



## Tested: Velodyne Acoustics MicroVee X – high Bass-Precision from little volume

When you think of a subwoofer, most of the time you picture a large cube with dimensions unfit for a living room. But it is difficult to bring room-filling bass and looks together without getting the usually male home theater or stereo fan into an argument with the significant other, or the subwoofer being misused as a surface for living room decoration. And simply for aesthetic reasons the subwoofer is rarely placed how it would sound best, but how the room supposedly dictates it. That is why the company Velodyne Acoustics from Hamburg, Germany tries to combine pleasant and useful in the MicroVee X.

### Compact in high quality packaging

The MicroVee X surprises after unpacking, because based on the weight you would expect somewhat different measurements than those that small subwoofer actually shows. A whole 23 x 23 x 25 centimeters seem undersized at first. How should a room-filling bass come from this petite cube? But if you look at the architecture and the technical data, you know that Velodyne Acoustics has put a lot of technology into this magic cube.



According to the data sheet the MicroVee X with its well known Class-AB amplifier delivers a permanent 300 watts of power, but can also call up a peak power of up to 800 watts. Installed are three identical 6.5 inch drivers made of a carbon fiber composite, one of which is actively driven at the front, while the other two being laterally aligned and facing each other are working passively. This design allows those two passive drivers to oscillate freely, eliminating the need for a bass reflex port. The Digital Drive Control System – DDCS for short – provides precise and low-distortion bass performance.

Visually the small sub does not look like much at first glance, but with its front facing driver embedded into the frame it differs from the classic Black-Boxes usually used for low frequencies. You really have to get used to the space-saving design first. Except for the small Velodyne Acoustics logo there are no displays on the front side and no LED informs you about the status of the MicroVee X.



If you want to protect the driver from dust, you can leave the included fabric cover on the device. Even if you rarely touch your technical devices to replace, the aluminum surface's matte coating is quite noticeable. Fingerprints hardly have a chance. The MicroVee X's dampening is done with small rubber feet on the bottom side and prevents ugly side noises. Hardwood flooring in particular tends to cause unwanted vibrations, which then distort the low frequency sound.

A look at the back side reveals the versatile function the small subwoofer has to offer. Numerous connection options allow the user to choose the way he wants to use the MicroVee X. Besides the classic connection via LFE, a Cinch connection is also available. Noteworthy are the cable clamps for directly connecting speakers. Especially PC gamers will appreciate this when they want to supplement their satellite speakers with additional bass.

Missing on the front the volume control is placed on the back side. This is a bit fiddly at first, but you quickly get used to it. Velodyne Acoustics also provides a small remote control that can even be used with a cable. With it you can control the volume, operate the internal filtering and change the phase. However, the remote control is just made of inexpensive plastic and falls behind the subwoofers' overall manufacturing quality.







## Made for music

Even though a separate subwoofer in a stereo Hi-Fi system is fairly unusual, that is exactly what the MicroVee X is made for, especially when the speakers used do not necessarily have their strengths in the low end of sound. I have a set of Cambridge Audio components arranged with Nubert's new nuBoxx BF-10 shelf speakers responsible for delivering the provided sound. As great as these little speakers are, sometimes I miss the punch in the bass from them. At this point the limited dimensions of the small

cube come in handy, because the furnishings and the setup do not really allow for a classic large-format sub to be installed for support.

For testing bass with music, for me there is time and again only one band worth considering in order to be able to evaluate the precision of a subwoofer. The Police is one of the few bands where the lead singer uses the bass guitar instead of a regular six string. But besides Sting with his bass, Stewart Copeland does belong to one of the greatest drummers of all time. What appears to be normal drumming at first, reveals its real quality on the drumsticks after repeated listening. At times highly complicated sequences are played, where the amateur drummer throws in the towel.



Not only does the small MicroVee X replay Sting's bass cleanly and adds more dynamics, especially the numerous drum sections sound so much more alive and precise. It really is a pleasure listening to the little sub at work. It is amazing how much power comes out of the cube and in particular how controlled and tight it plays. Even when operated at higher gain levels, there is no distortion or rattling to be heard, the MicroVee X plays at a consistently high niveau. But it is not only The Police where the sub is really fun. In the song The Chain from Fleetwood Mac's 1977 album Rumours

the bass also takes on a leading role. Here too does this small subwoofer give the entire song that extra bit of playfulness and vividness.

I have also used the MicroVee X with my home theater setup including the Yamaha RX-A2080 as receiver, but here the mini-sub vanishes due to the quality of the Soavo floor-standing speakers and can not perform against their low frequency drivers. But then again that is not what it is meant to do. This cube is supposed to be used with a hi-fi system supporting the given speakers. Doing that with flying colors.

### **Conclusion:**

I am fascinated by how the little Velodyne Acoustics MicroVee X performs in the hi-fi department. Admittedly, I was a bit skeptical at first how such a small housing could deliver the appropriate low ends for my music, but the cube picked me up from the very first notes. The casing is beautifully crafted. Even at neighbor-unfriendly volume levels there is no ringing or rattling to be heard. The drivers work hand in hand with a precision, making listening to it a real pleasure. Even tho the MicroVee X does not come cheap with a price of almost 1,300€, it is definitely worth having a listen to, especially for audiophiles and demanding music fans. If you rely on compact speakers like I do, with this small cube you will be able to take your hi-fi sound to a new level.

