



One Man's Journey Through The Stax Range (part.2.)



Stax SR-009 earspeakers (£3,695)

Welcome, if you didn't read part.1 of my journey last week, you can catch up [HERE](#).

Right, let's get started. Last week's look at the entry level [Stax](#) models was just the warm up, now we can get stuck into the really high performance versions.

I must admit, almost the whole time I was listening to the SR-207s I secretly had my eyes across the room on the reference SR-009s sat in the corner. Their metallic shine was glistening from the rare bit of winter sun streaming in through our beloved south facing window. That's not to say I wasn't enjoying the SR-207s, as you read last week, I loved them.

I am getting ahead of myself though, there's more than just the SR-009s here, I have a range to try out. I had first the SR-407s and SR-507s to sink my audiophilic teeth into.

The SR-407 is called the 'Signature' model. I used the 407s with the SRM006ts energizer (The SRS-4170 system). Looks-wise they are pretty much identical to the SR-207s except they are a dark green/brown colour as opposed to the black finish.

I must admit I am not the biggest fan of the colour but that wasn't going to stop me giving these a good listening to.



SR-407 earspeakers (£495) with a SRM006ts energizer (£1295)

The main difference that I could hear between the 407s and the 207s was the soundstage, it was that bit wider. It's funny with Stax because you listen to a model and you think that the soundstage is incredibly wide, but then you try the next pair up and it has been widened yet again. This is something I was quite blown away by throughout the range. The 407s are wider and they also have increased clarity, the sound has a little more snap to it.

The interesting thing about the Stax Lambda series is that all 4 models (SR207, SR-307, SR-407, SR-507) use the same driver, so the difference in sound between them is all generated from the geometry of the cables causing differing capacity and impedance, the other sound altering difference in the design is the variation in earpads. The 207s, 307s and 407s use a synthetic leather pad whereas the SR-507s have genuine leather pads.

The whole of the Lambda range have a similar style of flat cable, it is non-detachable and has a 5-pin plug. It would be nice if the cables were detachable, but seeing as the cables make such a difference to the sound, you have to think it'll be hard to find a better cable than that is provided by Stax.

The next step up was to the king of the Lambda range, the SR-507s. I used the 507s with the same SRM006ts energizer so that I could compare directly. They looked similar to the SR-207s in that they were all black, however the 507s have a metallic Stax branded badge on the side of the headband, a nice touch. The other instantly noticeable change is that the grills are now made from metal as opposed to plastic. I must admit, I was slightly disappointed when I first picked up the SR-207s as I thought from seeing them in pictures that they were metallic casings. This disappointment was not there with the 507s, they felt well made and expensive (both of which they are, of course).



SR-507 Earspeakers (£745)

Upon inspection I noticed that the headband of the SR-507s was improved, it was easier to adjust with a '10-click slider mechanism for head-pad height adjustment', which means they were slightly more comfortable than the other models. They were very easy to adjust and get the correct fit. The previously mentioned genuine leather ear pads were also incredibly comfortable.

The main improvement I noticed in the sound of the SR-507s was the improvement in the bass, though I wouldn't agree with the people who say that Stax are too light on the bass, the 507s were the first Stax that really had brilliantly weighted bass, and it is so well integrated into the sound.

Finally it was time to try out the SR-009s. These are the current Stax reference over-ears, which, pretty much means they are the world's reference over-ear headphones.



SR-009 Earspeakers (£3695) used with the SRM-007t II Kimik energizer (£2295)

They are packaged in a premium looking wooden box featuring the Stax logo proudly on the top. This is a nice bonus. When you are spending the money that you would spend for these (they retail at £3695.00), things like this are expected. You are also told in the accompanying instruction sheet, that these earspeakers must be handled with care as they are 'precision instruments'. This made me very nervous when using them; I was definitely taking far too much care when picking them up as was needed but these are precision instruments, which I did not want to damage.

I paired the SR-009s up with the SRM-007t II Kimik energizer, only the best for these can. The SR-009 earspeakers look very different to the rest of the range that I have tried. For starters, they do not have the classic rectangular grill look. They have much more modern styling, a much better to look at style if you ask me. Finally Stax have produced a set of earspeakers which look great as well as sounding great.

The circular ear-cups are manufactured from aluminium, they are open still, and have a very nice aluminium mesh design over the open sections. These are again

extremely comfortable cans, even more comfortable than the Lambda range, I think this is in most part to do with the ear-pads. They have the probably the biggest ear-pads that I have seen on a pair of headphones, (Maybe, just losing out to the MrSpeakers Alphadogs). They are thick and well cushioned and easily surround your ears. They feature the same 10-click adjustment system as the SR-507s, which again adds to the wear-ability.

The cable is made using high-purity copper wire of 99.9999% purity it is then silver-coated and finished with PVC. This is similar to what is used in high quality audio cables.

When it comes to the sound, the SR-009s are supreme beings, they have the classic Stax sound but everything is so crisp and balanced. The soundstage goes for miles and the highs are vividly clear. These earspeakers are extremely spacious, it really does feel like the whole room is filled with sound. They make you feel very small, something that is very difficult to achieve with headphones. I listened to 'Break on through (to the other side)' by The Doors, and I felt as if I had been transported to California in the late 60's. It was a feeling that I haven't really had with any other pair of headphones but one that I definitely want to have again as soon as possible.

It can be difficult to write about Stax at times, there isn't much out there that you can compare them to and you begin to run out of superlatives after a while.

So I guess the question that most people reading this will want answering is – are the Stax worth the price? Well, if you are a headphone fanatic (and there are a lot of them out there) and you are searching for perfection, you will probably never get there; but the closest you are likely to get moment are the Stax SR-009s. Perfection doesn't come cheap and neither do Stax earspeakers, but these are the goal that all headphone enthusiasts should be aspiring to.

—Many thanks to Nigel @ [Symmetry Systems](#) for letting us try out these great headphones.