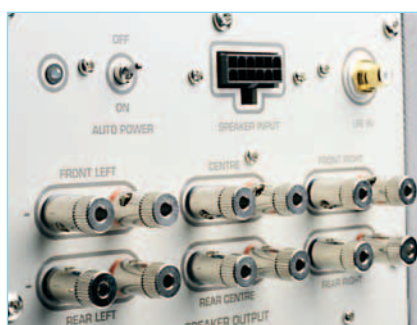




MISSION M-CUBE

PRICE: £1,200 (with two stands) ♦ 01480 423 700 ♦ www.mission.co.uk ♦ Overall Rating ★★★★★½



The M-Cube subwoofer works hard to blend with the tiny sats

HEIGHT (subwoofer)

320mm



The M-Cube is unique in its use of DML technology. This is commonly known as NXT, but Mission has decided to call it a different name apparently in order to get away from the negative connotations often associated with the concept of flatpanel speakers; something I agree is a good idea after experiencing one too many 'picture frame' speaker systems.

Description

The kit comprises five identical satellites and an equally square subwoofer. The cubed satellites and sub certainly look different to any NXT product I've seen before. They are available in black or off-white (ivory).

Cleverly, you can also change the colour of the felt wrap around the speakers (four choices are available). Two stands are supplied, and while you can add more if you need to, the system also comes with wall brackets, which is probably the best way of setting up if you can.

Performance

This system has an unusually high crossover point between the subwoofer and the satellites of 250Hz-300Hz – adjustable via the subwoofer. This means the sub has to do more work than most of the competition, and while it generally disappears into the overall wall of sound, it's occasionally too noticeable in the mid-bass, particularly with male dialogue

designed to fill the centre channel. The higher the crossover point, the more localisable the sound, and this can compromise the surround effect.

That niggle aside, these M-Cubes perform very well, filling the listening room in a manner that's hard to believe from such small boxes. The satellites provide a solid wall of sound across the front three speakers, while the diffuse nature of the DML technology also does a good job spreading out the rear effects.

Verdict


Mission's M-Cube system is the best application of NXT speaker technology I have yet encountered. The system is also beautiful to look at, and a top choice for those seeking a lifestyle sound system. It's at its best with movies, rather than music, but it looks as pretty with both.

FEATURES

Specifications: Drive units, satellite: DML in infinite baffle; drive units, subwoofer: 200mm; nominal impedance satellite: 8 ; frequency response system: 28Hz-30kHz; sensitivity satellite: 85dB; power handling, satellite: 150W; subwoofer power: 250W
Dimensions: Satellites: 90(w) x 90(h) x 90(d)mm; subwoofer: 320(w) x 320(h) x 320(d)mm
Weight: Satellites: 1.02kg; subwoofer: 16kg


TOP 6 RANKING

BY PERFORMANCE

1. M&K K5 
2. FOCAL SIB & CO
3. CABASSE XO2
4. KEF KHT 2005.2
5. MISSION M-CUBE
6. MIRAGE NANOSAT

TOP 6 RANKING

BY STYLE AND/OR VALUE

1. MISSION M-CUBE 
2. CABASSE XO2
3. KEF KHT 2005.2
4. MIRAGE NANOSAT
5. FOCAL SIB & CO
6. M&K K5

CONCLUSION

It's tricky judging sub/sat speaker systems; people will buy them for both aesthetic and performance reasons, and expectations vary wildly. To this end, we've produced two sets of rankings. One emphasises pure cinephile performance over style, while the second rewards design and/or value.

Perhaps it's not a surprise then that the most traditional system wins out when it comes to performance: M&K's excellent K5 setup. Admittedly it's the most expensive, but the real reason it wins is that fewer concessions have been made for style and size, and what you end up with is an excellent value for money, serious home cinema system.

The Focal system also performs very well, and the larger speakers again pay dividends with the sound quality, as does the new and improved subwoofer.

The order changes when we focus on style. The Mission M-Cube makes great use of DML – or NXT – technology, and is very room friendly, providing a good solution for people who can't set up a speaker system in the prescribed manner – as do the Mirage Nanosats, although in a slightly less impressive way. At a similar price, but in a more sonically appealing manner, our first look at a Cabasse system was a thoroughly exhilarating experience.

Last but by no means least is the KEF 2005.2 system. It may be getting on, but it's still a contender. However, the competition's hotting up...

RATINGS

CABASSE XO2 £725 (Approx)

Highs: A great price and excellent styling, fast and dynamic

Lows: The subwoofer could do with more grunt

| Fronts/Centre | Rears | Subwoofer | OVERALL |
|---------------|-------|-----------|---------|
| ★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★★★ |

FOCAL SUB & CO PACK CINEMA PRO £1,150 (Approx)

Highs: An excellent all round performer with good, deep bass

Lows: Quite large and a tad pricey

| Fronts/Centre | Rears | Subwoofer | OVERALL |
|---------------|-------|-----------|---------|
| ★★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★★½ |

KEF KHT 2005.2 £800 (Approx)

Highs: Still an object of desire, has a powerful new subwoofer

Lows: No longer the only egg in the nest

| Fronts/Centre | Rears | Subwoofer | OVERALL |
|---------------|-------|-----------|---------|
| ★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★½ | ★★★★ |

M&K K5 £1495 (Approx)

Highs: Wonderful surround sound performance, agile and deep subwoofer

Lows: Not aesthetically pleasing, the most expensive system here

| Fronts/Centre | Rears | Subwoofer | OVERALL |
|---------------|-------|-----------|---------|
| ★★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★★½ |

MIRAGE NANOSAT £600 (Approx)

Highs: Very room friendly, with impressive surround performance

Lows: The subwoofer is a disappointment

| Fronts/Centre | Rears | Subwoofer | OVERALL |
|---------------|-------|-----------|---------|
| ★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★ | ★★★½ |

MISSION M-CUBE £1,200 (Approx)

Highs: Will work in any environment, beautiful design

Lows: You can get better sound for the money from traditional speakers

| Fronts/Centre | Rears | Subwoofer | OVERALL |
|---------------|-------|-----------|---------|
| ★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★★ | ★★★★½ |

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