

Motivational speaker

THE NEW FOCAL.JMLAB SYSTEM AIMS FOR THE MIDDLE GROUND BETWEEN SIZE AND STYLE

Ali Upman Investigates . . .

There was a time when selecting a surround-sound speaker setup meant a potentially tricky decision over whether the living room or the home cinema took priority. Those who went for the latter option were presumably quite happy to live surrounded by gargantuan boxes, taking solace in the fact that in doing so they had achieved home cinema nirvana. Lately though, many companies have attempted to entice customers who would ordinarily favour the former option, by offering the 5.1 experience without the necessity to extend the front room or rethink your decor. Things get really interesting, however, when companies with experience stretching back two decades try to find a solution for people who feel that their living space and their home entertainment are of equal importance, and that is exactly what JMLab has attempted to do.



“A real winner”

Sound Style

JMLab is one of the few remaining companies to do everything in-house instead of assembling OEM components, and thankfully this earnest approach has paid dividends where the Sib speakers are concerned. They are fantastically well built, equally robust as they are stylish. Using a splash-proof injection-moulded ABS cabinet, topped off with a removable metal grille, JMLab has created a smart-looking speaker that is versatile and small enough to be used anywhere. The bracket at the back offers a choice between standing the cabinets upright or wall-mounting them. JMLab have even been thoughtful enough to include an Allen key with each speaker, should you need to make the necessary adjustments. And it doesn't end there: even though the binding posts are traditionally styled, instead of using a screw they use a spring. JMLab has really thought of everything.

Internally, the Sib is comprised of a 110mm synthetic mid-bass drive unit and a 19mm metallised plastic dome tweeter. Sensitivity is graded at 90dB and according to the manufacturer's rating, each Sib can take 75W of power while also being magnetically shielded, which is vital if you intend to position your setup near to the TV.



After being dazzled by the high-style speakers, I turned my attention to the subwoofer and once again I was not disappointed. The finish and solid build exude wealth and style. Everything about it compliments the rest of the system perfectly, and it's petite enough to be tucked away discreetly as well. The dapper cast-aluminum



chassis houses an 8in driver and 40mm voice coil, and even though it's the powerhouse of the system, it still manages to maintain a very low profile.

Screen Test

With such a handsome system at my disposal, I was anxious to slot in a movie and see if the JMLab could really deliver the goods, and I was extremely pleased with the results. Playback is exactly what you might expect from a speaker system at this price: refined, smooth and exciting.



With *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* in the DVD player, the extensive dynamic range of the Sib & Cub becomes obvious, assisted by a scintillating low-end performance. The sound field is as expansive as the epic battle scenes, and bass hits hard when called upon. But this is no wayward boom; this is a tight sound offering copious sofa-shaking excitement.

Equally, the low-end has the ability to effectively accentuate atmospherics when subtlety rather than bluster is required. The dynamics are impressive too, with a seamless shift between strident and soft sections of the soundtrack. The mid-band also put in a solid performance, with nicely raised dialogue and a pleasing level of warmth. The tonal balance is measured, and integration is impressive. This sonic capability succeeds in drawing you into the movie, while crisp detail and realistic rear effects pull you even closer.

Two-channel performance is equally exciting. Biffy Clyro's debut album is presented with aplomb. Guitars are rich and punchy, the bass grips tightly and the vocals are very natural. The Sib&Cub system also shows its delicate side, with beautifully presented acoustic tones . . .

JMLab has come very close to achieving a peerless combination of style and performance, elements that can very often be unhappy bedfellows. Both multichannel soundtracks and stereo music sources sound exhilarating. Combine this with the level of convenience this sub/sat system offers and the JMLab Sib&Cub combination turns into a real winner.



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