

Don't be a square... get Cubed

Mission M-Cube £1000

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE

FOR

Ultra-stylish, delivers an amazing surround experience; clarity and expression in abundance

AGAINST

A pair of stands costs another £200

VERDICT

A sub/sat system that displays cute looks and killer ability – in our eyes it's going to be a sure-fire hit



THE KEF EGGS have been the template for top-quality sub/sat systems over the past couple of years. Last year's Award-winning Mordaunt-Short Genie uses a similar design. But manufacturers have been striving for a package capable of taking the sub/sat format to a new level, and now this is a real possibility thanks to the stunning Mission M-Cube system.

Subwoofer aside, Mission's distinctly diminutive system throws tradition straight out of the window. Conventional drivers have been given the heave-ho in favour of NXT flat-panels. The result is one of the best sounds we've heard from a system of this type.

Before we become caught up in a whirlwind of performance praise, first a few aesthetic observations: the cuboid speakers are as cute as they come. Available in either black or ivory, each unit is made from extruded aluminium, and the solid build is impressive. Even the way the system is packaged adds to the sense of occasion. Open the lid and you're greeted with a selection of differently coloured fabric wraps that can be used to dress the speakers to suit room decor.

Then there's the issue of size. At only 9cm cubed, the satellite speakers shouldn't encroach too far into that precious living room space. Brackets are provided as standard and dedicated stands are available – though they cost a hefty £200 per pair.

In terms of looks, the subwoofer is a mirror image of the satellites. It's a compact, closed cabinet design that uses two 12.5cm bass drivers and contains a 250 watt amplifier. It's fairly small at only 32cm in each dimension.



TECH SPECS

SATELLITES:

ENCLOSURE Extruded aluminium and mineral loaded polymer
RESPONSE 200Hz-30kHz
SENSITIVITY 85dB
POWER-HANDLING 30-150w
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 9 x 9 x 9cm
WEIGHT 1.1kg
SUBWOOFER:
RESPONSE 26-300Hz
CROSSOVER FREQUENCY 250-300Hz
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 12 x 12 x 12cm
WEIGHT 16kg

We can't wait to pitch Mission's M-Cubes up against the Mordaunt-Short Genie 5.1

presented with all their atmospheric and emotional integrity intact.

The subwoofer pumps out its contribution with a fine amount of weight and authority. In *Alien Versus Predator*, the predators embark on a spring-clean of their temple and each alien beating is delivered with real solidity, power and slam.

With two-channel music, the M-Cubes do a fair job. This system copes with *The Streets' A Grand Don't Come For Free* in an involving manner.

Small, perfectly formed, and with excellent sound quality, the Mission M-Cubes are just the ticket to unobtrusive home cinema heaven.

“The proof is always in the pudding, and these little beauties taste particularly sweet”

Aesthetics and design aside, the proof is in the pudding, and these little beauties taste particularly sweet. The flat-panel satellites sound superb, combining effortlessly to produce an enveloping and seamless soundfield. Whether it's explosive effects panning

between the front loudspeakers or swirling around the rear channels, the M-Cubes plug all the gaps. During the memorable forest battle in *Hero*, you feel like an intrinsic part of the leafy onslaught and spectacular swordplay. The system's even tonal balance and open delivery also ensures that there's no top-end aggression or low-end lag to blight the listening experience.

In more subtle scenes, the M-Cubes prove highly versatile, and manage to change character to deliver dialogue and sound effects in a natural, controlled manner. The more intimate and graceful moments in *Hero* are

ALSO CONSIDER

Mordaunt-Short Genie

£800 ★★★★★ Awards 2004
Award winner compact speakers that have style and substance

Monitor Audio Radius

£1000 ★★★★★ Awards 2004
These tiny sats boast a big sound and the sub is no slouch, either

MISSION'S FLAT-PANEL SPEAKERS IMPRESS

The M-Cube's satellites are anything but conventional speakers. They are in fact Distributed Mode Loudspeakers (DMLs), using technology developed by NKT. Instead of incorporating two or three standard drive units, they consist of a single, flat, sound panel that's actively encouraged to vibrate via an 'exciter.'

Its variables such as the positioning of these exciters, plus the size, shape, bending stiffness, surface density and

internal damping of the panel material all affect the sound produced. The benefits of using such a composition are claimed – and after our tests we're not inclined to argue – to include a wider, non-directional spread of sound, improved integration across the frequency range – due to the absence of separate driver units – and the ability to design a slimmer and less imposing speaker. Mission has implemented this flat panel technology extremely well.

