



very high standard and the finish on the black or Mahogany veneers is also very impressive. The cabinet is a bass reflex design, with a rear-firing port and internally Subsonic has fitted the speakers with extensive acoustic damping. The XMs are biwireable and the gold-plated terminals are connected to a high quality crossover with substantial internal cabling. The

crossover also features decent quality components, such as air-cored inductors and polypropylene capacitors. All of these X Series speakers are fully magnetically shielded and share the same 130mm woofer and 25mm tweeter, to provide that all important tonal balance.

The XC2 is the smaller of two centre speakers but is still a substantial box. It's equipped with not only two woofers, but two HF units as well, to eliminate any higher frequency 'sweet-spot' from the centre channel. It too features high quality internal crossover and wiring and is also fully acoustically damped. Subsonic also points out that over 70 per cent of information in a home theatre comes from the centre channel, so it's important to get this one right. This led to the XC centre's multi point source design, using multiple tweeters to create a larger perceived 'sound window'. As Subsonic quite rightly states, 'you want the centre sound to be as big as your picture.' The X Series centres all use what it calls 'Complex Field Dispersion' (CFD), a technique designed to create horizontal and vertical sound dispersion, regardless of the listening position. This means you don't have to be sitting dead centre on the sofa in order to hear dialogue and other centrally placed effects clearly.

Bringing up the rear, the XR2 surrounds have also received their own fair share of design attention. Subsonic actually recommended listening to the rears with a subwoofer, as sat/sub combo to hear just how musical they can

sound. I duly hooked them up as such, before mounting them on the wall behind the sofa, and sure enough, they make a terrific pair of stereo satellites in their own right. The rears maintain the tonal balance with the rest of the system, using identical drivers as the centre and mains and they too have their fair share of quality componentry, including the crossover, internal wiring and cabinet construction. The XR2s are designed to be hung on the wall and there's a screw mounting bracket on the speakers' rear. The tweeter's located below the bass/mid driver and if you're going to wall mount them, it's a good idea to get them up fairly high.

For a new set of speakers straight out of the box, the collection didn't need a great deal of running in. Straight from the off the X Series settled nicely into their AV role. Bass sounded lean and well rounded, midrange open and expressive and there's no hint of any higher frequency harshness. Without one of its own subs, I tried the X Series with and without a Richter Thor subwoofer, mainly for use with Dolby Digital and DTS movie material. The XM3s are capable of a tight and very tuneful bass, but to get the extension needed for action movies' dynamic moments, a decent active sub is a necessary addition.

Connected to an Onkyo TX-DS797 receiver (reviewed p.19-21), the Subsonics sound superb. They present a relatively easy amplifier load, the front three have a nominal 6 ohm load, the rears are rated at 8. Sensitivity's not stated, but judging by the ease in which the 100-watt Onkyo drove the system, it's pretty high.

There's one word that best describes the sound of this X Series collection - cinematic. In a movie role, the five speakers combine to sound totally cohesive. The uniformity of the drivers and the smoothness of their response serves to create a lush, powerful presentation, in which movie sounds have a real sense of space in which to breathe. The XM2s and XC2 combine to provide excellent front-speaker drive.

Chucking on an oldie, but fantastic sounding DVD, the Dolby Digital rumblings of *Event Horizon* have the potential to upset woofers. The panning spacecraft shots above a stormy planet are full of weight and presence and on-screen movements from left to right and front to back are excellent too. You get a genuine sense of bulky, meaningful

Technotalk

Product Type:

Home theatre AV speaker system

Driver Types:

130mm bass/mid (all models)

25mm soft dome tweeter (all)

Frequency Response:

42Hz - 22kHz ± 2 dB (XM3)

47Hz - 22kHz ± 2 dB (XC2)

85Hz - 22kHz ± 2 dB (XR2)

Power Handling:

25 - 100 Watts RMS (XM3 & XC2)

15 - 65 Watts RMS (XR2)

Impedance:

See text

Sensitivity:

Not stated

Finishes:

Black & Mahogany (XM3), Black (XC2 & XR2). Additional finishes available on request

Magnetic Shielding:

All models

Technotalk specifications and recommended retail prices are supplied by the manufacturer