

# British audiophile solution is sublime



MJ Acoustics offers a high grade speaker solution to partner its highly rated subwoofers. Adam Rayner is first in line to get dewy-eyed

**M**J Acoustics is rapidly becoming a big deal in the world of British audio – but there's more to the brand than its well regarded subwoofers. They also make complete speaker systems, like this one, which I've lusted after since spying it at the recent London Heathrow hi-fi show.

As soon as I clapped my eyes on it, I wanted to indulge myself and asked if HCC could be first in line for an audition. The company agreed, and here we are. Ladeez and Gennelmen, may I introduce the Subliminal home theatre speaker system, married to MJ's new and very cunning MkIII version of its Reference 1 subwoofer!

## Description

For boxes that look small and slabby, they come in some of the weightiest-for-size cartons I've ever encountered. The Subliminal S1R front speakers stand just short of a metre tall and have big wooden bases. They're made of thick MDF with a furniture-grade veneer on the surfaces, and solid timber end-pieces to match the wood of whatever veneer you have. They're only 104mm deep, yet enclose a long transmission line organ pipe type enclosure within. They weigh a ton, and yet are packaged in pairs, fully assembled – there's no Ikea-style screwing-on plinths to contend with.

The carton is filled with polyurethane custom-cut packaging and even that weighs a good bit when empty. To unpack, you'll need a mate's help. Unfortunately, I don't have any, so had to manage on my own. Thankfully, I weigh a ton myself so was able to sort of grab on, lean back and generally lever the things into position.

The Subliminal S1R has a single hole underneath and sports a single speaker post cup on its rear. The enclosure has but one 4in aluminium coned loudspeaker driver in its face under that neat cloth grille. The shiny cone is surrounded by a very soft and compliant surround that allows the driver to play way down to 40Hz in this cabinet, and 55Hz in the smaller monitor-shaped product, called the Subliminal S1RM, as in er, monitor.

The other three enclosures in this 5.1 system are smaller, costing £500 each compared to the £2k per pair for the tall S1Rs. Again, there's a single port out the

## RATINGS

**Highs:** Stylish, clean, undistorted reference kit with ballsy output.  
**Lows:** The sheer dynamics are hard to tame

Fronts/centre	★★★★½
Rears	★★★★
Bass	★★★★★
<b>OVERALL</b>	★★★★½

back, which is the mouth of another transmission line enclosure. Famed for making small drivers deliver the most disproportionately huge amounts of bass versus their surface area, these T-L boxes need to be vast versus their driver's cone area, so even a simple 4in can wake the dead with low frequencies.

## Performance

So we know transmission line speakers make deep lows, but how do they make the highs? For they most assuredly do: bright, transparent, fast even. With a reach that goes 2,000 cycles above our theoretical 20kHz limit of high-frequency hearing, these speakers can be easily paired with Super Audio CD and DVD-A hardware.

The speaker units themselves owe some of their creation to Ted Jordan, one of the fathers of modern hi-fi transducers and drivers, as the use of actual cone flex is part of the HF response. Above a certain point, the cones vibrate within themselves as well as acting like a low compression piston for the bass tones. The product uses no caps, no coils and no resistors. There's nothing inside but silver soldered wire to connect the speaker leads up to the driver; this results in a purity and clarity which appeals directly to the sensitive midband hearing zone. Vocals are remarkable, detail is utterly pin-sharp and the weight of bigger sounds is inescapable.

## SPECIFICATIONS

ITEM	DETAILS
<b>MJ Acoustics Subliminal S1R</b>	
Drive units	One single aluminium coned diaphragm with 4in voice coil, using conventional excursion and molecular vibration technologies
Enclosure type	Transmission line
Frequency response	40Hz - 22kHz
Sensitivity	88dB/m @ 1w/1m
Power handling	100W
Dimensions	980(h) x 356(w) x 104(d)mm
Weight	17.5kg
<b>MJ Acoustics Subliminal S1RM</b>	
Drive units	One single aluminium coned diaphragm with 4in voice coil, using conventional excursion and molecular vibration technologies in
Enclosure type	Transmission line
Frequency response	55Hz - 22kHz
Sensitivity	88dB/m @ 1w/1m
Power handling	100W
Dimensions	430(h) x 204(w) x 290(d)mm
Weight	10kg
<b>MJ Acoustics Reference 1 Mk III Subwoofer</b>	
Drive units	10in ultra long throw driver with heavy duty cast alloy chassis and double stacked magnet
Enclosure type	Tuned gas-flowed ported 25mm thick MDF
Frequency response	10Hz to 200Hz
Power output	250W RMS from onboard MOSFET amp
Dimensions	500(w) x 458(h) x 320(d)mm
Weight	25kg