



Mission | MX1 |

Mighty Mission's convincing comeback

It's fair to say that Mission's recent run of form has been disappointing.

The products we've tested over the past few years have come nowhere near to challenging the class leaders, and that just isn't good enough for a brand that once routinely picked-up five-star ratings, *Group Test* wins and Awards.

But we think things are about to change for the better, and the reason for our optimism is none other than the MX1s under the microscope here. They're the entry point into Mission's new budget range and in sonic attitude are very much in the traditional company mould - which is great news for both wallets and ears.

Fast and to the point

The MX1s are fast, articulate performers that deliver sizable chunks of punch, expression and detail for the money. Play a tune like Kelis's *Milkshake* and the MX1s lap it up like an enthusiastic puppy.

They don't get fazed by complexity, and get straight to the point with a direct and dynamic sound that can't help but grab your attention.

While these speakers don't have many shortcomings in the finesse department, they prefer to major in sonic excitement and entertainment. It's a stark contrast

with class leaders such as the five-star Q Acoustics 2020s (£140), which sound unusually mature for the price class.

Despite having a rear-facing bass port, these Missions are optimised to sound best when placed close to a rear wall. Positioned in this way, these little speakers - they stand just 28cm tall - produce a decent amount of bass. No, it's not massively deep and certainly won't get furniture,

The MX1s are a great result for Mission. They manage to deliver a mature, exciting sound at a price that made us do a double-take

Put on a tune such as Kelis's *Milkshake* and the speedy, articulate MX1s lap it up like an enthusiastic puppy

teeth and neighbours' nerves rattling, but it is balanced, fast and tuneful. For a speaker of this size and price level it's a fine compromise. We like.

The Missions are fairly even through the bass and midrange but can be accused of being a little over-enthusiastic in the treble. The speaker's high frequencies are of a good quality, so this avoids being a problem, but if you already have bright or forward-sounding electronics, the MX1s wouldn't be our first recommendation.

Technically the MX1s are as we'd expect: small two-way ported designs are standard at this level. As always, though, it's the details that lift a product above the norm, and here it's the drive units and crossover. The inverted driver unit arrangement is a Mission tradition and places the 25mm soft dome tweeter below the 13cm fibre mid/bass driver. This is done to equalise the distance to the listener, which improves integration. Build quality is as good as anything else we've seen for the price.

It's great to see Mission producing excellent speakers again. The MX1s deliver large doses of fun, and that's a rare commodity at this or any price.

Rating ★★★★★

FOR A fast and engaging sound very much in the traditional Mission mould; relatively unfussy about positioning

AGAINST You'll need to avoid bright or aggressive partnering electronics

VERDICT It's been a long wait but Mission has once again delivered a great budget speaker

TECH SPECS

Type Standmount **Sensitivity** 86dB/W/m **Impedance** 8 ohms **Max power handling** 100W **Bi-wireable** Yes **Finishes** 4 **Dimensions (hwd)** 28 x 17 x 26cm **Weight** 5.1kg

TEST VERDICT

THE WINNER

Mission MX1

★★★★★

Talk about close races... there's a staggering amount of talent on display in this test - and to be honest, you can't lose with any of these speakers. But it's the smashing-sounding **Mission MX1s** that take home the trophy



We knew it was going to be tight - and it was - but the Award-winning Mission MX1s retain the top spot on account of a sonic delivery that simply entertains and excites more than any other pair of speakers here.

You see? When we said there's never been a better time to be buying budget speakers, we meant it. There's so much quality on offer, both in terms of sound and build quality, that you might wonder why you'd ever spend more than £150.

We know three stars is a low score, especially for a company with the reputation and heritage of Pro-Ject, but the Speakerbox 5s still have a delivery that's fast and detailed enough to make a purchase based on looks one that doesn't need to be heavily regretted. We can't help but be a little disappointed, though: the other speakers here were

already available, so Pro-Ject had a benchmark from which to work, and we were expecting these little speakers to go toe-to-toe with the very best.

And talking of disappointment, Q Acoustics are likely to be feeling some when they see that the 2020s

When we said there's never been a better time to be buying budget speakers, we meant it - there's so much quality on offer for just £150

have dropped down to four stars. The truth is that they were very close to retaining all five, but the Tannoy pair has come along with a delivery that offers similar levels of authority and scale with a greater level of detail and rhythm for just a tenner more.

SYSTEM BUILDER

You don't have to spend much to build a brilliant budget separates system. These are the best matches for the Missions



Denon D-M38DAB Micro system
£330 ★★★★★



SoundStyle Z2 Speaker stands
£70 ★★★★★



Talk 3 Speaker cable
£4/m ★★★★★

Then we get to the the main event. When we talk about the different characteristics of the Tannoy Mercury V1s, with their rounded, fluid and dynamic sound, and the Mission MX1s, which are punchy, vibrant and detailed, it would be easy to see them as polar opposites. But really, they're just a step either side of the perfect balance.

The Tannoys lose a little impact in their quest for that fluidity, while the Missions favour attack at the expense of calming down harsher recordings. For us, in the end, excitement comes first, which is why the Missions take the top-spot - but there's absolutely nothing wrong with going down the Tannoy route if that's what you fancy.



For a full list of specifications and other useful info visit whathifi.com

Facts & figures



Mission MX1

★★★★★

Sensitivity 86dB • **Impedance** 8 ohms
• **Max power** 100W • **Biwireable** Yes
• **Finishes** Black, cherry, rosewood, walnut • **Dimensions (hwd)** 28 x 17 x 26cm • **Weight** 5.1kg



Pro-Ject Speakerbox 5

★★★★☆

Sensitivity 86dB • **Impedance** 8 ohms
• **Max power** 150W • **Biwireable** No
• **Finishes** Black, white, red • **Dimensions (hwd)** 26 x 16 x 21cm • **Weight** 4.2kg



Q Acoustics 2020

★★★★☆

Sensitivity 88dB • **Impedance** 6 ohms
• **Max power** 75W • **Biwireable** Yes
• **Finishes** Gloss black, gloss white, graphite, walnut • **Dimensions (hwd)** 26 x 28 x 17cm • **Weight** 5kg



Tannoy Mercury V1

★★★★★

Sensitivity 86dB • **Impedance** 8 ohms
• **Max power** 100W • **Biwireable** No
• **Finishes** Dark walnut, sugar maple • **Dimensions (hwd)** 30 x 17 x 25cm • **Weight** 4.5kg