

Sonique

SAV-C5SE CENTRE SPEAKER



The centre-channel speaker is the most important speaker in any home theatre because it's required to produce almost all dialogue, no matter whether you're using Pro-Logic, Dolby Digital, DTS or THX. If you're using Pro-Logic, it has to cope with a lion's share of any music being reproduced in the front channels as well!

Equipment

In the decade or so since it's been in business Sonique has demonstrated time and again that its designs are anchored in the real world of what happens to speakers when they're positioned in an ordinary living room.

The front-firing ports in the SAV-C5SE are an excellent example. How many centre channels have you seen where the ports fire out the rear of the speaker? While this might be OK in a FR or FL speaker, having a rear-firing port in a centre channel speaker is just plain stupid, because it severely limits placement possibilities, ruling out cabinet-mounting and soffit-mounting entirely.

Another example is the enormous depth (front-to-back) of the cabinet (370mm). This means that, should you wish, the speaker can be used to actually

support a television, which immediately solves the eternal dilemma of where to place a centre channel speaker. Although it seems to make sense to buy a narrow centre channel speaker, this means you'll probably end up trying to balance it on top of your TV — a dangerous manoeuvre that's sure to end in tears. However, the SAV-C5SE's enormous depth also ensures sufficient volume to ensure good bass response, particularly when the bass/midrange drivers are as large as the two fitted to the front baffle! The cabinet volume (around 30 litres) and large bass drivers also means that Sonique has been able to maximise the efficiency of the design, such that it's rated at 92dB SPL, and thus easily able to keep pace with even the most efficient front left (FL) and front right (FR) loudspeakers.

Realising that most people will place their TV on top of this centre channel, Sonique has made sure the SAV-C5SE is shielded, but recognising the increased sensitivity of the widescreen TV sets that are now coming on the market, Sonique has incorporated its 'second generation' magnetic shielding to ensure the three speaker magnets inside the SAV-C5SE can't possibly interfere with even the widest, and/or flat-

test screen. The other dimensions are 230 x 550mm (HW).

Immediately above the twin ports is a 25mm horn-loaded fabric-dome tweeter. The bass/midrange drivers are nominally 170mm diameter units but have a Theile/Small (T/S) diameter of 132mm. They have polypropylene cones and rubber roll surrounds. The chassis is pressed steel. Sonique's crossover network is quite impressive, with a pair of cross-mounted air-cored inductors, a 10 watt wirewound resistor and four capacitors (two non-polarised electrolytics and two polyester).

Performance

We have to admit to expecting a lot from Sonique's new SAV-C5SE, but are happy to say it not only met all our expectations, but exceeded them by far. Rarely have we heard such great bass from a centre channel speaker, and we can't recall ever hearing such a level of clarity. Needless to say, both attributes are essential for the reproduction of dialogue. Bass is particularly important with male voice. When listening to systems with small centre-channel speakers, it's easy to tell when a male voice 'moves' from the FR or FL to the centre because all the vocal 'weight' disappears. When we tried this test with the SAV-C5SE, the tonal structure remained identical — there was no reduction of vocal strength whatsoever. Also impressive was the clarity of reproduced dialogue. There was never any sense of having to strain to understand what was being said. The Sonique performed just as well with Dolby Digital encoded concert footage on music DVD, 'filling' the centre-stage sound perfectly.

Conclusion

Sonique's SAV-C5SE is a seriously good centre-channel that would be the perfect choice for anyone serious about the quality of their centre channel sound. **Bb**

Sonique SAV-C5SE Centre Speaker

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| WARRANTY: | Five years |
| | Clarity of dialogue Extended bass |
| | Quite large |

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| CONTACT: | Sonique Audio Pty Ltd 1300 766 418 info@sonique.com.au www.sonique.com.au |
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