

STYLE SPEAKER PACKAGE

5.1 SPEAKER
PACKAGE
BOSTON
ACOUSTICS
SOUNDWARE XS

★★★★★

↑ FOR

Small but sturdy; included wall brackets offer versatility; cohesive, balanced, full-bodied sound

↓ AGAINST

Very little, considering the price and form

→ VERDICT

It's been a while since we've enjoyed a budget 5.1 package that sounds this good

Budget Bostons a reason to party

THERE'S BEEN A dearth of budget style speaker systems adorning our pages over the last year or so, which is a real shame. Good-quality home cinema electronics are now more affordable than ever, meaning that alongside a set

"A new budget style system that's worth shouting about"

of speakers such as these you can have a home cinema system for relative peanuts.

So, to this Boston Acoustics SoundWare XS 5.1 package. The price box is ticked – we've seen it even cheaper online – and in terms of practicality these speakers are a definite score, too. Not only are they tiny units that, despite their multi-sided design, sit happily on stands, they also come complete with articulating brackets for simple wall-mounting.

Available in white or black along with a bog-standard subwoofer they certainly look pretty smart and feel fairly solidly constructed. The speakers use smaller spring-clip terminals, which work well and grip the cable solidly – which is handy if you're planning on sticking them halfway up the wall.

Listening to the soundtrack on the excellent Blu-ray transfer of *The Lord Of The Rings* we're first

taken by the cohesive, enveloping quality of the package. For such miniature speakers they do a staggering job of filling a good-sized room as sound swings fluidly around the satellites.

Highs and lows to raise a smile

Diminutive in stature but not sound, the satellites deliver big but balanced audio, with a treble that's assured, clear and never bright. The subwoofer beds in well, too, delivering the necessary bottom-end power and weight without sticking its head too far above the parapet. There's subtlety, too, with the tense atmospherics of *Moon* conveyed confidently alongside decent dynamics when required.

It's been a long time coming but finally we have a new budget style system worth shouting about. It may be XS in size but it's an XL for performance.

