

Tannoy is tame but still tempts

MULTICHANNEL
SPEAKER
PACKAGE
TANNOY
SENSYS 5.1



↑ FOR

Expansive, detailed and well-integrated sound; good build; excellent subwoofer

↓ AGAINST

Slightly reticent sound; odd-looking centre channel; foggy bass from front speakers

→ VERDICT

If you can get past the rather odd looks and subtle delivery of this Tannoy package, it offers a lot for your money

DO YOU THINK you're a glass-half-full or half-empty sort of person? Optimists will be thrilled by the sheer amount of material that goes to make up this Tannoy Sensys 5.1 package. The more sceptical might glance at competing packages and wonder how the Tannoy ended up looking quite so, well, substantial. Here at **WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION** we try not to pre-judge a system before we've heard it, but even we pointed and laughed at that centre speaker while we were setting everything up for a listen.

And it's the centre channel that dominates your attention when you're sitting inside the speaker circle. The front speakers are tall and chunky, while the rear speakers are no shrinking violets, either. But though the subwoofer is commendably compact, the centre channel is the talking point. Its proportions are all wrong: the drivers are crammed like sardines into the unhappily shaped cabinet. It's too tall to look comfortable on top of your television or to fit on a shelf. It can't be any coincidence that we've never seen a centre speaker of such dimensions before.

How does it sound?

With the kit's large front speakers standing in a degree of free space, and the asymmetric grilles (another not-entirely successful design feature) removed, the Sensys 5.1 shows all the key characteristics we admire in Tannoy loudspeakers.

The soundstage is well-defined and expansive, with good detail and confident effects-positioning. The large rear speakers offer focus and rapidity, and seamlessly integrate into the system. The centre speaker,

"The best part is the subwoofer: it integrates beautifully with the front speakers, dishes up the low end with punch, drive and decent modulation, and is really discreet"



meanwhile, invests dialogue with weight, authority and accuracy, which makes an aside-studded movie like *Meet The Fockers* easy to follow.

Best of all is the TS10 subwoofer: it integrates beautifully with the front speakers, dishes up the low-end stuff with punch, drive and fine modulation, and it's vanishingly discreet. Mind you, how much use its balanced XLR inputs will be when used with a price-comparable amp is open to question.

The few areas of performance we were less keen on are typical of budget Tannoy products, too. For all its roomy soundstage, good integration and consummate fidelity, the overall sound of the Sensys package is polite, safe and undemonstrative – there's no lack of articulation, but these Tannoys sound reined-in. Big action movies have none of the visceral attack and drive that makes for real impact, and this inoffensiveness drains soundtracks of excitement.

We'd also like to flag up the front speakers' lack of low-end definition: the most effective presentation comes when the speakers hand over to the sub fairly high up the frequency range. This does rather negate the sonic appeal of front floorstanders.

Tannoy's latest speaker system shows plenty of character, but it's not always spot on

The Sensys' oddities – that freaky centre channel, slightly tame voice and foggy bass from its fronts – are easily outweighed by its fine build, detailed, focused presentation and splendid subwoofer. These Tannoys definitely deserve an audition.

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and dynamic
muscularity – our
current favourite

TECH SPECS ★

SPEAKERS
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 39Hz-51kHz
SENSITIVITY 88dB
POWER-HANDLING 110 watts
IMPEDANCE 8 ohm
DIMENSIONS (HWD)
Front 91 x 21 x 29cm
Centre 21 x 35 x 28cm
Rear 35 x 21 x 29cm
WEIGHTS
Front 15kg
Centre 10kg
Rear 7kg

SUBWOOFER
LOW FREQUENCY RESPONSE 29Hz
AMPLIFIER 300 watts
INPUTS 2 x line level, phono,
2 x XLR balanced
DIMENSIONS (HWD)
32 x 29 x 29mm
WEIGHT 10kg