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Retro

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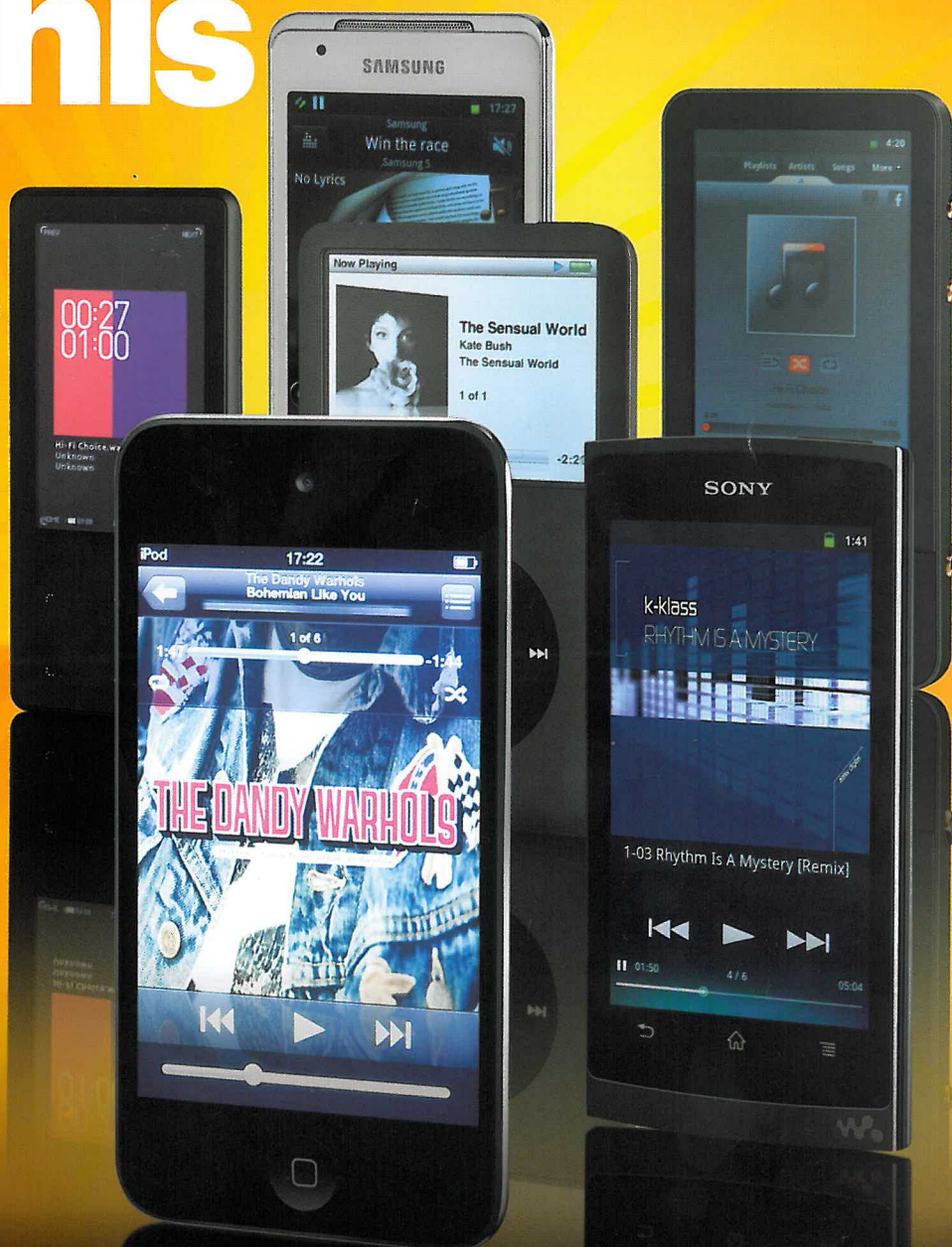


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Elipson Planet M/Planet subwoofer

The Elipson Planet L I reviewed in *HFC* 350 was one of my surprises of 2011, combining a unique appearance with genuinely excellent sound. The spherical design reduces cabinet coloration to a minimum and the coaxial driver arrangement made for a focused and effortless sound.

Hot on the heels of Planet L comes Planet M which is in almost every respect a shrunken version of the same. Each sphere is 15 centimetres across and mounts another coaxial driver pairing – in this case a 10cm paper unit and a 2cm silk dome tweeter. The only feature not replicated is the rear bass port, the Planet M instead being an infinite baffle design. Around the back a single pair of speaker terminals is fitted. A choice of black, white and red finishes are available.

These smaller dimensions mean that the M needs the assistance of a subwoofer to produce a full range sound. To this end, Elipson has produced the Planet Subwoofer to partner the M. This is a cylindrical downward firing unit with a 20cm driver with a 200W amplifier. Rear panel controls are limited to a crossover and volume control and a phase switch. Both high and low level inputs are supported. The Planet sub is finished in the same choice of lacquers as the satellites and shouldn't be too hard to accommodate. Fit and finish of both components is excellent – the paint quality in particular is superb.

In fact, the entire system is very positioning-friendly. Each Planet M is supplied with a 'mounting ring' that prevents them from rolling around on a flat surface, but optional wall and floor mounts are available. The decision to make the Planet M an infinite baffle design pays dividends here as they seem unfazed by shelves or window sills and feed commendably little energy back through the rings. Best results from the subwoofer were gained from keeping it on the same axis and between the satellites.

Sound quality

I suspect that most Planet Ms will find their way into multichannel systems where I have no doubt that they will do a fine job. People that use them this way will be missing out on what is a very fine stereo performer indeed though. Like the larger Planet L, the Planet M is incredibly cohesive. The coaxial driver arrangement gives a very focused and coherent performance that is largely free of coloration and is tonally excellent. They have an innate timing which helps them sound fully in control even with fast and complex material.

The shape of the Planet M is beneficial in that the 10cm driver is a larger unit than might be expected in a satellite speaker. While you wouldn't really want to use them without the subwoofer,

they have sufficient bandwidth to handle the bulk of the material they receive meaning that the subwoofer is being asked to do just that – sub bass.

The good news is that the subwoofer is able to keep pace with the satellites. It is largely free of bloat or overhang and produces bass that has a commendable level of detail and texture to it rather than the deep, but rather monotonal bass than can result from subwoofers.

Compared with some similarly sized designs there is a limit to the absolute low end heft that it can produce, but for me this is an acceptable trade off to ensure that it can keep up with the very fast satellites. The system neatly avoids the most problematic area of sub/sat performance – the crossover between satellite and subwoofer. Thanks to the relatively low reach of the satellite and the speed of the subwoofer this is smooth and unobtrusive. It allows you to concentrate on the music rather than thinking about which speaker is doing what.

This is a very convincing system. It can perform well in some challenging spaces and possesses most of the attributes that I found so appealing about the larger Planet L. It faces no shortage of competition at the price and the looks will still not appeal to everybody, but this is a fine sounding system that is genuinely satisfying to listen to. **ES**



DETAILS

PRICE: £899

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OUR VERDICT

