

## Klipsch Quintet SL Home Theater Speakers

Small and Hard Hitting Flat-Panel Friendly

One look at Klipsch's Quintet SL home theater speakers and you can tell they'd go great with a flat-panel TV. You can even mount them on the wall or use their nifty pedestals to sit them alongside (or below) the TV. But, as always, it comes down to one simple question: can this little system carry a big, bad movie soundtrack? In a word: yes it can. Add a subwoofer and you have a hard-hitting, dynamic speaker rig that's ideal for small- to medium-size rooms—and affordable, too.

**FEATURES** Except for the optional subwoofer, the entire system comes in a box whose footprint is about the size of an extra-large pizza box, although much deeper. There are three identical front speakers—each long and elegant and ready to be placed horizontally or vertically with wall-mounting key holes or screw-on stands—and a pair of rear surrounds. The surrounds look like computer speakers but are much heavier than you would expect for their size, with mounting brackets

that double as stands. The speakers are finished in dark gray with medium gray accents.

All of the speakers combine 3.5-inch woofers—two each in the case of the fronts—with a 0.75-inch aluminum tweeter that's mated to Klipsch's signature Tractrix horn. The horn is precisely shaped to allow sound to emanate as efficiently as possible, meaning you won't need a boatload of power to get loud, clean sound—a modest receiver will do the trick.

Rounding out my review system is the Synergy Sub-12, featuring a 300-watt amplifier and a 12-inch down-firing driver. The subwoofer has enough connections and controls to accommodate almost any configuration you can dream up. Around back there's a huge 4.5-inch port, so you need to leave a little space between the back of the sub and the wall.

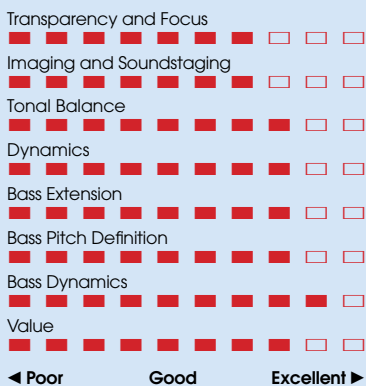
**PERFORMANCE** If you like your movie soundtracks loud and clean, the

**FACTOID!**

The Klipschorn speaker, launched by Paul W. Klipsch in 1946, is the only speaker in the world that has been in continuous production for more than 60 years.

### Ratings

(compared with sub-\$2k speaker systems)



Klipsch Quintet SL system will get your heart racing. I started my evaluation with the first chapter of the Hitchcock-inspired thriller *Flightplan* on DVD. Dominated by dialog, the beginning of the movie is quiet and somber—until it's interrupted by the sudden, loud rumble of a passing subway car. Apart from being startling, the sound was so realistic that I practically jumped out of my seat.

That opening scene also proved to be an excellent demonstration of the close tonal match between the front and rear speakers—consistent sound from speaker to speaker is essential for a realistic surround experience. A lone bird squawking in the left rear of the room sounded so real that I swore it was that pesky crow that wakes me up every morning. And the sound of a flock of birds flying from front to back was utterly convincing and matched exactly what was happening on-screen.

Dialog—especially Jodie Foster's distinctive voice—remained clear and intelligible as long as I didn't move too far to one side or the other. As is common with horizontal center speakers that use a woofer-tweeter-woofer configuration, the

sound tends to get dull as you move off center.

As much as I liked the overall Quintet SL system, the real star of show was the Synergy Sub-12, which must be purchased separately for \$500. At 18 x 15 x 20 inches, it's not one of those cutesy little subs that are all the rage these days, but if you're considering this system, I beg you to find room for it. The Sub-12 is one of the few budget subs that can rattle my walls. The terrifying bridge attack scene from *Mission: Impossible III* had me jumping out of my seat with every exploding missile.

Settling in to listen to music, certain traits of the Quintet SL system became evident. On Jacintha's *Here's to Ben: A Tribute to Ben Webster*, a great sounding stereo SACD on the Groove Note label, the singer's voice sounded somewhat closed in as she sang "Danny Boy" without any instrumental accompaniment. I found that toeing the speakers in toward the listening position helped open up the sound. Although they lack the high-frequency smoothness of higher priced speakers, the Quintet SL speakers were evenly balanced in the midrange.

Another great sounding SACD is, *SuperBass 2* from Telarc, a multi-channel disc featuring three bassists—Ray Brown, John Clayton, and Christian McBride—in the front channels and an audience behind. Being direct radiating speakers, as opposed to the more diffuse sounding dipoles used in many surround systems, the Quintet SL's rear speakers had trouble spreading the crowd ambience around me in a convincing way.

On the other hand, the Quintets excelled with Roxy Music's *Avalon*, a multichannel SACD recording from Virgin Records with vocals and

discrete instruments—like Phil Manzanera's guitar on "Take a Chance"—emanating from the surround speakers.

**BOTTOM LINE** If you've spent a lot of money on a new flat-panel TV and your spouse is giving you the evil eye, you'd do well to add the Klipsch Quintet SL speaker system. Throw in the company's Synergy Sub-12 and you have a dynamic, high value system that I would heartily recommend to anyone who wants a good home theater sound system but is tight on space or funds. **TPV**

### The Last Word



- Bold dynamic sound
- Superb bass
- Excellent tonal match between speakers



- Sounds closed in with some music
- Surround speakers could be more enveloping

### Specifications

#### Main and Center Channel Speakers

- Driver complement: two 3.5" graphite-injected woofer cones, one 0.75" aluminum tweeter mated to Tractrix horn
- Frequency Response: 80 Hz–23 kHz
- Sensitivity: 93 dB
- Impedance: 8 ohms
- Dimensions: 20.5" x 5.5" x 5.6"
- Weight: 6.6 lb

#### Surround Speaker

- Driver complement: one 3.5" graphite-injected woofer cone, one 0.75" aluminum tweeter mated to Tractrix horn
- Frequency Response: 120 Hz–23 kHz
- Sensitivity: 91 dB
- Impedance: 8 ohms
- Dimensions: 8.3" x 5" x 6.3"
- Weight: 3.5 lb

#### Synergy Sub-12 Subwoofer

- Driver complement: 12" woofer
- Integrated amplifier power: 300 watts
- Dimensions: 18" x 15" x 19.875"
- Weight: 40 lb
- Price: \$500

**System Price: \$1450 with sub**

**Manufacturer Info**  
1-800-544-7724  
klipsch.com