

# XTZ Cinema Series M6 and S5 Speaker System Review



By Marshall Guthrie — September 08, 2014

Product Name: **Cinema Series M6 & S5**

Manufacturer: **XTZ**

Performance Rating:

Value Rating:

Review Date: **September 08, 2014 17:00**

MSRP: \$ 1000/each (M6), \$700/each (S5)



XTZ Cinema Series No Grills



## |+ Specifications

### Pros

- Multi-tweeter array yields high dynamic range
- Superb fit and finish with attention to detail
- S5 offers multiple dispersion modes
- Sealed design great for wall-mounting
- Unique appearance

### Cons

- M6 and S5 Speakers require a subwoofer for full-range reproduction

## XTZ Sound M6 and S5 Speaker System Introduction

There is a growing buzz around XTZ Sound. The Sweden based hi-fi company describe itself as "a border-crossing network of engineers, technicians, manufacturers, and producers" that manufactures speakers in Sweden and Asia, and sells them direct around the world. The latest products from XTZ are their Cinema Series M6 hybrid 2/3-way satellite LCR and S5 dipole speakers. The \$1000 M6 and \$700 S5 were designed for high-output, low-distortion, and accurate response. They feature a unique driver configuration, a compact, yet solid cabinet design, and superb attention to detail at a very attractive price.



XTZ Sound M6 and S5 Speaker Youtube Review

## First Impressions

### The XTZ M6 LCR Speaker

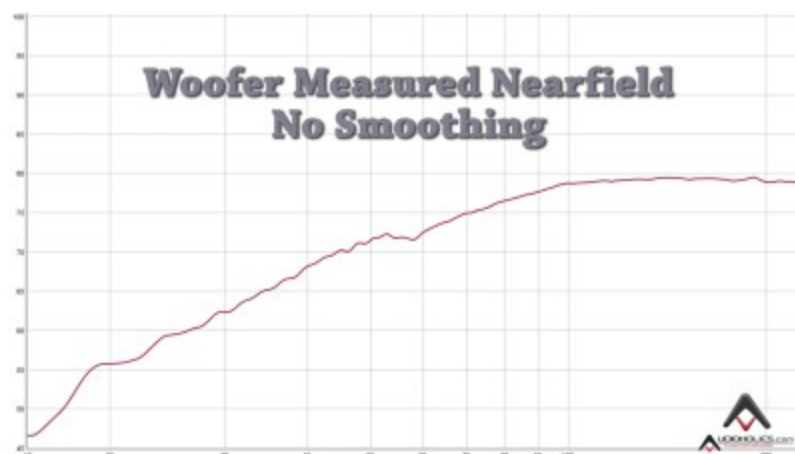
I was sent three M6 speakers for main and centers, and two S5 for surrounds. Opening the box, other than the individually cloth bagged speaker and magnetic grill, one will find the neatly packed manual, magnetic logo badge, and rubber feet, along with a pair of white gloves to separate your greasy mitts from your new speakers. The gloves also work great for debutante balls. Unfortunately, my corn-feed lowan hands were a bit larger than the dainty gloves, so I apologize to XTZ, but you'll be getting some fingerprints back with your speakers.

Fortunately, the flawless matte black finish does an admirable job of rejecting fingerprints, dust, and light. Sure, a piano-black, wet-look finish is always a head-turner, but this is a cinema system, and the XTZ speakers still look good while being functional and not directly reflecting light from your display back at your eyes. The magnetic grills are very sturdy, constructed on a nicely-finished wood frame; no rough edges or plastic here. As mentioned, the logos are also magnetic, so you can mount them on the top, bottom, or side of the grill, in any orientation, or leave them off completely.



XTZ S5 Magnetic Grill with Rubber Feet

Looking at the main/center M6, you'll see the cabinets are asymmetrical with only two parallel sides. This not only combats standing waves within the cabinet; it allows you to flush mount the speaker on a wall vertically or horizontally using XTZ's optional flush wall mount, and still have a slight amount of toe-in or aiming with the angled front baffle. Of course, you can also use the available matching stands. The M6 also serves as the system's center channel, and oriented accordingly can have the front baffle and drivers angled up or down towards the listener. These speakers are sealed designs, meaning they don't have any ports that need to be kept away from walls, and the bottom of their frequency response will drop off more gradually. In this case, the low end reaches 75hz +/-3dB, making the M6 perfect to cross over to a capable subwoofer.



XTZ M6 Single Woofer Nearfield Measurement

The cabinets themselves are manufactured with High Density Fiberboard, which is stronger and harder than MDF.

"Knock knock."

"Who's there?"

"Nobody." Seriously, these are very non-resonant cabinets. Where some speaker cabinets sound like you're knocking on a thin-walled, hollow box, these sound like a solid piece of wood. A solid box means the resonance of the enclosure won't be coloring your speaker response, and at almost 20lbs each in a 17 by 9 inches square, the M6 are remarkably stout, despite being relatively compact.



**XTZ M6 Crossover and Cabinet Lined with Foam and Stuffed with Polyfill**

The driver configuration is probably the most unique thing about the M6. There are many speaker designs that feature a single tweeter flanked by two woofers, often called a D'Appolito array, but the M6 have not one, but four, 1" tweeters. I asked Dan Roemer at InterSource OEM which also does business as Claridy Audio, who designed the XTZ Cinema Series speakers together with XTZ, "what's up with the 4 tweeters?"



**XTZ M6 Fresh out of the box with 4 tweeters**

Dan detailed a number of potential problems that using multiple tweeters works towards solving. For one, using multiple tweeters shares thermal loads allows for a lower crossover point to the woofer, reducing distortion and beaming of mid frequencies. The crossover frequency is lowered to 1.2kHz, which Dan notes is right around the area below which our brain uses phase to determine directionality, and above which uses amplitude. Where a woofer at 2-3kHz might be very directional, a tweeter can be more omnidirectional, allowing for a more even dispersion in this critical band.

One of the problems in using multiple tweeters in close proximity to one another is that they can cause interference with each other, and that's the main reason people wrinkle their noses at this approach. However, Dan has a way around that. He doesn't run all 4 tweeters all the way to 20kHz. Instead, 3 of the tweeters are rolled off at 3kHz, and just one of the domes takes over.



## The XTZ S5 Hybrid Surround Speaker

As you'd expect, the design cues from the M6 are carried over to the Hybrid 3 way XTZ S5. The S5 has a similar multi-tweeter design featuring two, 1" tweeters; (both operate from 1.2kHz on up). These are paired with a 4" mid-woofer on the front face, and the non-parallel sides each feature a single, 3" full-range woofer. They are again quite dense at 16.5 lbs and 11 inches tall by 8 inches deep. If you're looking to hang these on a wall, you'll definitely want to consider the sturdy XTZ flush-mount bracket.



The XTZ S5 and its versatile 3-array design

With three different wiring configurations, the S5 speakers proved to be a very versatile surround speaker. When it comes to surrounds, some people choose monopole, or direct-firing, speakers for surround use. These offer a very balanced frequency response, but can be easy to localize making all the surround effects sound like they are coming from a single point on your wall. For folks looking for a more diffused sound, where surround effects seem to be coming from the sides and behind you, but you can't tell exactly where, they often choose bipole or dipole speakers. The S5 takes a swing at being the best of all worlds. With various configurations of wiring the 4 binding posts using the included metal jumper/bridge, you can configure the speaker for one of three modes:

- **Direct:** the front array is primary, with the sides producing low frequencies only
- **Dipole:** the sides are running full range, out of phase, and the front woofer is also active helping with the low frequencies
- **Dipole 3x:** all drivers running full-range, so you get a combination of a direct and a dipole speaker working in tandem

For the record, my favorite in my setup was the "Dipole 3x", with just the right hint of diffused sound, but your taste may vary.

## XTZ Cinema Series M6 & S5 Speaker Sound Quality Tests



By [Marshall Guthrie](#) — September 08, 2014

And that brings us to how this system sounds. I started with some stereo listening using a pair of the M6 on 24" concrete stands. Once again, these speakers are designed to be crossed over with a subwoofer, so I mated them with my 2012 SVS PB12-NSD at 80 Hz.



"The Limit to Your Love" is featured on Feist's *The Reminder*

One track that I go back to often, as frequent viewers might note, is Feist's "The Limit to Your Love." One of the things that I listen for in this song are a good sense of spaciousness, as the recording captures a lot of the room ambiance. This requires the speakers to reproduce transients well with quick transitions from loud to soft, and to resolve the slightest sound of room reverb. The XTZ Cinema Series handled this task fabulously, perhaps a benefit of multiple tweeters, as Dan Roemer notes...

Another benefit of using 4 tweeters is the ability to control the dispersion characteristics. For instance, the off-axis reproduction, the sound waves that will bounce off early reflection points on your walls and floor, are still a good representation of the on-axis response, but will be attenuated, causing less "blurring" of the image and masking of subtle details.

Also in "The Limit to Your Love", there is a passage with a few powerful, held high notes that will reveal any harshness in the upper mid frequencies, or in the case of the XTZs, the tweeters. My current speakers exhibit a bit, but the XTZ M6s didn't display any harshness.



*For big action, I turned to Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit.*

For 5.1 listening, I used a 3rd M6 in a horizontal configuration below my screen. The S5 surround speakers were placed on stands just behind the listening position the center of the tweeter array approximately 24 inches above ear-level, and wired in the "Dipole 3x" configuration. One of the main design goals of the XTZ Cinema Series was high-output, so I grabbed a recent blockbuster, "Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit", and cranked the system up to reference level. That was probably a mistake. The XTZ didn't shy away from the high levels one bit, and in the helicopter crash scene early in the film, where other systems might have compressed short of peak levels, the XTZs hit the top of the dynamic range and I was quickly scrambling to turn the volume down.