

£900 ☎ Bowers & Wilkins 01903 750750 🌐 www.bwspeakers.com

B&W 600 S3 MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE FRONT: 602/REAR: 601/CENTRE: LCR 600

▶ All five speakers in B&W's budget priced surround system are nominal standmounts, and deserve good quality stands. All use the same tube-loaded 25mm metal dome tweeter and all feature Kevlar-coned, cast-frame main drivers, so there ought to be plenty of sonic commonality, even though the latter vary slightly in size and configurations. The 602 is a two-way with 20-litre enclosure and 175mm main driver, while the 601 uses a 165mm unit in a 14-litre box, and the LCR has two 165mm drivers operating as a two-and-a-half-way in a 28-litre enclosure. Finish is vinyl, either in

KEY FEATURES
175MM KEVLAR-CONE MAIN DRIVERS (602)
23.5X49X29CM ENCLOSURE (602)
CENTRE SPEAKER USES TWO 165MM KEVLAR DRIVERS

traditional black or the new lighter sorrento. The sound quality with stereo material is described in the



separate entry for B&W's DM602 S3. Perhaps predictably this high-class behaviour carries through into the multichannel performance, where the combination of all three B&W models creates a thoroughly convincing all-round coherence. These deliver the warm and cuddly envelopment of the whole musical or cinematic event, and the experience itself provides a strong justification for the benefits of surround sound music.

The good-size centre and surround speakers clearly make a worthwhile contribution towards building up the complete wraparound soundfield, while the meaty 602s at the front deliver weight and drama with little obvious contribution from additional box colorations. Large standmount speakers might not be the most fashionable format, but this B&W combo delivers the sonic goods in both stereo and multichannel modes. *Reviewed in HFC 224*

£300 ☎ Bowers & Wilkins 01903 750750 🌐 www.bwspeakers.com

B&W 602 S3 STEREO SPEAKERS

▶ The 600-series has been B&W's bedrock budget range for many years, the latest Series 3s featuring a Light Oak Sorrento finish option which is much closer to current British tastes, combining a light grey front baffle and main driver surround with pale vinyl woodprint. With a twenty year heritage behind it, this £300 per pair 602 S3 is a bulky 20-litre two-way standmount, based on a main driver with a seven-inch cast frame and 140mm diameter Kevlar cone, used alongside B&W's tube-loaded 25mm metal dome tweeter. Not surprisingly, room measurements indicate free space siting, on high quality stands which should be a little lower than usual (eg 450mm) for maximum effect.

The effect of the relatively large bass/mid driver is immediately obvious in the listening experience. This speaker simply brings superior dynamic grip and authority to the

KEY FEATURES
TUBE-LOADED METAL DOME TWEETER
LARGE 175MM CAST FRAME MAIN DRIVER
23.5X49X29CM ENCLOSURE
KEVLAR-CONE BASS/MID DRIVER



party, creating the sort of dynamic tension that grips and focuses the attention and adds genuine magic to the business of reproducing music. There's a commendable lack of strain here too, with better than average headroom, and particularly impressive bass which is capable of going deep while remaining crisp and even, providing a firm and propulsive foundation. The top end might be a shade obvious, though it's also notably clean and clear.

The midband is essentially neutral, if a tad 'pinched' through the presence region, and maybe a little laid back for some tastes. And although some might prefer a punchier projection, this speaker has the sort of restraint that should suit budget electronics rather well. One of the great all-rounders of this or any other year, the 602 continues to become increasingly refined with each successive generation. *Reviewed in issue 234*