

MICRO SYSTEMS

Yamaha MCR-940

Finely crafted

While many of us in the A/V industry naturally believe that everyone wants a large home theatre system, the reality is that we are in the minority.

Most people don't want a plethora (I just love that word) of big components, fancy cables or loudspeakers that have enough output capability to recreate the volume of the space shuttle taking off.

Some of this majority may appreciate better audio quality than that delivered by television speakers, enhanced video quality, and small components that look good. They may even be willing to pay just a little more for these enhancements.

Yamaha, being a large company that likes to offer solutions for most niches, has a solution that should appeal to the above-mentioned people, and I just so happened to have reviewed said system.

The system is called the MCR-940, and it

comprises the BD-940 Blu-ray player, R-840 receiver, and NS-BP3000 loudspeakers.

A peek at the specs panel will reveal that all three components are modestly sized, and a look at the pictures of the components shows that they are good looking, too. If you like shiny finishes you will also love the piano gloss black finish of the speakers.

While good looks may help you get a foot up in life, they have to be backed up with some substance, and fortunately the MCR-940 has quite a bit of substance to it.

This substance comes in the form of ease of set up. All inputs are well marked, the speaker binding posts – on both the amp/tuner and speakers – were multi-way pieces that exuded quality. A system connector cable couples the amplifier and tuner, and this ensures that the supplied remote is all that is needed to control the system.

For video I ran the HDMI out of the player directly to our LCD TV and ran analogue

audio out of the player into the amplifier. Running speaker cables was also easy as our stock and banana plug-equipped cables were attached in a few seconds. I should also mention that an iPod dock is built into the top of the amplifier, and this means you would probably place the duo of amplifier and player on top of a shelf rather than in a cabinet.

On the performance front, there is a whole lot going for the little Yamaha system.

Video quality from Blu-ray is superb and you certainly can see the benefits of high-definition video. I was a little less pleased with video quality from DVD and felt that the old dedicated DVD player we have in the studio delivered slightly better overall image quality results.

Sound-wise, I also liked the system, although it did have limits, one of which was not markedly better audio quality when listening to Dolby True HD music. This was, to be honest, not unexpected as audio is



Vital Stats

delivered via the player's analogue out, and the format wasn't decoded within an AV receiver as is usually the case when listening to HD audio.

This aside, the little speakers played acceptably low – although I would personally add a sub – played clean at all but full volume, delivered mid and high frequencies that were endowed with enough detail for me to hear imaging and spatial cues, and outplayed the television's speakers by a million percent. Pure Direct mode made a small but positive difference, too.

On balance you get good looks, better sound, reasonable convenience – inputs are a limited so you won't be hooking up a whole bunch of other devices – and all of this in a trim form factor.

Joel Kopping

R-840 Receiver

Channels 2
Power 60 watts per channel
Inputs iPod dock, 2x sets stereo in
Features Pure Direct, 30 station am/FM tuner
Dimensions (WxHxD)
 215x110x348 mm

BD-940 Blu-ray Disc Player

Formats supported
 1080p/24 Hz-compatible, Dolby True HD DTS Master Audio
Dynamic Range 95 dB
Dimensions (WxHxD)
 215x108x318 mm
Weight 3.4 kg

NS-BP300 Speakers

Drivers 13 cm cone woofer tweeter, 2.5 cm dome tweeter

Power 110 watts maximum
Frequency Response 55 Hz – 28 kHz (-10 dB)

Dimensions (WxHxD)
 176x318x305 mm
Weight 4.3 kg/unit

VERDICT

If space is an issue but you still want quality on-screen images and good audio, then the Yamaha MCR-940 is a neat and good looking solution. You won't however get the whole benefit of HD audio.

PRICE R10 000

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