

SOUND BARS

## Yamaha YSP 5100

# The king of sound bars. No less.

**T**he concept of sound bars is a relatively new one in the home theatre environment. It makes sense from a space point of view wherein you have one box in which is located the centre channel, the front channels, the rear surround channels and the receiver to drive it all. Literally one box to do it all.

The 5100 comes with a wireless Yamaha AirWire subwoofer connection box – which basically allows the 5100 to talk to your sub wirelessly, and losslessly, anywhere in the room. It is a brilliant invention, almost as good as the remote iPod dock that also comes with the 5100 – this natty device allows the 5100 to play back from your iPod, which is now mobile and beaming its music to the 5100 using the same AirWire technology. And no, the two signals do not interfere with each other...just in case you were wondering.

Right. So the 5100 hooks up to whatever HDMI input you have, or any of the other

older styles inputs you may have as one would expect from a flagship product such as this. All you need to do is to select the input from the remote and the 5100 does the rest. Your command is its bidding.

I may have skipped a step here – the auto setup routine that the 5100 performs is impressive. Almost a standard feature on surround processors these days: all you have to do is position a microphone at your listening position, keep quiet and hit the 'go' button. All sorts of strange noises, tweets and blurbs of bass later and the 5100 has read your room, analysed it and set itself up for optimum performance in your room. Luckily, my room is pretty good – and the 5100 clicked itself first time around. It takes less than five minutes.

After that I never used it again, nor did I have to change anything. My current receiver is also a Yamaha, which also set itself up in similar fashion, so perhaps this is why my ears seem tuned into the 'preferred Yamaha

## Vital Stats

**Power output** ..... 120 watts  
total power: 2Wx 40 + 20Wx 2  
**Drive Units** ..... 40x beam drivers,  
2x woofers, 2x tweeters  
**Surround Sound Formats**  
..... HD Audio and below  
**HDMI Inputs/Outputs**  
..... 1080p-compatible HDMI (4 in/1 out)  
**Dimensions (WxHxD)**  
..... 1200x212x90 mm

### VERDICT

Not cheap. But very good value indeed. Classy unit that pulls no punches.

**PRICE** ..... R22 220  
(includes wireless iPod/iPhone transmitter plus wireless subwoofer receiver)

**SUPPLIED BY** ..... Balanced Audio  
011-314-0760

**WEBSITE** ..... [www.balancedaudio.co.za](http://www.balancedaudio.co.za)

sound', but whatever. The 5100, given what it is, is able to beam sound via any of the 40 focused beam speakers located behind the impressive black grille.



What this means is that the Yamaha is able to generate surround sound by projecting sound off solid surfaces in your room to hit your ear at the right angle to produce the illusion that is surround sound. It's quite incredible actually, and what is even more amazing is that it actually does work.

Of course it cannot quite get to the same effect as a rear channel. Rather the effect is different in that via the bounces the Yamaha is able to very clearly produce a 'side on' sound wave, which sounds different to that of a direct rear speaker.

The 5100 is even able to produce sound behind you – not as emphatically perhaps, but it's there. It's weird, not being able to trust your eyes, but after a few minutes it's all academic because when I was watching 'Inglorious Basterds' on Blu-ray, the sound was nothing short of amazing. There was

much less compromise in the sound stage than I anticipated, with the 5100 creating a full sound field throughout the room.

Further surround sound effects are well presented off the central listening position. This



makes the 5100 family-friendly and means that you don't all have to sit on top of each other to attain the best possible listening experience.

I really think that despite the asking price, the 5100 is really good value. Take the costs of a receiver and five speakers and add to that the cabling hassle. Add the space costs and the wife's nagging costs and the 5100 starts to look like something of a bargain.

Yes, of course your room is going to play a far more important role in the use of a sound bar like the 5100 than it would with a full blown separate component system. So you would have to take this into account. But if you have a ceiling and a wall or two somewhere vaguely near your television set, I think a close listen to the 5100 might just leave you a little more than pleasantly surprised. It certainly surprised me.

**William Kelly**

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