



# Yamaha WX-010

**M**iniaturisation continues to be one of the major technological trends of the 21st Century. Devices are becoming smaller, and thus more portable and more convenient to use.

But consumers expect simultaneous gains in performance, regardless of the smaller form factor. And they'd also like the devices to look smart and sexy. It seems a difficult formula to achieve, but the Yamaha WX-010 comes pretty close, while adding some clever features of its own.

The elegant, minimalist WX-010 looks like a slightly elongated cube, covered by fabric on three sides, while the top panel is smooth and devoid of switchgear. Instead, it uses touch-sensitive icons to access functions such as power on/off, volume up/down, and play/pause. Status LEDs for power, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth are also incorporated.

The WX-010 comes in a choice of black or white finishes, with the latter perhaps the more appealing option, although the black model is the more elegant, more discreet alternative. Either way, the styling is contemporary in a clean, minimalist kind of way that will suit most situations: kitchen counter, patio, study, lounge or bedside table.

The Yamaha employs a two-way driver array comprising a 25 mm tweeter and a 90 mm mid/bass unit. A generous passive bass radiator is located on either side of the front baffle with the aim of adding some low-frequency authority.

The drive units are individually powered by dedicated Class D amplifiers. The mid/bass driver gets 15 watts, while 10 watts is dedicated to the tweeter. Combined urge therefore amounts to 25 watts.

The rear panel offers an Ethernet connection, and a figure-of-eight power receptacle. Using Ethernet, linking the Yamaha to a home network is plug 'n play easy, with DHCP taking care of protocols and IP addresses.

However, many users will find a Wi-Fi connection more convenient, and while hooking up the Yamaha to a Wi-Fi network takes a little more time, and a few more

steps, it's still dead simple.

Once hooked up to a network with Internet access, the WX-010 can play music from a wide range of sources. It recognises UPnP and DLNA devices such as a NAS or a computer on the network and can access music content from it.

Using vTuner software, the WX-010 plays content from an extensive list of Internet radio stations, while AirPlay is available for sourcing content from iTunes, or from iDevices such as iPads and iPhones.

The WX-010 also supports several streaming services, depending on the country of operation – but sadly, none

appear to be of South African relevance. Other countries can opt for Qobuz, Napster, Juke! and Spotify, amongst others.

Another option is to hook up a music source device such as a smartphone or a digital audio player using Bluetooth. The WX-010 supports the A2DP transfer codec. Talking of codecs and formats, the Yamaha is compatible with most popular music file formats.

Lossless formats supported include WAV, FLAC and AIFF, all up to 192 kHz/24-bit resolutions, and ALAC up to 96 kHz/24-bit. It also plays back lossy formats such as MP3, WMA, and AAC at up to 320 kbps.



Key to operating the WX-010 is the Yamaha MusicCast app, available as a free download for iOS and Android. It offers convenient control of all the WX-010's functions, including selecting and playing music from connected sources, and setting timer and equaliser settings.

It also allows the WX-010 to become part of a bigger MusicCast network if other MusicCast components (receivers, sound-bars, lifestyle systems, etc.) are present on the same network. These can be run individually or in predetermined groups, utilising any of the sources available to any connected MusicCast device recognised by the MusicCast app.

The MusicCast app 'sees' each of these devices as a separate 'room' which can be renamed, and associated with an icon or an image. The result is a hugely flexible ecosystem of connected devices that can be centrally controlled from the app.

One interesting option is the ability to hook up two WX-010 units in a combined stereo set up, with each WX-010 being responsible for one channel. This effectively creates a stereo system with double the power, and true stereo reproduction.

I linked the review unit to my home network, which hosts several UPnP NAS devices with a substantial catalogue of content. Once connected to the network, the Yamaha identified, downloaded and installed a firmware update.

The app then identified the various NAS devices. I was also able to link an iPad



via AirPlay, and my Astell & Kern AK Jr via Bluetooth. The vTuner Internet radio app worked a charm, easily linking up to Radio Paradise. And I was also able to choose music from the iPhone I was running the MusicCast app on.

So, in one little box, I now had access to no less than five content streams! The app, as the heart of the system, operates intuitively and makes a potentially complex arrangement seem seamless and simple. It even offers per-source adjustment of treble, mid and bass, although the flat settings worked best.

The Yamaha punches well above its weight in sonic terms. It delivered everything from Paganini to Pink Floyd with verve and enthusiasm, showing off a broader than expected tonal range, while never falling short in the pace and rhythm department.

Don't expect the WX-010 to fill big rooms with sound, but it plays plenty loud

enough, and its coherence and composure are impressive for such a small driver array. Those bass radiators help to add some vital low-frequency foundation, too.

For me, the only downfall here is that the WX-010 has to remain tethered to AC power, which limits its portability and flexibility. But its extended array of talents, and its MusicCast features, more than make up for this small impediment. Sonically, visually and functionally, the Yamaha WX-010 is a class act.

Deon Schoeman

## VITAL STATS

Description .....	Single-unit desktop system
Drivers.....	1x 25 mm tweeter, 1x 90 mm mid/bass 2x passive radiators
Power output .....	25 watts
Connectivity ....	802.11 Wi-Fi, Ethernet
Interfaces .....	Bluetooth, Yamaha MusicCast, AirPlay, Google Play
App.....	Yamaha MusicCast (Android, iOS)
Dimensions (HxWxD) .....	160 x 120 x 130 mm
Weight .....	1,7 kg

### Verdict

Hugely versatile one-box lifestyle system that exceeds sonic expectations, while offering a plethora of source options. MusicCast extends overall flexibility and potential, while the control app is a winner.

Price .....	R3 990
Supplied by .....	Balanced Audio 011-259-7800
e-Mail .....	chantel@baudio.co.za
Website .....	www.balancedaudio.co.za

OUR RATING: 81/100

