



Paradigm Shift Soundtrack 2

Although most televisions these days – and I mean even the cheap ones – offer brilliant resolution, smart functionality and multiple connectivity options, there is one area in which almost all of them, even the expensive ones, fall short... the sound.

Despite impressive stickers on the box with claims of audio superiority that may make it seem like ‘this’ television’s audio was, in fact, not an afterthought, the simple fact is that a device that is only 1,5 cm thick means you can only go so far in the sound department.

It’s been a few years since I reviewed anything from Paradigm but the fact that the company stuck to its guns shows it’s doing something right.

At first glance, you’d be forgiven for thinking the first and second installment

of this line were the exact same thing, but the Soundtrack 2 has just enough up its sleeve to be relevant in this ever-changing technological environment.

Visually, there is almost nothing to distinguish the Soundtrack 2 from its predecessor besides the remote. And, why not? The bar itself, although quite tall, is slim and neat, with the option of either surface or wall mounting, should your television not have enough clearance.

The subwoofer is also an attractive design with interesting placement options. There is a stand allowing for vertical placement, which carries a certain ‘modern art’ feel about it or, furniture permitting, it can be placed horizontally on some included feet that’ll let you slip the sub under a couch or chair for a more minimalist setup.

For a more industrial feel, the front grille detaches and re-attaches courtesy of some rather strong and decisive magnets. Paradigm has definitely covered a lot of décor options, which, to my mind is close to the core of the success of out-of-the-box sound systems like the soundbar.

People want the surround experience without the clunky installation process of a 5.1-plus speaker array and the soundbar/subwoofer setup ‘is’ the answer right now. So the Soundtrack design in general scores top marks in my book for its attention to this very detail, as well as the range of easily adjustable real-world styling options.

Before I get into the Soundtrack 2’s sonic characteristics I must say that it is rare to come across a user manual that tells you to first ‘break in’ the speakers before expecting great sound.





Perhaps that's an apology for the initial upper midrange sound from the straight-out-of-the-box unit I had on test. However, about 60 minutes into some non-challenging music, the raspy tone rolled off into a midrange/treble sweet spot for lyrics and dialogue.

There is a definite depth straight off the bat and movies impress with their complex array of up-front and background sounds. The result is a proper 5.1 feel, which I was dubious about at first – given the limited choice of either movie or music modes – but I got almost a bespoke result from newer, more multi-faceted film soundtracks, which felt immersive.

In the more traditional stereo/music mode, the Soundtrack 2 displays confidence with great stereo separation, which is no doubt thanks to the actual speaker array.

The bar sports two 25 mm tweeters at the far ends, followed up by two 102 mm mid/bass drivers and two 114 mm passive radiators closest the center. The sub features dual ports and a 200 mm laminated composite cone driver.

At the back you'll find an optical digital input, RCA analogue inputs and an auxiliary 3,5 mm input for headphones. The Soundtrack 2 also now offers Bluetooth aptX in its arsenal, allowing for quick pairing with your mobile devices.



Add to that a learning remote that allows for quick synching of an existing remote to the Soundtrack 2's functions (permitting for disposal of the included remote for that extra neat feel) and you have yourself one very capable and very clever sound solution.

The Soundtrack 2 is a brilliant serving from Paradigm and I feel like the company has paid attention to all the right things. It is a superb design with just the right amount of sonic clout for this price range. I expect the Soundtrack 2 to be a solid success.

Justin Beachcroft-Shaw

VITAL STATS

Drivers.....	2x 25 mm tweeters, 2x 102 mm midrange, 2x 114 mm passive radiators, 1x 200 mm subwoofer
Crossover ...	3rd-order electro-acoustic at 2,4 kHz
Amplifier	2x 25 watts RMS, 2x 50 watts peak
Frequency response	On-axis: 140 Hz – 20 kHz, ±2 dB Off-axis: 140 Hz – 20 kHz, ±2 dB
Inputs.....	Toslink optical digital, analogue RCA, auxiliary, Bluetooth
Dimensions (HxWxD) 135 × 924 × 75 mm
Weight 3,4 kg

Verdict

Brilliant design and excellent sound make the Soundtrack 2 a serious contender in this price bracket.

Price R15 995

Supplied by Audio Specialists
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Website www.audiospecialists.co.za

OUR RATING: 84/100

