Hi-Fi Choice
RECOMMENDED

Big hitter

You'll need a fairly big bookshelf, but Klipsch's powered monitor packs one hell of a punch says *Cliff Joseph*

As the successor to Klipsch's R-51PM from 2019, the R-50PM boasts a larger and more powerful cabinet design that puts an emphasis on bass. Each speaker houses a 133mm bass driver and 25mm tweeter that together deliver a healthy 60W per channel. The R-50PM has a frequency response of 55-Hz-20kHz, compared with the low-end of 68Hz found on its predecessor, and opts for a deeper MDF cabinet and bass port to make the most of the bass sound. Mind you, it does rather stretch the definition of a 'bookshelf' speaker, with each cabinet standing 274mm deep. There is, however, a slightly more compact and affordable option in the shape of the £500 R-40PM.

To be fair, the R-50PM fits nicely onto my TV bench and the 4m wire that connects the passive left speaker to the powered right one gives me plenty of room to move them around. It's more of stretch to imagine the large speaker sitting on my computer desk for a spot of gaming action, as

Klipsch suggests. Even so, there are quite a few users who require a good system for audio recording and video editing, and the R-50PM provides a good range of connectivity features for use with a variety of digital devices and audio sources.

On the back of the right-hand cabinet is a pair of RCA connections that can switch between line and phono, with a built-in preamp for hooking up a turntable. Klipsch provides optical and USB ports for digital audio input, with optical and USB cables also included.

Sound quality

It's perhaps odd that the speaker opts for the aging USB-B interface rather the newer USB-C that is now standard on many computers and mobile devices, but I am able to use the R-50PM with the USB-C output from my laptop using an adaptor that I have to hand. Alternatively, there's also a 3.5mm connection for analogue input, as well as a single RCA out for hooking up an external

subwoofer. The R-50PM also includes Bluetooth for a quick and easy wireless connection with mobile devices and supports both AAC and aptX HD codecs.

Focusing on wired input, I start by turning to the electronic bass of Max Richter's *Shadow Journal*. Many speaker systems struggle to plumb the subterranean depths of the electronic effects on this track, but I'm surprised by the weight of the deep bass the R-50PM produces. The repeating low frequency effect starts like a slow explosion and the reverberating aftershock has a satisfying, full-bodied rumble as it gently echoes off into the distance. The violin isn't overwhelmed, though, piercing the air with great clarity, and the Klipsch places the strings precisely in the centre of the soundstage as the bass echoes around.

There's a more boisterous bass on *Breakthru* by Queen – the extended remix on Apple Music. For once, it's the rhythm section that makes this lesser-known track a real joy. John Deacon's furious bass has a firm, taut sound that drives the track along while the precision of Roger Taylor's high-speed fills are highlighted well.

The R-50PM isn't just about the bass, though. It shows a light touch on the ambient soundscape of Enya's *The Humming*, giving the multi-tracked chanting chorus room to rise, and lending a bright sparkle to the little touches of harpsichord. And, with a total of 120W to play with, it has the power to effortlessly fill the room with Enya's airy harmonies.

Conclusion

I'm not entirely convinced this should be described as a 'bookshelf' system, let alone a desktop one. But, if you have room for a medium-sized setup, then the R-50PM can deliver a clear, precise sound, with solid bass and a comprehensive set of connectivity options for your home entertainment system and digital devices ●

▶ DETAILS

PRODUCT
Klipsch R-50PM

ORIGIN
US/China

TYPE
Powered stereo loudspeaker

WEIGHT
11.2kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
178 x 356 x 274mm

FEATURES
● Claimed power output: 60W per channel
● Inputs: RCA (line/ phono); optical; USB-B; 3.5mm
● Outputs: subwoofer (RCA); Bluetooth

DISTRIBUTOR
Henley Audio Ltd.

WEBSITE
klipsch.com
henleyaudio.co.uk

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY
★★★★½

VALUE FOR MONEY
★★★★☆

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★☆

FEATURES
★★★★½

LIKE: Clear, precise sound; firm bass; good connectivity

DISLIKE: Bulky for 'bookshelf' speakers

WE SAY: The size might not suit everyone, but the R-50PM provides strong sound quality and good connectivity

OVERALL

★★★★½