

One-box Wonder

MERIDIAN G95 (£4195)

Meridian brings high-end performance to the modern day music centre, says Paul Miller

By shoe-horning five very efficient, cool-running power amplifiers into its G91 DVD-playing surround processor, Meridian has been able to develop an all-in-one solution at the drop of a hat. Sure enough, a few features have been dropped, including the ability to replay DVD-A software, but it remains a versatile performer.

Meridian provides its hugely

variants as this is a 5.1 and not a 6.1 or 7.1 channel receiver. Meridian offers an FM/DAB tuner module upgrade for another £100. Well worth having, unless you already listen to digital radio via a Sky box.

All digital inputs to the G95 are upsampled to 96kHz just as all analogue inputs are digitised using 96kHz/24-bit ADCs before joining the same signal path. All inputs are returned to the analogue domain before reaching any or all of the

'The G95 casts a surprisingly open and transparent sound'

comprehensive, tabletop remote control, but it is still possible to navigate your way through the G95's setup and/or DVD title menu using five of the seven buttons on its fascia. These are 'soft keys' whose function is indicated on the dot-matrix display, above.

This deceptively simple fascia disguises a 30kg chassis, a new slot-loading CD/DVD drive and an HDMI output supporting both multichannel audio as well as digital video scaled all the way up to 1080p.

Standard Dolby Digital and DTS decoding is provided (for both bitstream inputs and DVD media) instead of the EX/ES

five, cool-running Hypex amplifier modules nestling under the bonnet.

VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

My journey began with the G95 in two-channel mode, playing CDs, and with the swift realisation that this compact box was just as capable as Naim's n-Vi in casting a surprisingly open and transparent sound into the room. Surprising, that is, if you buy into the conspiracy theory that all Class D amplifier technologies necessarily lack that elusive spark of 'musicality'.

I was struck by the G95's resolution of Amy Wadge's warbling piano tone through 'This is Me, This is You' [*No Sudden Moves*, Hatman 2022]. The silence of the

background acoustic was impressive too, a cleanliness that helped both her voice and accompanying acoustic guitar stand out in a clear but enjoyable, almost slightly cosy, relief. There's plenty of warm, stringy and resonant detail but it's never delivered in a fashion that puts the music's technical structure ahead of the integration or comprehension of the whole performance.

LIGHTS OUT

This is a home cinema solution that majors on atmosphere rather than special effects and, as such, typically makes a better fist of the sword and sandals epics than SF spectacles like *War of the Worlds* or *Batman Begins*. The G95's pictures are crisp and finely detailed, while any loss of smoothness on swift pans seems less obvious with 720p than 1080p HDMI output settings. With a properly calibrated display its greyscale reproduction looks very smooth indeed, with detail in both shadowy and near-black pictures revealed as cleanly and without obvious highlight as that in the brightest daylight scenes.

VERDICT

Meridian's G95 is an elegant, one-box gateway to a brave new world where audio enthusiasts aren't afraid to admit they enjoy watching movies too. The more general, but well-heeled, consumer will appreciate the G95 for what it delivers: exquisite digital audio and video with the minimum bother. ☺

AUDIO FILE

Integrated DVD receiver with five amplifier channels. Rated at 5x100W/8ohm

Price: £4195

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HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Maximum multichannel output, 8/4ohm	105W/110W
Dynamic power output, 8/4/2/1ohm	120W/115W/60W/35W
A-wtd S/N ratio (digital/analogue 0dBW)	102.1dB/ 86.7dB
Dist. 20Hz-20kHz (Analogue, 10W/8ohm)	0.045-0.078%
Freq. Response CD/DVD (20Hz-20kHz)	+0.0/-0.73dB
Freq. Response 96kHz DVD (20Hz-45kHz)	+0.0/-1.1dB
Digital jitter, 16-bit CD/24-bit DVD/SPDIF	265pspec/240pspec/460pspec
Stereo separation (20Hz-20kHz)	>100dB



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EDITOR'S
CHOICE