



Celebrity squares

A portable Bluetooth stereo system that packs a big punch – **Cliff Joseph** can't help but be impressed

As one half of Mitchell & Johnson, Paul Mitchell decided to go it alone in 2018 with Mitchell Acoustics. Feeling that true stereo systems were being overlooked in the age of the smartphone, he launched the uStream One bookshelf speakers with the aim of combining spacious stereo sound with the convenience of wireless Bluetooth connectivity. The range has continued to expand since then and is now going portable, with the compact uStream Go.

The cabinets are small enough to fit into a backpack, and the “full metal jacket” aluminium casing feels solid and sturdy enough to cope with life on the road. Each speaker houses an 80mm driver with 50Hz-18kHz frequency response, along with its own 15W amp (30W total), and a 68mm bass reflex port on the underside. There are controls on the back for power and volume, as well as 3.5mm line-in and USB-C port for charging. There's no wired connection between the two speakers at all, so

whichever one is turned on first is assigned the left-hand channel and then automatically pairs with the second via Bluetooth. It's all very simple and straightforward, but while the AAC codec is supported, there's unfortunately no aptX.

It's a little light on accessories too – there's no carrying case and while there's a twin-headed USB-C cable for charging, there's no mains power adaptor. Mitchell Acoustics suggests the batteries should last for 30-35 hours even when at full volume.

Sound quality

The performance is very impressive for such a compact speaker. I place the two cabinets on my TV stand with the recommended 1.4m between them and the uStream Go clearly captures the extreme panning on Queen's *A Kind Of Magic* as Brian May's counterpoint guitars take it in turns to run up the scales on the left and right channels. There's a light, relaxed rhythm to the song's driving bassline too, and a light shimmer on

the electronic keyboards that echo in the background.

It also works well with the more delicate sound of *The Waves*, by Max Richter. This opens with a more subtle murmur of sound and the speaker effectively creates the sense of water dramatically swirling around. The entrance of the delicate electronic chimes is almost unnoticeable at first, but the uStream Go allows the sound to emerge slowly. It also shows great restraint as the strings of the Deutsches Filmorchester slowly emerge, gradually building in strength until they are joined by the piercing soprano of Grace Davidson. There's great clarity to her voice and, as I push the volume up to max, the little cabinets manage to cope with the surging strings and wailing horns without bursting at the seams, delivering the orchestra's powerful crescendo with clarity and precision.

If there's a minor weakness to the overall performance, it's that the uStream Go can't quite dig down to the deep bass guitar on Leonard Cohen's *You Want It Darker*. The bass doesn't quite have the taut, sinuous rhythm that I'm used to hearing – although, to be fair, that's a lot to ask from such a compact offering as this. The uStream Go also does well with the deep, gravelly rumble of Cohen's voice, catching the mournful tone as he declares: “If you are the healer, I'm broken and lame”. There's also a rich, warm tone to the harmonies of the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue Choir, while the sharp, stabbing percussion effectively drives the song forward.

Conclusion

There are dozens of less expensive – and frankly lighter – Bluetooth portable speakers available on the market right now, but if you want high-quality stereo sound and good battery life then there are few that can rival the miniature powerhouse that is the uStream Go ●

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Mitchell Acoustics
uStream Go

ORIGIN
England/China

TYPE
Portable Bluetooth
stereo speakers

WEIGHT
1.35kg (each)

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
115 x 115 x 90mm

FEATURES
● 80mm driver with
68mm bass reflex
● Quoted power
handling: 15W per
unit (4ohm)
● 3.5mm line input

DISTRIBUTOR
Mitchell Acoustics

WEBSITE
mitchellacoustics.
co.uk

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★☆

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

EASE OF DRIVE

★★★★☆

OVERALL

★★★★★

LIKE:

Sturdy design;

impressive sound

quality; decent

battery life

DISLIKE:

Heavy

cabinets; no aptX

WE SAY:

High-quality

sound from very small

portable speakers

★★★★★

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