

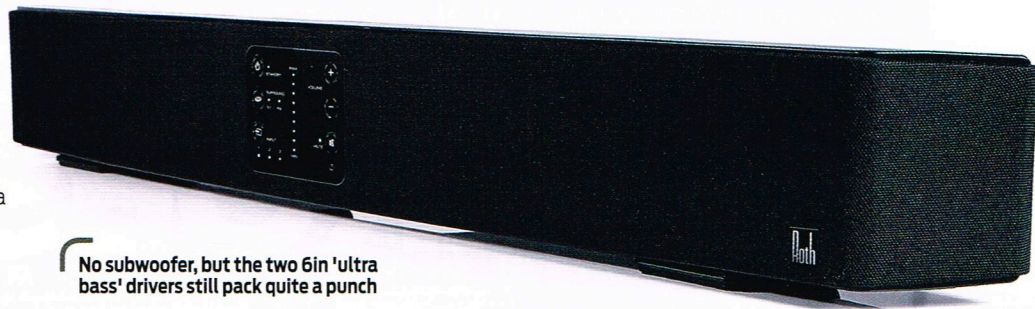
Another soundbar? Oh, go on then

Roth Audio enters the competitive 'bar market with a sub-free solution. **Adrian Justins** listens in

YOU'VE GOT TO admire Roth Audio for taking a risk with the name of its soundbar. It assumes, I guess, that customers will infer that no sub is required, not that the performance is worse than zero. Probably nobody cares, so long as it sounds cool. And taking care of low-end are dual built-in 'Ultra Bass' drivers, which complement six other drive units— including two side-firing drivers for an enhanced stereo effect. Power comes courtesy of a 64W amp, with Roth Audio's proprietary Fractal Expansion processing promising the holy grail of surround sound.

Classy control

The unit is well designed, with a classy remote control that's comfy and responsive. Separate main and bass volume controls, input, mute and surround buttons are all replicated on a panel in the middle of the soundbar's fascia. Audio reproduction is highly impressive. Using stereo AV phono inputs, I was amazed at how



No subwoofer, but the two 6in 'ultra bass' drivers still pack quite a punch

expansive the sound is. Dialogue from *Arrested Development* on DVD is full and resonant, whilst effects from *Wall-E*'s richly orchestrated BD soundtrack ping out forcefully. Bass is convincing and tight – this is a remarkable performance for the money.

I do have some criticisms, though. Firstly, at 105mm tall, it might not fit on your stand without encroaching on your screen. Then there's the lack of a coaxial digital audio input, with connectivity comprising a digital optical

input and a 3.5mm line in as well as the stereo phonos. Oh, and the so-called Surround mode is underwhelming ■

HCC VERDICT

Roth Audio Sub Zero → £150

Overall ★★★★★