

AV INFO

PRODUCT:
Floorstanding 5.0 speaker pack – just add a sub...

POSITION:
The F500SP models sit in the middle in of Fyne Audio line

PEERS:
Monitor Audio Gold; KEF R Meta

Mark Craven battles Ares and explores the New World with 'Special Production' models from Fyne Audio

Lush looks, Fyne sonics

Forget made in Britain – how about made in Scotland? The claim to fame of Fyne Audio's new F500SP series of loudspeakers is that the cabinets are hand-built and finished at its Glasgow factory (SP standing for Special Production). When you open the boxes you can practically smell the haggis.

Okay, enough jokes, because these speakers are no laughing matter. Not only are they manufactured 'at home', they borrow design and technology ideas – cabinet architecture, crossover design, etc – from Fyne Audio's costlier F700 range, in order to be a serious upgrade on the original F500s. The outcome, says the brand, is its most affordable 'premium' loudspeaker offering.

The numbers game

Affordability and premium mean different things to different people, of course. So to be clear, the F500SP standmount can be yours for £1,299, the F501SP tower is £1,499, and the larger F502SP floorstander is £1,999.

Eagle-eyed readers will have spotted only three speakers listed there, none of them a centre channel. Yet there are actually two matching centre speakers: the F57SP-6 and chunkier F57SP-8.

I'll admit to still only just getting my head around Fyne's naming convention, despite the brand no longer being 'new' – it arrived on the loudspeaker scene in 2017. All its speakers begin with an 'F' prefix (which presumably just stands for Fyne), so the detail is in the numbers – the higher the number the more desirable the model. For example, the lineup kicks off with the F300/F300i series, moves up through F500/F500SP and F700, and culminates with the, er, flagship FIs. And the two centres mentioned earlier? F57SP translates as suited to both the 500 and 700 models, Special Production version, while the following '6' or '8' relates to the size of their drivers.

You don't need to be an acoustic engineer to understand the basic idea behind Fyne Audio's 'point source' IsoFlare driver, you just need to look at it. By placing its 25mm magnesium dome tweeter unit within the centre of its multi-fibre bass/mid, the aim is to have the speaker's output coming at you from the same point in space, for optimal integration of mids and highs. Similar drivers are favoured by KEF, Mo-Fi Electronics and others.

The two-way F500SP has one IsoFlare, 6in in diameter, and its low-end is tuned by a downfiring port. This being a standmount/bookshelf design, the output of that bass reflex system needs managing, so the main speaker cabinet stands on a lower plinth, in the centre of which is a 'BassTrax Tractrix diffuser system' that, well, diffuses the airflow radially and uniformly (another difference between the 'SP' version and the standard F500.)

A 6in IsoFlare is also used on the F501SP floorstander (the bigger F502SP uses an 8in), at the top of the baffle above its 6in woofer, while the F57SP-6 packs the same two drivers, plus an auxiliary bass radiator, into its 60cm-wide cabinet. The ABR not only gives the speaker a symmetrical look, but compensates for its lack of a reflex port.

Styling and build of these speakers is superb, with their smart, piano gloss finishes (black, walnut or white) accentuated by diamond-cut aluminium trim rings around the drivers. In a word? Lush.

Let's play the music

Listening to Fyne Audio's speakers (with a GoldenEar Forcefield 30 sub in tow) reminded me how



1. The F500SP, here in walnut finish, features a 6in IsoFlare 'point source' driver and down-firing reflex port...

2. ...while the three-way F501SP floorstander adds a 6in multi-fibre woofer



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much music there is in a typical film soundtrack – their handling of everything from soft orchestral motifs to banging electronica is on point. The big F501SP floorstanders make a big sound, with a real bassy kick that makes you wonder if that woofer really is just a six-incher. Its upbeat delivery of the meaty parts of a mix means the Rupert Gregson-Williams score in *Wonder Woman* (4K BD) feels joyously alive and purposeful.

Skip to the dense action of this film's final set-piece, and Fyne Audio's array rises to the challenge. There's a lovely feel of richness and energy to how it digs into the explosions and flying vehicles as *Wonder Woman* faces off against Ares, and the Foley effects come with a fast leading edge. The F500SP standmounts at the rear of the room prove effective at filling out the soundfield, and are a match for the LCR models in terms of tonality and dynamic demeanour, if not bass extension. Front-stage movement is articulate as the F501SP pair builds a solid, wide image, and within it dialogue is held firmly in place, full-bodied and believable.

With a more 'talkie' movie than *Wonder Woman*, these latter elements are more crucial. Terence Malick's *The New World* (Sky Cinema) has a distinct lack of explosions, but its mix of subtle effects, dialogue and music is beguiling here. True, these Fyne Audio speakers aren't the last word in terms of crystalline detail, but they succeed in building an immersive, naturalistic soundfield that will quickly have you drawn into the onscreen drama.

Furthermore, this performance comes effortlessly. The rated spec for the F501SP floorstanders is a 91dB sensitivity and nominal 8ohm impedance, which would suggest a fairly benign load on your AV amp, and in practice they handle tickover volume and beyond without sounding like it's a strain. Switching to straight

SPECIFICATIONS

F501SP

DRIVE UNITS: 1 x IsoFlare with 6in multi-fibre bass/mid and 25mm magnesium dome compression tweeter; 1 x 6in multi-fibre woofer **ENCLOSURE:** Down-ported **FREQ. RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 36Hz-34kHz (-6dB 'typical in room') **SENSITIVITY (CLMD.):** 91dB **IMPEDANCE (CLMD.):** 8ohm (nominal) **POWER HANDLING (CLMD.):** 80W (RMS) **DIMENSIONS:** 984(h) x 288(w) x 320(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 21kg

F500SP

DRIVE UNITS: 1 x IsoFlare with 6in bass/mid, 25mm tweeter **ENCLOSURE:** Down-ported **FREQ. RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 42Hz-34kHz (-6dB 'typical in room') **SENSITIVITY (CLMD.):** 90dB **IMPEDANCE (CLMD.):** 8ohm (nominal) **POWER HANDLING (CLMD.):** 60W (RMS) **DIMENSIONS:** 323(h) x 200(w) x 320(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 8.1kg

F57SP-6

DRIVE UNITS: 1 x IsoFlare with 6in bass/mid, 25mm tweeter; 1 x 6in bass; 1 x 6in ABR **ENCLOSURE:** Sealed **FREQ. RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 47Hz-34kHz (-6dB 'typical in room') **SENSITIVITY (CLMD.):** 90dB **IMPEDANCE (CLMD.):** 8ohm (nominal) **POWER HANDLING (CLMD.):** 80W (RMS) **DIMENSIONS:** 210(h) x 600(w) x 250(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 15.2kg

TESTED WITH



WONDER WOMAN: After a scene-stealing turn in *Batman v Superman*, Gal Gadot's *Wonder Woman* returned in this 2017 origin story flick that added a sense of humour (helped by Chris Pine as US fighter pilot Steve Trevor) to the blockbuster action. Rock-solid AV chops on 4K disc, particularly the Atmos soundtrack.

stereo with AC/DC's *Black in Black* (CD), the front pair put on a thrilling show, digging out deep bass and thunderous drums on the title track, and keeping pace with the up-tempo riffing on 'Shake A Leg'. It was largescale, dynamic, and heaps of fun.

Special delivery

If you're not fussed that Fyne Audio doesn't sell a matching sub, and are in the market for a floorstander-based setup for movie playback with music on the side, these 'Special Production' versions of its F500 range live up to the name ■

HCC VERDICT



Fyne Audio F501SP 5.0

→ www.fyneaudio.com

WE SAY: These Fyne Audio models have the look of finessed hi-fi speakers, so their energetic, big-shouldered sound might surprise you. Shame there's no matching sub or Atmos upgrade.

3. Fyne Audio's distinctive 'FyneFlute' surrounds aim to reduce unwanted cone 'energy'

4. In place of the other models' port-tuning, the F57SP-6 uses a passive bass radiator

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