

PAUL WHITE

The Adam F5 two-way active monitor is part of a new, low-cost range designed to provide an affordable alternative to the company's popular AX-series speakers. To date, there are two F-series monitors, the F5 and the F7, plus the SubF subwoofer, which can work with either model where greater bass extension is required. Adam have the speaker cabinets for these F-series speakers built overseas, and also get the woofer units built offshore, but the distinctive '4:1 geared' Air Motion Transformer (AMT) tweeter, with its folded-membrane construction — a feature of all of Adam's monitors — is still hand made in Adam's Berlin factory. Final testing is also carried out in Berlin, which means that the end user benefits from offshore manufacturing economy

Adam F5

Active Monitors

Always wanted a pair of Adam speakers but couldn't quite afford them? Then their new F-series might be just the ticket...

but still buys into Adam's expertise in design, German tweeter manufacture and quality assurance.

Unlike Adam's more expensive models, there's no magnetic shielding on the F-series, but then few people use speakers close to old-school CRT monitors anymore, and flat-screen monitors are not affected by stray magnetic fields.

Measuring 290 x 185 x 230 mm and weighing 6.8kg, the Adam F5, reviewed here, is the baby of the range. Its front-ported cabinet has a simple black-foil finish, the baffle edges are chamfered to minimise edge diffraction, and the slot-shaped, front-facing port is slightly flared to reduce wind noise. The five-inch glass-fibre and paper cone woofer is driven by a 25mm voice coil, and the crossover frequency between the woofer and AMT tweeter is set at 2.9kHz (just a little higher than for the larger F7). Rear-panel controls include a level trim, two ± 6 dB EQ controls that adjust shelving filters above 5kHz and below 300Hz, and a switchable 80Hz high-pass filter. Power comes from a pair of 25W Class-A/B amplifiers.

The input can come from either a balanced XLR/jack 'combi' socket or an unbalanced RCA phono, and the mains inlet is a standard IEC type. This sits alongside a power switch, and green and red LEDs on the front panel show normal activity or overload/fault conditions.

A maximum SPL of better than 106dB at one metre is available from a pair of



Adam F5 £349

PROS

- Affordably priced.
- Good overall sound quality.
- Detailed high end.
- Can have a subwoofer added if necessary.

CONS

- The more costly Adam monitors have a slightly more 'grown up' sound to them, although the quality difference is less than you might imagine, given the price difference.

SUMMARY

In the F5s, Adam have created an admirable balance of low cost and quality performance.

Alternatives

The F5s are priced to compete with models such as the **KRK Rokit 5**, **Mackie MR5**, **M-Audio BX5 D2**, **Alesis M1 MkII** and **Fostex PM0.5n**. A more direct comparison, though, might be the **Prodipe Pro 5**, which, like the Adams, uses a ribbon tweeter.

F5s, and their operating frequency range is specified as 52Hz to 50kHz.

Testing

I'm sure the AMT tweeter, with its dramatically extended high end and increased efficiency compared with most dome designs, is responsible for the clear and detailed Adam 'family' sound, and this carries through to the F-series. Rather than being flat and moving in a simple 'piston' (forwards and backwards) motion, the AMT's ribbon is folded like a fan, with the magnet that drives it alternately compressing and stretching the ribbon. This yields a 4:1 ratio of air movement to driver movement, hence the name — and the high efficiency!

As far as the lows are concerned, although you can't expect huge levels of ultra-deep bass from a box this size, the bass produced by the F5s is still punchy and gratifyingly tight-sounding, with barely a hint of boxiness. This makes it particularly well suited to smaller studios, where really deep bass would only aggravate room problems. Using decent speaker platforms also pays dividends in cleaning up the lows and is much better than just standing them on the desk.

Stereo imaging is stable, with a good phantom centre image, and though the more expensive Adam speakers display a little more low-end integrity, the F5s really do exceed expectations when taking into account their size and affordability, especially in their consummate handling of the mid-range and high end.

If you have always aspired to Adam monitors but found them beyond your budget, you may well find the F5s are just what you need, with the option of going for the F7s if you need something for a slightly larger room. It could



The rear panel houses input sockets for both balanced and unbalanced signals, as well as trim pots for high and low shelving EQs, and an overall level control.

just be that Adam have come up with a serious contender for 'best in class' with the F5s. **///**

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This article was originally published in Sound On Sound magazine, **March 2013 edition**



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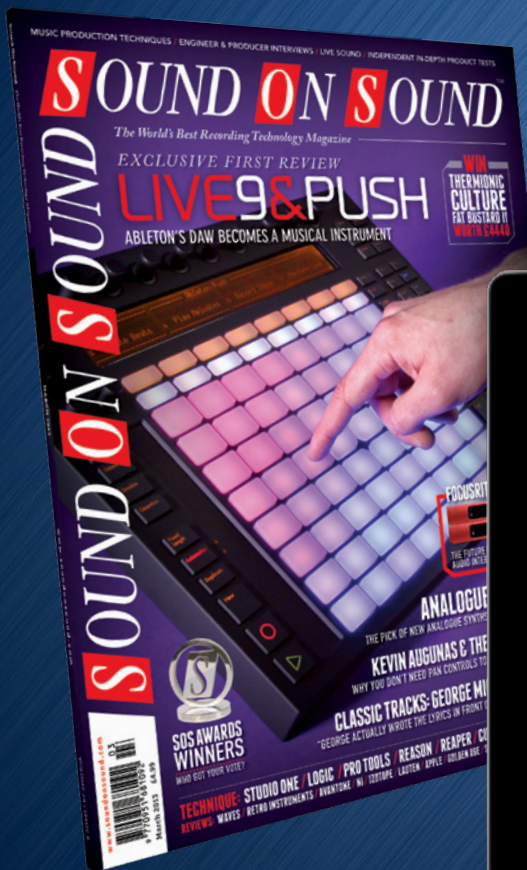


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This article was originally published in Sound On Sound magazine, **March 2013 edition**



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