

Fyne Audio F501



at the bottom of the cabinet is subtle rather than showy.

On a technical level, the F501s are an intriguing combination of the predictable and the unusual.

It's the broad strokes that are pretty predictable: a two-and-a-half way design using a 25mm tweeter, 15cm mid/bass driver and 15cm bass driver, nominal impedance of 8 ohms and 90dB sensitivity won't raise any eyebrows at this kind of money.

But Fyne Audio has brought some interesting thinking to bear. The tweeter - a highly rigid titanium dome - sits in the throat of the mid/bass driver in an arrangement Fyne calls IsoFlare.

The bigger drivers are multifibre paper cones, with unusually sculpted surrounds. Fyne Audio calls this design FyneFlute, and claims it offers more efficient dissipation of cone energy and reduction of unwanted resonances.

And at the bottom of the cabinet Fyne has employed something called 'BassTrax Tractrix Diffuser System' (try saying that fast and see how far you get). It combines a downward-firing port above a carefully profiled, conical diffuser to convert the port energy into a 360-degree wave front.

A fine cocktail served with relish

We give the F501s the chance to show off their chops with Diana Krall's version of *Almost Blue*. This is a high-gloss hi-fi recording, with painstakingly recorded piano and close-mic'd vocal supported by stand-up bass, brushed drum kit and economical guitar - and the F501s absolutely lap it up.

Initial impressions are of a broad, well defined soundstage, solid stereo focus and a lavish amount of detail. No nuance of Krall's phrasing, no creak of double-bass fretboard, no lingering decay of a piano note is ignored.

But while they are borderline fanatical about laying out the last scrap of information, the F501s never sacrifice the coherence of a performance. Timing and integration are excellent, and the sympathetic responsiveness of the musicians is never understated.

Across-the-board consistency

Upping the assertiveness quotient with a switch to *Burn With Me* by DJ Koze allows the F501s to show off their beautifully even, consistent tonality. From the bottom of the frequency range to the top, there's no noticeable gear-change to the F501s' delivery and that makes them sound absolutely convincing.

Moving to the Deutsche Grammophon recording of *Rhapsody In Blue* by the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein not only allows the F501s to again demonstrate their fine grasp of timing but also their dynamic prowess.

No matter the sternness of the challenges we pose to these speakers, they prove unfazeable. Lotte Kestner's *Secret Longitude* shows the F501s can deliver all the character and emotion of a vocal performance and The Byrds' amble through *You Ain't Goin' Nowhere* reveals top-end crispness and substance.

A degree of system-matching is always necessary, but in this instance it's imperative - the Fyne Audios' top end isn't impossible to provoke, and while the thrilling rapidity of their low-frequency response might at first be confused with a lack of extension, leaner electronics are probably best avoided.

And while we're laying out our few caveats, we think the F501s vibrancy and excitement properly comes to the fore only once the volume control nudges above 'polite'. But these Fynes are such an enthralling listen once the wick is properly lit, we doubt you'll want to hear them at background levels anyway.

Fyne Audio might only have been around since 2018, but the F501s look, feel and - most crucially - sound more like the product of a company that's building on many years of experience and expertise.

At 98cm tall, 20cm wide and 32cm deep, the F501s are of unremarkable dimensions for a product of this type. And in terms of build quality and finish, they're exactly what a £1200 floorstander needs to be - that's to say they are sturdily made, from the chunky locking spikes beneath the substantial plinth all the way along the gently curved MDF-beneath-real-wood-veneer cabinets.

Finish is smooth and seamless - the veneer feels as good as it looks, and the shiny silver band above the port system

WHAT HI-FI?
★★★★★

WHAT HI-FI?

SOUND



COMPATIBILITY



BUILD



FOR

- Well made and finished
- Some interesting technical aspects
- Detailed, engaging, confident sound

AGAINST

- Require judicious system-matching
- Sound best at reasonable volume

VERDICT

Remarkably well realised in every respect, the F501s are serious contenders

RATING ★★★★★