



Fyne Audio F301 Bookshelf Speakers Review

on May 29, 2019 by Ashley

I've been hoping to review Fyne Audio's products for some time, though rarely does a new brand see such demand for its products that samples are like gold dust. But when old Tannoy talent regroup and launch a new name and fresh ranges designed from the ground up, there is certainly reason to get excited.



The F301 is the largest standmount in the company's 300 series, situated at the budget end of the company's product range between the smaller F300 and floorstanding F302. The range also includes the larger F303 floorstander and both centre (F300C) and discrete 'on-wall' (F300LCR) models for home theatre installations.

All mid/bass drivers make use of Fyne's multifibre paper cones, with a central phase plug providing smooth midrange roll-off characteristics. The roll rubber surrounds are formed with equally spaced grooves rather than a uniform surface. Known as FyneFlute technology, this effectively terminates cone energy, resulting in better control particularly at the leading edges of notes.



The 25 mm Polyester Dome tweeter is fitted with a powerful neodymium magnet, and a phase loss compensator integrated within the protective mesh grill which delays the output from specific areas of the dome to give a smooth and extended response.



The cabinets are veneered MDF and are internally braced. Though rear ported, the velocities seem such that the F301 can work well close to a wall with minimal ill effect on performance even when playing loud. They're also unfussy about room placement, though they'll benefit from a decent pair of stands and being at least 40 cm from room boundaries to perform at their best.

Few companies can produce a product of this quality on the first go, testament to the engineering know-how of those in the Fyne team. Lifted from the packaging the F301s aren't especially heavy, but are every bit as well made as befits a speaker of several times their modest price. The finish is expertly executed and there are no duff edges.



The driver surrounds are neatly trimmed with a fixed grill over the tweeter, set into a curved gloss fascia and sitting slightly proud of the cabinet. Unusually in a budget speaker, the cloth-covered woofer grill is held by 4 magnets, hiding unsightly fixings and making popping the grill off to optimise sonics a snap. Branding is well placed, with Fyne's logo on the grill and their name badge on the baffle beneath.

The cabinets feel solid and sturdy with a deadened 'thunk' when tapped. The sides, front baffle and rear appear especially well damped. I picked up a slight resonance (approximately 440Hz) tapping the top panel but certainly nothing of concern. The F301s

are rear ported with a block of chunky single-wire terminals beneath. The terminals will accept bare wire, banana plugs or appropriate spades. Polarity is marked with raised symbols; a minor point, though one which, being unable to see the colours, I appreciated nonetheless.



The F301s were connected to my Marantz PM-11S3 amplifier with a pair of Rega Duet cables. Digital and DAC duties were handled by my Cambridge Audio 851N, and vinyl playback came via a Technics SL-1210 MK II with an Audio-Technica AT-VM95SH, and latterly both a Technics SL-1200G and our recent Thorens TD-150 MK2 builds. I even added a cassette or two into the mix via a Pioneer CT-S830S. Sturdy wooden stands brought the tweeters to roughly ear height when seated on a sofa approximately 2 metres away, with the speakers roughly the same distance apart. My review samples arrived well run in so I began listening almost immediately, though did allow time to become accustomed to their sound before noting my impressions.



That's my excuse anyway. Truth is the F301s really are a musical speaker above all else. Whether streaming digitally or spinning records, tunes flow from them with an easy, laid back air. With an effortless presentation, they show surprising bass extension; deep an authoritative yet refined and well controlled. Detail levels are high especially through the mids and into the top end. Vocals are full-bodied and expressive. There's a healthy dose of mid-range three-dimensionality too and an immersive stereo image, the realism of which is quite remarkable for a speaker of this size and price.

There's something about the F301s presentation that just sounds 'right'. They're forgiving of poor recordings too and are very easy to drive. Paired with an amp of even moderate power they will go very loud indeed and yet none of that effortless or outstanding imaging is lost.

At £250 the Fyne Audio F301s are a real bargain in budget audio. Well built, nicely finished and with excellent sonics, they'd still be a contender at twice the price. If this is what the company can produce on a budget, I look forward to auditioning their more upmarket models. Highly recommended.