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UK £6.99
9 771472 256936 30

hi-fi news OUTSTANDING PRODUCT

Two-way reflex-loaded floorstanding loudspeaker
Made by: Q Acoustics (Armour Home Electronics)
Supplied by: Armour Home Electronics Ltd, Herts, UK
Telephone: 01279 501111
Web: www.qacoustics.co.uk; www.armourhome.co.uk
Price: £1299

AUDIO FILE

Q Acoustics 5050

The 5050 floorstander tops off a range that sits above Q Acoustics' entry-level 3000 models, and below its Concept offering, which includes the Karl-Heinz Fink-designed Concept 500 flagship [*HFN* Jul '17]. As you might expect, technologies are trickled down from the Concept speakers, including point-to-point cabinet bracing and internal Helmholtz Pressure Equalisers.

The 5050 features a similar two-way MTM design to the series' more affordable 5040 floorstander, but uses a bigger cabinet and larger (150mm) 'Continuous Curved Cone' (C^3) bass/mid drivers either side of its 25mm dome tweeter. This driver is hermetically sealed to prevent interaction with the output of the larger units, and while not identical to the most recent Concept design, again there's trickle-down at work, including mechanical isolation from the 5050's front baffle.

> 'Meg White, beating the drums to death, was full of energy'

Slim dimensions are accentuated by curves to the top and bottom cabinet edges – a choice that also has acoustic advantages, such as limiting internal standing waves. Four smart colour choices are on offer – black or white satin, plus oak and rosewood as wood veneer options. Whichever you choose, the build of the 5050's rear-ported cabinet appears seamless, with a pleasing assimilation of the black-toned acrylic baffle into the fascia, and it's given a stable footing by a metal stabiliser that attaches below its set of low-profile binding posts.

TOUR DE FORCE

Connected to a Lyngdorf TDAI-3400 integrated amplifier [*HFN* Aug '18], and easily slipped into place either side of an OLED TV, the 5050s took the first hour or so of *The Eras Tour Of Taylor Swift* [Disney+] and delivered electrifying stadium-scale ambience and excellent vocals. Boosting the volume enabled some full-bodied bass too, impressing with its size if not with fine detail.

This speaker doesn't exaggerate the presence region, which gives it a somewhat reserved-sounding profile. But such relative neutrality has its merits – fatigue-free listening and only a gradual roll-off when you move out of the sweet spot – and otherwise its coherency and crisp midrange are great for explosive rock music, as we found when playing The White Stripes' *White Blood Cells* [XL Recordings]. Jack White's guitar was satisfyingly grungy and fat, brought to the front compared to his vocals, while the sound of Meg White beating the drums to death was full of energy.

The languid pacing of 'Illusion', from Roger Eno's *The Skies, They Shift Like Chords...* [Deutsche Grammophon], let us savour the 5050's textured portrayal of the cello, counterpointed by a nimble and bright piano melody. The expansive nature of its delivery also suited this album's ambient soundscapes perfectly, but that's not to say it lacks focus – Talking Heads' 'Psycho Killer' [*Talking Heads: 77*; Warner Bros] came with punch and attack to the drum kit and guitar riffs, and 'Dog Days Are Over', from Florence + The Machine's *Lungs* [Universal], was dense and powerful, but with the lightly strummed mandolin still easy to pick out from the mix.

Overall, these speakers give you a recognisably 'audiophile' sense of detail without losing sight of the importance of excitement and engagement. Perfectly suited, then, to both immersive listening and a quick adrenaline rush before heading out to the pub...

VERDICT

Q Acoustics' impressive 5050 takes a tried-and-trusted acoustic design, refines it further and ices the cake with a tempting price point. The smart, slim styling is also a plus!

RIGHT: Two 150mm C^3 bass/mid units are combined with a 25mm soft-dome tweeter in a classic MTM array. The braced cabinet is offered in a choice of Satin Black, Satin White (pictured), Santos Rosewood and Holme Oak finishes and is stabilised by a rear alloy outrigger with spikes. Around the back, single 4mm binding posts are offered as the 2.7kHz crossover is not split. Q Acoustics' large, rear-firing reflex port may be partially or wholly shorted using the supplied concentric foam bungs

HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Sensitivity (SPL/1m/2.83V – 1kHz/Mean/IEC)	92.2dB / 90.0dB / 88.5dB
Impedance modulus: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	3.0ohm @ 482Hz 32.5ohm @ 64Hz
Impedance phase: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	–63° @ 78Hz +48° @ 21Hz
Pair matching/Resp. error (200Hz–20kHz)	0.7dB/ ±4.8dB/±4.2dB
LF/HF extension (–6dB ref 200Hz/10kHz)	41Hz / 35.8kHz/37.0kHz
THD 100Hz/1kHz/10kHz (for 90dB SPL/1m)	0.9% / 0.06% / 0.75%
Dimensions (HWD, inc stabiliser) / **Weight**	1017x386x336mm/21.6kg