Fostex PM0.4n Powered Monitors | £140 per pair

The PM0.4n's are the new babies of Fostex's studio monitor range. ***Jono Buchanan*** lends them his ears…

WHAT IS IT?

The redesigned, smallest monitors of Fostex's PM monitor range

CONTACT

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HIGHLIGHTS

1 Good sound quality
2 Surprising depth of detail for a monitor this size
3 Available in a range of colours

SPECS

HF unit: 16mm Soft Dome
LF Unit: 100mm Aromatic Polyamide

Frequency Response: Free field ± 2dB: 60Hz - 30kHz
Low Frequency Cut-Off: 60Hz (-10dB)
High Frequency Cut-Off: 22kHz (-10dB)

Amp Power
Low Frequency: 18W
High Frequency: 18W

Amp Distortion: <0.1% T.H.D. @ 12w, 4 Ohm 20Hz - 20kHz
Amp Signal to Noise: >75dB 20Hz - 30kHz, not weighted

Dimensions
114 x 190 x 220mm

Weight
3.75kg

The PM range of monitors was released to the world in 2005 and while Fostex's name might not be the most immediate to spring to mind if you were listing companies building studio speakers, their popularity has proved sufficient for Fostex to tweak and reissue the whole of the PM range, with the smallest of the monitors, the PM0.4n, the subject of this review.

These are available in a range of five flashy colours with red, yellow, white and purple options for those who prefer something striking, alongside black for studio traditionalists. So, can the visual vibrancy be matched with sonic fidelity?

Looking around

The PM0.4n's are active monitors, that stand only 22cm tall but which feature a 4" cone for their low frequency driver and a ¾" soft dome tweeter for the top end. 18W of power are available to both drivers and frequency response is offered between 60Hz and 30kHz.

Input is provided at the rear via RCA or ¼" jack, alongside a continuously adjustable gain control, while the power button lies below a prominent heatsink, with a bright blue LED on the monitor's front to indicate that it's ready to do your bidding.

One construction point of note – the PM0.4n's are not magnetically shielded speakers, so may be prone to greater levels of interference than any of the other models.

Sound and size

Monitors of this size usually suffer most at the bottom end and with the frequency range stated above, it's fair to say that the PM0.4n's shouldn't be exclusively trusted to balance super-low bass content, though the prominent roll-off of the original PM0.4n design is much less apparent this time around. However, they manage to avoid the more obvious low-mid pitfalls that can beset monitors of this size by providing a pleasingly rich level of detail in this area, while there's also plenty of snap in the upper mids, without too much obvious colouration.

The tweeter is nicely fizzy without being over-bright and with the Dance music I fed their way, in particular, the PM0.4n's are punchy little beasts, responding well even at louder listening levels.

More layered and textured material stands up fairly well too, though there's a slight prominence around the 'vocal sweet spot', which you'll need to handle with care if you're intending to use these speakers to mix Pop records. Rich, more orchestrated music is also impressive, with a good density of field and pleasing stereo image.

Foxtex focus

As is clear from Fostex's website, these monitors have been designed to serve a multitude of purposes, including installation in clubs and bars for 'recreational' listening and this is perhaps supported by the range of colours in which the monitor is available. This doesn't rule them out for those looking for a studio monitoring solution towards the budget end of the market but any mix can only be as good as the monitors on which it is put together and accordingly, this is one area where anyone who can stretch their budget, should.

However, the PM0.4n's impressed me with the level of detail they do manage to convey and they're certainly capable of doing a good job, so if you're shopping with one nervous eye on the debt crisis, you should certainly add these to your listening list. FM

FutureMusic VERDICT

BUILD
VALUE
EASE OF USE
VERSATILITY
RESULTS

Packing more sonic weight than their size would suggest – good for those on a budget.

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