

M-Audio BX5 D2

£190 per pair



A punch above

In use, the BX5s are seriously impressive for a monitor this size. The stand-out frequency ranges are the upper mids, which tingle with clarity yet provide weighty punch, while the top end sizzles nicely without overcooking content in this area.

The majority of affordable compact speakers are found wanting here but the BX5s just get on with doing their job very well, without providing ear fatigue or clatter. Inevitably for a 5" cone, the bass needs to come in for some scrutiny but a lowest frequency of 53Hz is perfectly acceptable for a monitor this size.

While you'd never trust sub-bass frequencies on compact speakers, they still provide a great platform to accurately mix bass and kicks, but do use a multimeter to check for bass spikes. The low mid-range is nice too and with the crossover frequency at 3kHz, there's none of the awkwardness of too many sounds being unnaturally split across the cones. There's a punch to the BX5s which makes them an ideal monitor for Pop and Dance music but they're accurate enough for intricate mixing, so I suspect they'll also find favour with those working in post-production and sound design, while they'd also make an excellent choice for those putting home cinema and surround systems together too.

The original BX5s have been market leaders for a fair while now but it's impressive that rather than waiting to let rival firms make up ground, M-Audio have shaken up the range to keep it right at the front of the pack. As previously, if you like the idea of the BX5s but know you'll need greater bass extension, the larger BX8s have been overhauled too, with a frequency range of 38Hz to 22kHz. Don't underestimate these little brothers though – they're very impressive and a bargain price for beginner producers or a second pair. **FM**

WHAT IS IT?

An updated version of M-Audio's best-selling compact studio monitors

CONTACT

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Redesigned in and out
- 2 Great-sounding mids
- 3 Good for a wide range of applications

SPECS

Frequency Response: 53Hz – 22kHz
Crossover Frequency: 3kHz
Low-Frequency Amplifier Power: 40W
High-Frequency Amplifier Power: 30W
Maximum Signal-to-Noise (dynamic range): > 100dB (typical A-weighted)
Input Impedance: 20kOhms balanced, 10kOhms unbalanced
Input Sensitivity: 85mV pink noise input produces 90 dBA output SPL at one meter with volume control at maximum
Protection: RF interference, output current limiting, over temperature, turn-on/off transient, subsonic filter, external mains fuse
Cabinet: Vinyl-laminated MDF

Size: 195 x 176 x 252mm
Weight: 5kg

Monitors might not be the product type you most readily associate with M-Audio, so it might

surprise you to discover that, according to sales reports from January 2009 to December 2010, its BX5 speaker was the best-selling monitor in the US. Combining high performance with compact design and affordable cost, it understandably represented a popular choice. M-Audio have now redesigned the monitor, in both appearance and internal construction and the result is the BX5 D2, a bi-amplified active monitor boasting impressive specs. Do these translate to even higher performance levels, however? I tested them with an RME Fireface UC.

Inner science

The new design is in midnight black, with only the silver 'M-Audio' and 'BX5'

badges and a tiny blue LED 'on' light between the tweeter and woofer offering any colour. Neatly, to help you position the monitors, the LED shines brightest when you're sitting on-axis from the speaker's front. Round the back, as well as the power inlet and rocker switch, you'll find both balanced XLR and balanced or unbalanced TRS inputs as well as a volume dial.

The front face offers a new 5" Kevlar cone which provides sound from the new low-frequency driver. Upper frequencies are distributed through a 1" silk dome, with a crossover frequency between the cones at 3kHz, the net result providing 70W of power, with 40W provided by the bass driver and 30 via the tweeter.

Both speaker cones are magnetically shielded and the whole bundle, although rather muted in appearance, is attractive nevertheless.



FutureMusic VERDICT



The new BX5 design equates to yet more quality while affordability is retained.