

M-Audio BX5 D3

£100 per monitor

Can these affordable five-inchers make big waves in the studio? **Jon Musgrave** puts them on the stand and finds out

CONTACT WHO: InMusic Brands Europe **WEB:** www.inmusicbrands.com **KEY FEATURES**
INPUTS: XLR (balanced) and TRS jack (balanced or unbalanced) **HF Driver:** 1-inch natural silk dome,
LF DRIVER: 5-inch Kevlar curved cone with damped rubber surround **AMPLIFICATION:** LF 60W, HF
40W, **INPUT IMPEDANCE:** 20Kohm balanced, 10Kohm unbalanced, **FREQUENCIES:** 52Hz to 35kHz



THE PROS & CONS



Compact, robust and stylish design

New tweeter waveguide delivers broader sweet spot

Improved amplifier output for both HF and LF drivers

Low frequency trim to compensate for monitor position

Magnetically shielded



No high frequency EQ option

The BX5 has established itself as a reliable and affordable compact two-way monitor, maintaining its popularity through a number of updated

and restyled versions. Its latest incarnation carries through many common features from recent editions, including a one-inch silk-domed tweeter, five inch woven Kevlar woofer (both magnetically shielded) and vinyl laminated MDF cabinet. Once again it uses a rear ported design to improve bass extension, and further rear panel elements include Volume control, XLR and TRS jack inputs and three Acoustic Space bass settings (Flat, -2dB and -4dB) to help compensate for the monitor position in the room. Much like the recent BX5 Carbon, you can connect both XLR and jack inputs simultaneously.

For these D3 models, the onboard Class AB bi-amplification has been upgraded, now delivering 60 Watts and 40 Watts to the LF and HF units respectively; the crossover is now set at 2.5kHz (rather than 3kHz on the Carbon); and the front baffle has had a makeover. The two-part design retains the familiar M-Audio styling, with a rubberised feel to the speaker surround section. There's an improved tweeter waveguide providing broader dispersion for a wider listening sweet spot.

Overall, the BX5 D3 is a solid, compact performer with some useful features

When I tried the last BX5 Carbon model, I felt it was a bit too full in the low mids, but this isn't the case with the D3, which is good news. Even so, the bass port still delivers somewhat hyped lower frequencies, and even with a good half a metre between the rear port and the back wall, I had to go for the -2dB Acoustic Space setting. In fact, I'd say the Flat setting should be reserved solely for circumstances where you have the monitors free standing in an open space.

Looking back at my notes for the BX5 Carbon, I reckon the D3 sound smoother in the top end. Yes, they are still bright and lack any form of HF tweak, which is a shame. I didn't find them particularly fatiguing, though, and I think that the new waveguide does help deliver a broad sweet spot.

The BX5 D3 includes an array of protection circuits (current limiting, over temperature and transient protection). Even so, it remains surprisingly loud for its size, just like its predecessors.

A/B-ing the BX5 D3 with some considerably more expensive monitors shows them to be pretty revealing, and after an hour or so reacquainting myself with their sound, I feel I could easily deliver good, reliable mixes on them. Overall, the BX5 D3 is a solid, compact performer with some useful features, a good track record, a reliable sound, and one of the best compact affordable monitors out there. **FM**

FM VERDICT

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The D3s are the best looking and best sounding BX5s ever. These diminutive monitors remain one of the best budget designs you can buy