

DYNAUDIO EMIT 5.1/£3,200



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REVIEWS

Dynaudio has lowered its sights with its Emit speaker range. **Danny Phillips** gives it a 5.1 workout

Down but not so dirty

Dynaudio is a speaker brand doing most of its business at the high-end. The company has been consistently pushing the audio envelope since the late 1970s with pioneering speakers like the Consequence, Evidence and Contour. Its speakers are innovative, distinctive and accomplished. One thing they're usually not, however, is affordable.

This is something that Dynaudio is addressing, sort of. Not with a soundbar or sub/sat system, but with a new entry-level range, called Emit.

Admittedly, at a chunk over £3,000, this 5.1 package is not everyone's idea of affordable, but given that a single pair of Dynaudio's Evidence Platinum floorstanders costs around £58,000, it could be seen as a bargain, relatively speaking. And what you're getting with the Emit models are speakers that bring Dynaudio's technical innovation and Danish craftsmanship to a much more realistic price point, but with a promise of performance that exceeds rival systems in its class. Sounds tempting.

Sizing up the system

The 5.1 setup on test here includes a pair of the Emit M30 medium-sized floorstanders (£1,250), the M15C centre (£425) and a pair of M10 bookshelf speakers (£500). The range also includes a larger bookshelf option, the £600 M20, in case you're seeking a little more authority in the surround field.

There's no dedicated subwoofer for the Emit line, but Dynaudio recommends the SUB 600. This normally retails for £1,400 but costs £1,000 when bought as part of this 5.1 package. Of course, if you want a speaker upgrade but already have a subwoofer in residence, you could assemble an Emit 5.0 system.

First under the spotlight is the M30, a floorstander – almost one metre high – that comes in a choice of White or Black Satin Lacquer, a step up from the vinyl veneers often used by entry-level loudspeakers. The look is workmanlike, lacking the quirky flourishes of Dynaudio's upper-tier systems as the company constructs down to a price point, but its solid, seamless cabinet and relatively luxurious finish give it the air of a more expensive speaker. It's also quite easy to accommodate, being little more than 20cm wide and not much deeper.

On the front, chamfered edges slope in towards a removable cloth grille; pull it off and you'll expose dual 6.5in magnesium silicate polymer (MSP) mid/woofers – backed by 3in lightweight aluminium voice coils – and a 1.1in soft dome tweeter at the top. The thick industrial surrounds that house the drivers live things up visually. On the back is a single pair of gold-plated binding posts. There's no bi-wiring option.

The identically styled M15C centre is surprisingly compact, making it easy to house on an AV shelf. It comes with a detachable metal plinth that allows you to angle the speaker upwards or downwards, depending on where it's installed. Its driver array also includes a 1.1in soft dome tweeter but it's flanked by smaller MSP mid/woofers (4.5in) than the M30.

The two-way M10 is an ideal surround speaker, compact enough to perch discreetly on a shelf or sideboard, or on Dynaudio's optional stands. Like the other Emit speakers, build quality is fantastic and the smooth lacquered finish is a treat for the eyes and fingers.

Here, the 1.1in tweeter is joined by a single 5.5in MSP mid/woofer. As with the other speakers in the Emit stable, the M10 features a rear-mounted bass reflex port to help tune its low-frequency output.

Back to bass

Aesthetically the SUB 600 is the black sheep of the family with its incongruous Black Ash wood veneer, although there are six other finishes to choose from – Maple, Cherry, Walnut, Rosewood, Gloss White and Black Piano Lacquer.

The result of a collaboration with Dynaudio's Professional team, this cube-shaped sealed sub is housed in a rock-solid cabinet and does its damage with a 12in front-firing MSP woofer and 300W amplifier.

A busy back panel gives you plenty of control over the sub's performance. There are gain and crossover

AV INFO

PRODUCT:
5.1-channel speaker package

POSITION:
Dynaudio's entry-level speaker range

PEERS:
DALI Opticon 5.1;
Monitor Audio Gold 200AV;
B&W 683 Theatre

1. Dynaudio MSP mid/bass drivers are used in varying sizes through the range

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knobs to twiddle, plus phase can be flipped at the flick of a switch. A high-pass filter switch offers three settings – Flat, 60Hz and 80Hz. There are phono LFE and stereo inputs for feeding signals from an AV receiver and two-channel amplifier respectively. Those who want to beef up bass even further can link multiple SUB 600s using the slave function.

To assess the system's performance I begin with the Blu-ray release of Guillermo del Toro's Gothic chiller *Crimson Peak* and quickly found the Emits serving up a rich and sumptuous soundstage to match the movie's gorgeous visuals. The DTS-HD Master Audio track gives the system a chance to demonstrate its range, combining an exquisite lightness of touch with astonishing power and dynamics.

Set in a spooky, sprawling mansion, the movie is more about brooding atmosphere than slam-bang action, and the Dynaudios crank up the tension with gleeful relish. As damsel-in-distress Edith creeps through haunted corridors, the speakers punctuate the eerie quiet with sonic minutiae. It's a masterclass in detail retrieval.

'Dynaudio's M30s and M15C make a formidable LCR trio, creating a large, three-dimensional wall of sound'

There's so much going on here – the creaking, groaning house, crackling fires, jangling keys, ghostly whispers – yet this system's ridiculously capable tweeters reveal these subtleties in a realistic, tangible manner. The result is a layered, captivating soundstage.

Tonally Dynaudio aims for neutrality, allowing events to unfold naturally and authentically. Such transparency makes it easy to slip into the movie or enjoy long music listening sessions. There's no lack of excitement – the speakers are attacking and expressive, showing great energy when needed – but it feels so effortless, and there isn't a hint of brashness.

Playing fetch with effects

Careful voice-matching and uniform dispersion ensure a cohesive soundstage in which effects move between channels seamlessly. For example, Edith sits in the bath and throws a ball for the dog. As he scampers off to fetch it, his scratchy footsteps move from the front speakers to the rears and back again without even the slightest shift in timbre.

Thanks to their excellent dispersion, the M10 surrounds are easily placed and disguise their position well, adding rear-field colour without sounding overly directional – but give them a location-specific noise and you know exactly where it's coming from.

The ripple of applause after Thomas and Edith finish their waltz has depth, space and clarity; the claps are so lucid and subtly layered that it feels like you're standing in the ballroom.

With a suggested sensitivity of 86dB for all speakers, Dynaudio claims the Emit system is easy for any AV receiver to drive and I certainly found that to be the case (despite the varied impedance rating across the system – four Ohms for the M30s, four-to-six on the M15C and six on the M10). They didn't need much prompting from



my Onkyo TX-NR818 to go sufficiently loud. Nor do you have to go nuts with the volume dial every time – the speakers retain their energy and perkiness at lower volumes, which is great news when watching the news late at night.

The SUB 600 may not be a native member of the Emit family, but it fits right in. It integrates smoothly with the rest of the speakers in the upper bass region, generating huge waves of low frequency noise as the drama builds. Del Toro signposts his jump shocks with deep burbles of bass; the woofer makes them undulate and shudder through your chest. And when those shocks come, the SUB 600 has the slam and muscle to make all that unboxing and lugging it around – it weighs in at around 21kg – seem worthwhile.

Elsewhere, Sharp's clay-mining machine churns with heavy rhythmic beats and the rousing score at the movie's climax is full-bodied. The sub does subtlety too – footsteps make a solid clunk and effects have weight without sounding too thick. As with any sub, this is only possible with careful positioning and adjustment, but find that sweet spot and it'll have a transformative effect on your listening experience.

Feasting on Spectre

Moving to something more action-packed, the stunning opening of James Bond caper *Spectre* reveals more of the Emit 5.1 array's wild side. After the kick-drum beats that herald the Day of the Dead celebrations – each one a huge, visceral punch – we step into an explosion of frantic rhythms and immersive crowd chatter. It's beautifully handled by the Dynaudio package, using its wonderful clarity, attack and broad dispersion to bring the carnival atmosphere to life.

Bond's gunshots snap and thud as he dispatches the bad guys through a window; the subsequent explosion has impressive scale. What follows is a pulse-racing chase through the crowd, where the Emit system displays its drive, attack and detail. And as the helicopter whirls above the crowd, we get more of that seamless inter-channel cohesion, the thrum of the engine maintaining its full bodied tone as it pans.

The M30s and M15C make a formidable LCR trio, creating a three-dimensional wall of sound. The M30's terrific bass extension offers weight and solidity, but as effects move across the front the M15C holds its own with the larger speakers. Daniel Craig's voice is smooth as silk; the speaker picks out his gentle husk while a layer of bass lends presence.

With music material this £3,200 system is sparky and precise, with a superb sense of rhythm. The transparency enjoyed with movie playback is even more apparent here, giving an accurate depiction of any song played. It's the sort of performance that buyers will expect from Dynaudio speakers.

Whatever you think of it, Sam Smith's *Spectre* theme is handled with irresistible fluidity and depth, those swelling strings sounding rich and powerful through the Emit drivers. Detail is abundant, from the breathy top edge of Smith's voice to the subtle strokes of harp deep in the mix. It's all there.

Remove the subwoofer from the equation and the M30s also impress in an old-school stereo setup, with the floorstanders' deep bass extension injecting more than enough bottom-end punch. They're rated to reach

SPECIFICATIONS

Emit M30
DRIVE UNITS: 1 x 1.1in soft dome tweeter; 2 x 6.5in magnesium silicate polymer mid/bass drivers **ENCLOSURE:** Bass reflex (rear-ported) **FREQUENCY RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 40Hz-23kHz **SENSITIVITY (CLAIMED):** 86dB **POWER HANDLING:** 200W **DIMENSIONS:** 204(w) x 960(h) x 275(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 18.0kg

Emit M15C
DRIVE UNITS: 1 x 1.1in soft dome tweeter; 2 x 4.5in magnesium silicate polymer mid/bass drivers **ENCLOSURE:** Bass reflex (rear-ported) **FREQUENCY RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 60Hz-23kHz **SENSITIVITY (CLAIMED):** 86dB **POWER HANDLING:** 150W **DIMENSIONS:** 500(w) x 130(h) x 210(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 7.0kg

Emit M10
DRIVE UNITS: 1 x 1.1in soft dome tweeter; 1 x 5.5in magnesium silicate polymer mid/bass driver **ENCLOSURE:** Bass reflex (rear-ported) **FREQUENCY RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 50Hz-23kHz **SENSITIVITY (CLAIMED):** 86dB **POWER HANDLING:** 150W **DIMENSIONS:** 170(w) x 292(h) x 238(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 5.6kg

SUB 600 (subwoofer)
DRIVE UNITS: 1 x front-firing long-throw magnesium silicate polymer 12in woofer **ENCLOSURE:** Sealed **FREQUENCY RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 22Hz-200Hz **ONBOARD POWER:** 300W **REMOTE CONTROL:** No **DIMENSIONS:** 350(w) x 370(h) x 420(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 21kg **CONNECTIONS:** LFE/slave input; slave out; stereo input and output

PARTNER WITH



MARANTZ SR7010: The SR7011 will touch down soon, but that's no reason to ignore Marantz's still-on-sale nine-channel AVR (£1,000). Performance is smooth, powerful and detailed, and it's ready for Dolby Atmos and DTS:X

all the way down to 40Hz, and certainly deliver a full-range listening experience.

Imaging is superb, too – somehow the trumpet and sax solos in Miles Davis' *Blue In Green* emanate from the empty space between the two speakers, sounding crystal clear and side-stepping hardness.

Triumphant towers

Dynaudio's rare foray into entry-level territory is an unmitigated triumph. It has poured its high-end *savoir faire* into a relatively affordable multichannel package and the result is a fabulous system that performs well beyond its price tag.

This ensemble delivers one of the most natural and cohesive soundstages I've heard at this price, while dredging up bucketloads of detail and filling the room with frighteningly visceral bass. And although they're not the most glamorous speakers Dynaudio has produced, the build quality and finish are every bit as luxurious as you'd expect for the money. Great Danes? Bloody brilliant Danes more like ■

HCC VERDICT



Dynaudio Emit 5.1
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WE SAY: This system offers a natural, transparent presentation, tons of detail, superb bass slam and high-quality construction. Only the asking price and workmanlike looks count against it

2. Our set came in satin black lacquer – there's a satin white option, too

3. The SUB 600 features a slave output to link to other woofers