

ADAM Audio F Series Studio Monitors

The F7 offers solid, characteristic ADAM Audio performance for the discriminating, budget-conscious and space-limited audio producer.

Over the past decade, ADAM Audio has cut a wide swath into the studio monitor marketplace. Due to the proprietary Accelerating Ribbon Technology (ART) utilized in its folded ribbon tweeter designs, ADAM Audio is fairly equated with a natural, aurally pleasing and extended high frequency response (at a generally higher-end price point, too).

Now, as low as \$250 street per box (the F5), we could assume that the lowest-priced-ever ADAM monitor line—the F Series featuring ART, with an even further “eXtended” frequency response of “up to 50 kHz”—is somehow a fair step down in capability and quality, too. Yet from what I’ve experienced, that assumption would be wrong; while assembled in Asia, the design, components, specifications and performance are spot-on for this aspiring German manufacturer.

Features

Reviewed here, the F7 is the larger of ADAM’s two F Series full-range loudspeakers, featuring a 7-inch fiberglass/paper woofer and ART tweeter, powered by a Class AB dual channel amplifier [35 W [x2] of continuous power]. The smaller F5 is available, differing only by its woofer’s 5-inch diameter, a slightly smaller cabinet and dual 25 W amplifiers. An F7 pair provides a maximum acoustic output of 109 dB-SPL. Also available is the F Series SubF subwoofer featuring an 8-inch woofer and 110 W of Class AB amplification, capable of 107 dB-SPL, within a compact 21.8 lb., 14- x 10- x 13.5-inch cabinet (the FSub was not included in this review package). The MDF cabinetry has an attractive, scratch-resistant finish.

The F7 features comprehensive analog input options—combo XLR/TRS and RCA jacks; a present RCA input automatically disables XLR/TRS input. Controls include rotary +/-6 dB shelving filter knobs, set at 5 kHz and 300 Hz, respectively; rotary level control, to +6 dB [+12 dB for SubF]; and—recommended for use with a subwoofer—80 Hz high-pass filter on/off switch. The front panel provides a two LED logo panel; a green LED lights when power is on; a red LED lights in Standby, or low power mode, with its automatic signal-sensing feature.

In Use

In my own private production space, I simply switched the ADAM F7 pair with my personal standard, a pair of KRK VXT8 midfield studio monitors. Despite the differences in price point, size and power—the VXT8 is more expensive, larger and stronger, respectively—I noticed an immediate improvement in imaging and appreciated the ART tweeter’s characteristically smooth performance. When auditioning very familiar percussive sound sources—from arpeggiated guitar runs to specific cymbals within the stereo landscape—the F7s seemed pinpoint accurate. They made me feel very confident in knowing precisely where things fell within a mix.



RHON PARKER (RHONPARKER.COM)

For a street price of \$399 each (at least \$400/pair less than my normal monitors), I was pleasantly surprised by the F7’s performance. Though I didn’t have ADAM’s SubF subwoofer, for the evaluation (also \$399 street), I found it interesting that a full three-piece F Series rig (two mains and subwoofer) would clock in at exactly the same price as my VXT8 pair. And, for users in smaller, more common modern audio workspaces, this makes the F Series a much more logical choice, I believe, than the kind of midfield powered monitors I normally depend on.

Summary

There are no gimmicks and few frills to be found in the F Series: just solid performance for the discriminating, yet budget-conscious and/or space-limited audio producer.

Prices: \$399 street, each

Contact: ADAM Audio | adam-audio.com

second opinion by Rich Tozzoli

The F7 pair is hefty—at least to me—for a compact studio monitoring system; at about 20 lbs. each, I had to readjust my nearfield speaker stands so they didn't fall. Upon power up, the green light indicated I was good to go, and I then went around back to make some adjustments.

Since the pair came without a SubF subwoofer, I left the high-pass filter set to flat, then set Level to 0. I also checked that the 5 kHz and 300 Hz EQ filters were set to 0 (flat)—something I found a bit hard to do since there's no marker on it, only an indentation in the all black screw (I would suggest a colored null point to allow users to easily see settings). Also, I was wondering why the AC cables were only 2 prong and not three. Luckily there was no buzz and they were silent even when 'live.'

Now, the important thing: the sound.

I've worked on ADAM monitors before (both A8X and A7X models), so I felt I knew what to expect. Like its cousins, the F7 sounds seriously good. I started by referencing my own and familiar edgy rock mix of full drums, bass and guitars. It was beefy yet smooth, and I had forgotten about how 'forward' I've generally felt ADAM speakers are; with the F7 pair, the sound is right in your face. Monitoring solo acoustic guitar (Jumbo Guild F50 via Earthworks QTC1 with Grace m103 preamps) was clean, clear and crisp. Male vocals were also notably present (via Miktek C7 with Focusrite ISA preamp); I was able to easily judge how much compression and reverb to add.

Next, I called up some aggressive patches in Heavyocity's AEON, ranging from pumping pulsing lows to shimmering highs. Again, the F7s were very present

and forward though well balanced. Calling up a nice ambient piano patch in Reason with a ton of reverb, I became completely lost in the sound. In fact, with both instruments, I started composing immediately. To me, that is the sign of good studio monitors: they inspire production.

As I've mixed on the same satellite/subwoofer setup for a decade, I'm accustomed to having a subwoofer. Do these need one? No and yes. With the rock mix, I swept a Brainworx bx_Digital EQ plug-in on the kick and bass (solo isolated); I found low end drop-off at approximately 100 Hz. I did the same sweep on the high end with a GML/Sonnox EQ and Manley Massive Passive; all that info was all there, as expected. That said I would definitely pair the F7s with the SubF for mixing full range. Other than that, these speakers are spot-on. I could comfortably mix with them, without hesitation.



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