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# Fyne Audio Vintage Classic X

- Floorstanding speakers
- £6499
- ★★★★★

**WHAT HI·FI?**  
★★★★★





"Vocals come through with clarity and passion while the instrumental backdrop is immaculately organised"

It is easy to underestimate speakers such as Fyne Audio's Vintage Classic X. They look as though they have been time-warped from the 1970s, with a huge, wider-than-deep walnut-covered cabinet and lovely adjustable dials to fine-tune their tone. We suspect a large proportion of worldwide sales will be down to the rather contrived aesthetics - and that's perfectly okay with us. Yet, for those not taken in by the Fyne's retro charms, it would be wrong to dismiss these floorstanders as something of a novelty solely for those that yearn for the past. Listen in and you will find one of the most charming speakers available for the money.

Fyne Audio may be a young company, having been founded in 2017, but the people behind the brand have worked in the industry for decades. That experience is evident in how this product has been engineered. At its heart is the company's trademark Isoflare point-source driver array, where the tweeter, in this case a 75mm titanium-dome compression design, sits in the throat of the 25cm multi-fibre mid/bass unit.

There are many advantages to this kind of design, ranging from more consistent dispersion and better time alignment between the drivers to improved integration. The unusually large tweeter allows a crossover point that is unconventionally low at 750Hz and this has benefits in allowing the bulk of the midrange to be delivered by just one drive unit. The promise is of a more seamless and coherent sound in that all-important frequency region.

A second-order crossover network links the two drive units, and the result is a sensitivity of 94dB/W/m and a nominal impedance of 8 ohms. That sensitivity rating is unusually high by modern standards and means that it is possible to get generous volume levels even from some of the single-figure power output valve amplifier designs that are on the market.

The cabinet is huge when judged by current standards, with a frontal area similar to that of a tall washing machine, though the cabinet depth is fairly shallow at 38cm. The enclosure is made of high-density fibreboard and is extensively braced to aid rigidity. It is available only in the one, walnut finish, which suits the speaker's character well. General standards of build and finish are as good as we would hope to find at this level.

### ADJUST TO TASTE

Those dials on the front allow a degree of fine-tuning to accommodate the room and your tastes. The Energy adjustment either lifts or lowers the 1.8-26kHz region to a maximum of 3dB either way, while the adjacent Presence control offers the same range of adjustment, but focuses between 2.5 and 5.0kHz. We can see these controls being useful for balancing the speaker's presentation in more difficult listening spaces.

The Classic X are revealing speakers, so it makes sense to partner them with care. Our sources are the Naim ND555/555

PS DR music streamer and the Technics SL-1000R/Vertere Sabre record player. While we mainly use our reference Burmester 088/911 MkIII combination (180W per channel), we also have a listen with Naim's Supernait 3 (80W per channel) to see how they cope with more modest partners.

These floorstanders don't prove too fussy over placement, thanks partly to a clever downward-facing port arrangement that fires onto a specially shaped diffuser to disperse bass notes more evenly into the listening space. In our 3 x 7 x 5m (hwd) listening room, these boxes sound right at home around half a metre out from the wall with a bit of angle towards the listening position. Positioned in this way they produce a nice, tonally balanced sound with stable, focused stereo imaging.

These qualities are evident when listening to Prokofiev's *Romeo And Juliet*. This piece is a stern test, requiring the speakers to deliver large-scale dynamic shifts with muscle while having the composure and control to deal with the dense score. The Fynes duly oblige with an impressive sense of scale and authority.

### LOOKS MAY DECEIVE

Those looking at the Classic X's old-fashioned appearance might well expect the soft, smooth and rich sonic balance that was popular back in the '70s - but that isn't what we get. These floorstanders are front-footed performers that are as agile and articulate as you like. If anything, we can see them sounding a little forward and aggressive if poorly partnered or used in a bright-sounding room, but we find the tweeter manages to integrate beautifully with that mid/bass unit.

The Classic X are impressively detailed speakers but don't tend to highlight the point. Listen to a range of recordings, as we did, and you will notice that these speakers are explicit in the way they reveal differences in recording quality, location and production techniques; yet they remain very easy to listen to over longer listening sessions and have the finesse to make that a worthwhile experience.

Tonally, the Classic X are hardly the purest performers around. Let's describe them as characterful but decently balanced. The seamlessly integrated lows are wonderfully textured, nicely extended and tuneful, but also not especially muscular. We find the fleet-footed way in which these speakers reproduce bass infinitely preferable to the heavy-handed way most floorstanders cope with low frequencies.

Such a balance works beautifully with George Michael's *Fast Love*, which motors along at full throttle. They might not offer the most analytical rendition, but the Fynes deliver the song's infectious rhythm with breathtaking verve. Michael's vocals come through with clarity and passion while the instrumental backdrop is immaculately organised into a coherent and musical whole. There is a great sense of musical momentum here and that makes these speakers great fun to listen to.

It is surprising just how poor many speakers - even at this level - sound when asked to perform quietly. Thankfully, these Fynes excel at low volume levels, where the music still manages to retain most of its exuberance and energy.

The Vintage Classic X are always going to be something of a Marmite product. Their appearance is sure to split opinion, but there is so much talent behind that olde-worlde aesthetic that we would encourage anyone lucky enough to be able to be in the market to put this one on the shortlist. Close your eyes if you have to. You will be glad you made the effort.

### WHAT HI-FI?

#### SOUND



#### BUILD



#### COMPATIBILITY



#### FOR

- Wonderfully articulate presentation
- Expressive dynamics coupled with impressive detail resolution
- High sensitivity
- Lovely build and finish

#### AGAINST

- Treble lacks a touch of air and refinement
- Large size may be an issue for some

#### VERDICT

While the Classic X's appearance is sure to split opinion, there is no denying their stonking performance. They are easily one of the most sonically talented floorstanders we have heard at the price