



Elac Debut F5

As you may have heard, Andrew Jones (arguably one of the more renowned speaker engineers of our time) recently made the jump to Elac from Pioneer, where he was doing very good things bridging the gap between quality and affordability.

So, it's no surprise then that his swan song from Pioneer would turn into his overture for Elac.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that the price is a typo. So here's your official pardon! The Elac Debut speakers epitomise the very spirit of what's going on in the company's ranks.

They are the debut range of Elac speakers from Jones that, as I poetically referred to earlier, represent a perfect storm (if you will) between performance and price.

The subject of this review is the Debut F5 – a three-way, bass-reflex floorstanding speaker just shy of a metre tall. They're modestly handsome, cloaked in brushed black vinyl, and come equipped with a removable cloth grille to cover the drivers. Branding is tastefully minimalist.

At the back you'll find a single pair of binding posts (there's no provision for bi-wiring) and a trio of bass ports, as well as a lo-fi safety feature: a small clip to which you can attach a chain or some cordage for anchoring it to the wall behind. Neat. Rubberized feet also help to keep everything secure.

The build quality is superb for a speaker in this price bracket, and the braced, sectioned MDF cabinet both looks and feels premium, as do the woven-aramid fibre woofers.

The top section of the cabinet has its own port and houses both a 133 mm midrange driver and a 25 mm silk dome tweeter, the latter set into a deep-spheroid waveguide.

The enclosed, bottom section houses the two remaining 133 mm drivers, each with their own port. To maximise driver efficiency, Jones has also designed a custom 10-element, three-way crossover network with audiophile-grade components to boot.

Woven aramid fibre replaces the more traditional paper or polypropylene woofer cones for their superior stiffness-to-weight



ratio and damping, allowing for a smoother, extended frequency response.

Combined with my Yamaha RX-V379 AV receiver and the rest of my five-channel speaker setup, I was able to put the F5s through their paces both as part of a two-channel stereo and a surround system.

Two-channel is where I kicked things off, throwing a diverse array of old and young music in various compression formats at it.

The overall sonic signature delivers a richly detailed and punchy bottom end, with an expansive and up-front midrange topped off with some clear, sweet treble. For simple music listening and with the right bass enhancer, I didn't feel the need for a sub.

The woofers react quickly and precisely, creating a wide and realistic soundstage while reaching into those sub-bass sections for that warm, complete feeling.

Voices are also well pronounced with that 'right there' feeling from the mid-range and treble to kick things up an emotional notch. I played a lot of live musical performances (because that's what I'm into right now) and the F5s were very kind to them.

As part of a five-channel (I don't have a sub) system, they were forced to hold their own against a pair of Wharfedale

Xarus 4000 floorstanders that I use as surround left and right speakers. After some mic-based calibration, we were in business and the F5s were still 'there'.

They displayed good timing, excellent bass depth and great dynamics even in the face of the most recent big-budget, well-scored, technically complex films.

There is some lovely expression through the extra dialogue track that the centre channel doesn't represent, which makes an entertainment system feel full and alive. It kicks you in the stomach every now and then, just to remind you that you're in the midst of the action.

In the gaming world they are nothing short of immersive and that's where most of my stomach kicks came from. Lively, realistic and oh...that bass again!

I wanted to say something clever about quality versus affordability at the end here to really round things off, but simply, the F5s are in a league of their own. And, perhaps even more so in a multichannel set-up!

The bang-to-buck ratio is out of this world, solidifying Jones' ability to successfully solve the recurring (only because I keep referring to it) equation of quality over price.

Thank you Andrew!

Justin Beachcroft-Shaw



VITAL STATS

Type.....Three-way bass reflex
 Frequency response 42 Hz – 20 kHz
 Impedance 6 ohms
 Sensitivity 85 dB @ 2,83v/1m
 Crossover points..... 100 Hz/3000 Hz
 Maximum power input 140 watts
 Drive units25 mm cloth dome tweeter, 1x 133 mm woven aramid-fibre midrange, 2x 133 mm woven aramid-fibre woofers
 Binding postsFive-way metal
 Dimensions (HxWxD) 965 x 200 x 222 mm
 Weight 14,9kg

Verdict

Unbelievable quality at a price that makes you want to Google 'Andrew Jones.'

Price R11 990

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OUR RATING: 90/100

