

Audioengine A5+: Best Audiophile Speakers For Gamers!

 e!otalk.com/technology/audioengine-a5-a-perfect-match-for-you-audiophile-gamers/

From my past articles, we can already know that I myself am a huge audiophile, I love the quality hi-fi sound but it often comes at a pretty steep price. In the world of gaming computer setups, we often forget about speakers as headphones is our weapon of choice. My true weapon of choice is my AudioTechnica M50X's, these headphones are probably some of the best headphones for the money, but I'll review that later on. For quite some time now I've been using the Bose Companion 20 computer speakers solely because of their nice design and small desk real estate – and while they were nice, they were lacking in audio quality. I missed having a true stereo, I missed having just the look of nice speakers and full sound – but my quest for new speakers was very specific.

What I wanted from my new set of speakers:

- Crystal clear quality with a relatively flat EQ
- Powered; Don't want to mess with desktop amplifiers as it takes up a LOT of real estate.
- Nice and clean looking, minimalistic – something that has character.
- Something with a nice low end, enough bass to where I don't need a subwoofer.
- Under 700 dollars (because we all know speakers can get ridiculously expensive)

For us special snowflakes that are audiophiles but also lifelong gamers, we are finally getting some choices of having some high-quality sound to our computer setups. All different brands are coming out with nice (some REALLY Hi-Fi quality) computer speakers from Logitech to Corsair, and even higher end brands like Polk and Bower & Wilkins. But I noticed a lot of them were struggling with the lower ends as smaller speakers often adjust their EQ to really “amp up” the lower frequencies to make up their lack of a subwoofer – which makes their bass sound muddy and gross and I don't want a subwoofer because its just too much space.

After many, MANY hours of research and testing different systems, I went with my gut and bought these beauties. Let me introduce you to the Audioengine A5+ Monitoring Powered Speakers!



Photo by Audioengine.com

The Audioengine A5+ are only available online and not sold in retail stores, so you have to buy them before you try them. But thanks to Audioengine being the great people they are, they allow a 30-day audition on all their products if you're not satisfied with your purchase they'll give a full refund.

Packaging

The packaging for these speakers are actually pretty nice, each speaker is fully supported and secured within the durable foam. These speakers are going nowhere while they're being shipped so don't worry about people being too rough on this package, Audioengine made sure in their packaging that these speakers are safe for those who don't care and have rough handling.

Each box comes with the A5+ Left (Powered) Speaker and the right passive speaker, a remote control (battery included), speaker wire (12 ft), detachable power cord, Mini-jack audio cable (6 ft), RCA to RCA audio cable (6 ft), cloth cable bag, setup guide, and a product line brochure. One thing I liked about the packaging a lot is that the speakers came in a very nice microfiber cloth bag, it's too thin to where there's not much extra protection but it's nice to have a bag for your speakers just in case you have to move them, not to mention you can use the cloth to wipe down the speakers – just a nice little extra and proving on how methodical they are in their packaging.

Lastly, the Remote Control offers 4 different uses: Volume Up & Down, Sleep and Mute.



Photo by Custompreview.com



Photo by Audioengine.com

Design

If you're looking for something a bit different but still want that nice "speaker" look, these are perfect for you. The speakers come in 3 different designs; Satin Black, Hi-Gloss White, and for a little bit more you can get Solid Carbonized Bamboo, yes solid bamboo and not that veneer disgrace...



Photo by Audioengine.com

Audioengine A5+ easily stand out in the forever sea of mainly black speakers. Each one being crafted beautifully with a nice, sleek minimalistic design – complimenting the area no matter where you put them. The key thing to note about Audioengine speakers is that they are bookshelf-style speakers, masking behind the PC or "multimedia"

models. But unlike many other classic bookshelf speakers, these are powered via AC plug, there is no need for a separate receiver or amplifier, so you can use them with any audio source – making these speakers incredibly versatile. You can use these for your computer, your TV, in the kitchen, anywhere.

These speakers are significantly bigger, actually the biggest speakers you can possibly buy that are labeled as “computer speakers”. Each speaker is about 11” in height, 7” in width, and 9” deep. Each speaker has a 5-inch Kevlar Woofer and a 20MM silk dome tweeter. The Left speaker weighs 15 pounds and houses the amplifier (Up to 50 watts per channel), being a tad bit heavier than the right speaker at 9 pounds. Each speaker has a mat that is glued underneath so no shaking or rattling will occur on any surface you put the A5+ on.

Connections are versatile because of the RCA, you’re able to easily connect to a subwoofer (even though I don’t feel the need for one) for you bass hungry music listeners, you can buy Audioengine’s own subwoofer – the S8, or just plug and use your own. The speaker also sports a USB port to charge iPods, iPhones, and other USB devices. The USB port is used for charging and not for data transfer or music syncing. If you want to play music from your iPod you’ll have to plug in via auxiliary cable.

I love the industrial look of these speakers, but it does worry me that these have no speaker guard. The woofers are fully exposed and vulnerable to anything. I don’t recommend these being within animal or kid distance as they can easily puncture the silk dome and woofer. If you have animals or a kid that can easily play with these speakers I’d recommend a wall mounting bracket to keep them out of harm’s way.



Photo by Audioengine.com

Tech Specs

Materials and Construction

1/2" (13mm) thick MDF cabinets
5" (130mm) Kevlar woofers with advanced voice coils
3/4" (20mm) silk dome tweeters with neodymium magnets
Torroidal power transformer

Environmental Requirements

Operating temperature: 32° to 95° F
Non-operating temperature: -4° to 113° F
Relative humidity: 5% to 95% non-condensing

- **Type:** 2.0 Powered (active) Bookshelf-style Speaker System
- **Power:** OutPut: 150W Peak Power Total
- **Inputs:** 3.5MM Stereo Mini-jack, RCA L/R
- **Input Voltages:** 115/240v, 50/60Hz Manually Switchable
- **Frequency Response:** 50Hz-22kHz + 1.5dB
- **Input Impedance:** 10K ohms unbalanced
- **Weight (Left Speaker):** 15.4 pounds
- **Weight (Right Speaker):** 9.6 pounds
- **Power Consumption:** Idle 10W – Mute – 6W – Sleep – 4W

- **Amplifier Type:** Dual Class AB Monolithic
 - **Drivers:** 5" Kevlar Woofers, 3/4" Silk Dome Tweeters
 - **SNR:** >95dB (typical A-weighted)
 - **THD+N:** <0.05% at all power settings
 - **Crosstalk:** -50dB
 - **Dimensions (HWD):** (R) 10.75"x 7" x 7.75" (L) 10.75" x 7" x 9"
 - **Shipping Weight:** 31 pounds
 - **Shipping Box dimensions:** 15"x 22" x 11.5"
-

Performance

First Impression:

Once I got these I was eager to try them, I wanted them up as soon as possible because all I've been hearing is rants and raves about these speakers. Once everything was up and running, to be honest, I wasn't initially impressed. I realized that the type of audio that was bothering me was what I typically get when I get a brand new speaker, and that is not letting the speakers itself break in. So I let them play for about 2 days straight on low, casually bringing them up when I'm on my computer. After about 50 hours of burn in I gladly discovered that these speakers are easily the best speakers I've ever had on my computer desk and by far the best sounding. The only downside to these speakers is if you have audio tracks which are "less than stellar" in quality, as these speakers will let you hear the flaws in the recording, you'll easily be able to distinguish between a good recording and a **great** recording.

Power:

The Audioengine A5+ are incredibly loud, almost *too* loud. These speakers are an audio powerhouse, especially for how small these bookshelf speakers are. I find that even at 35% volume these speakers are almost too much to handle in terms of loudness. These can go stupid loud with stupid ease. Actually not only can they go loud, they yearn too. It's like a dog longing to be given an open field and allowed to go for it. These have almost too much power bottled up inside them and it just wants to constantly burst forward with audio. But these speakers play consistent, crystal-clear audio from the highest of high to lowest of settings. No matter the volume, these speakers don't distort whatsoever. If they do distort then I haven't heard it yet because my ears can't handle that kind of loudness.

"Our current favorite pair of 2.0 PC speakers overall, the Audioengine A5+ delivers stellar sound quality, impressive bass punch, and flexible connection options." – PC Magazine Editor's Vchoice: A5+ Award for Best Computer Speaker

Lows:

These are monitoring speakers, designed to give you a flat EQ. However, no speaker offers a full "flat EQ" as its impossible. These are not for bass lovers, but for nice clean bass with a punch. These speakers are not exactly a deep bass lover's dream, though can easily be augmented with a subwoofer if you have the spare cash. The low end of the A5+ doesn't give you a thunderous roar of bass – but rather a thump and punch with a kick. The A5+ handle Dusky's "Sort It Out Sharon" phenomenally, which is an incredibly bass heavy song. Kanye West's "Diamonds From Sierra Leone Remix" from his Late Registration album offers an extremely clean bass response

that's punchy but still offers that chest thump but doesn't sound muddled and distorted. Normally its synthesized bass that distorts speakers but these have no problem replicating clean low ends from them. The acoustic bass is like gold with these speakers, sounding so superb and clean yet so thunderous. Adele's "Rolling In The Deep" from her 21 Album is played with utmost rigorous bass that is crystal clear. I personally think are perfect without a subwoofer but for you bass lovers, Audioengine offers their own personal Subwoofer, the S8. There is no distortion whatsoever even at the highest settings.

I'm a bass heavy person when I use headphones, not when I listen on speakers and for that, I use my very trusty Subpac S2 which you can read my review [here](#).

Mids:

I love my Mid's and this is what the A5+ are superb with. The Mids these speakers reproduce are phenomenal. Any well-recorded track will be analytical and orchestras will be airy all while being balanced and dynamic. Vocals are incredibly bright and upfront. It is pretty common to hear the singers breathing before notes. Mids are balanced, crisp, rich and incredibly detailed. Florence & The Machine's "No Light, No Light" sounds pretty exceptional on these speakers and show the dynamic with these speakers. Florence Welch's vocals are airy and breathy but still remain clear while the piano, harp, and drums are doing their work, each individual instrument is clear and you can point them out instead of sounding muddled and conjoined.

I have no other words for the mids with these speakers except wow, just **wow**.



Photo by Audioengine.com

Highs:

The highs in the A5+ are awesome and these handle the highest of high frequencies with ease. These speakers boast a heady, open quality to the sound that comes from the good representation of overtones. I find that certain speaker's highs are often too high in their EQ setting that make my ears fatigued, these speakers have a bit of "warmth" to them once they break in – which isn't a bad warmth whatsoever. Ellie Goulding's "Guns and Horses" on her Bright Lights album back in 2010 has a lot of high tones that are wonderfully replicated – the xylophone and cymbals are played perfectly and don't distort at high volume and are not sharp whatsoever, no matter the volume.

Imaging:

For those who don't know what Stereo Imaging is it is the aspect of sound recording and reproduction cornering the spatial locations of sound sources in the recording, both laterally and in depth. This means being able to pinpoint where the instruments and vocals are during recording. To get good stereo imaging, you'll be looking at speakers that are well near 1000 dollars, but these do quite a fantastic job at them for half the price. Though it varies on the recording, you can easily tell where what is located. For many listeners, good imaging adds to the pleasure of produced music and I find it really enjoyable. Stereo Imaging only works with recording and not synthesized music such as EDM.

Foo Fighter's "The Pretender" has always been a personal favorite track of mine, it's fun to point out where they have the instruments in the recording. The A5+ easily points them out; Vocals always being middle (which is quite typical), drummer in the far middle left (it predominantly shows when hitting the cymbal), the bass is upfront right – right next to vocals, and backing vocals to the front left. I've noticed that listening to Broadway musicals makes stereo imaging shine the best, especially on the A5+.

"In particular, we loved the dynamics and spatial imaging. These speakers are easy to set up, easy to use, easy on the ears." – Audioholics: A5+ Review

TL;DR

These speakers are filled with energy, power, and a boundless enthusiasm, just screaming at you to crank the volume dial. The Audioengine A5+ are a bargain, for the quality of sound these speakers deliver. These speakers deliver a phenomenal sound and offer simple, attractive styling. Offering two audio inputs and an integrated USB port for charging devices. While these speakers are bulky to leave on a normal desk, these speakers are truly bookshelf speakers with an industrial flair. Despite the price, the bottom line here is that you're going to be hard-pressed to find a 2.0 speaker system that sounds better than the money while having the connectivity options the A5+ boasts. I personally spent the extra money and bought the Bamboo style and I can rest assured that these speakers will last me for quite some time and then some. Hi-Gloss White and Satin Black start off at \$399 while the Carbonized Bamboo is \$469- the extra 70 bucks is worth it because they are positively swankier than the others.

Buy them [here](#).



To Audioengine, keep doing what you're doing because I love it.