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**BRAND: PERLISTEN**

# Perlisten R5t floorstanding loudspeaker

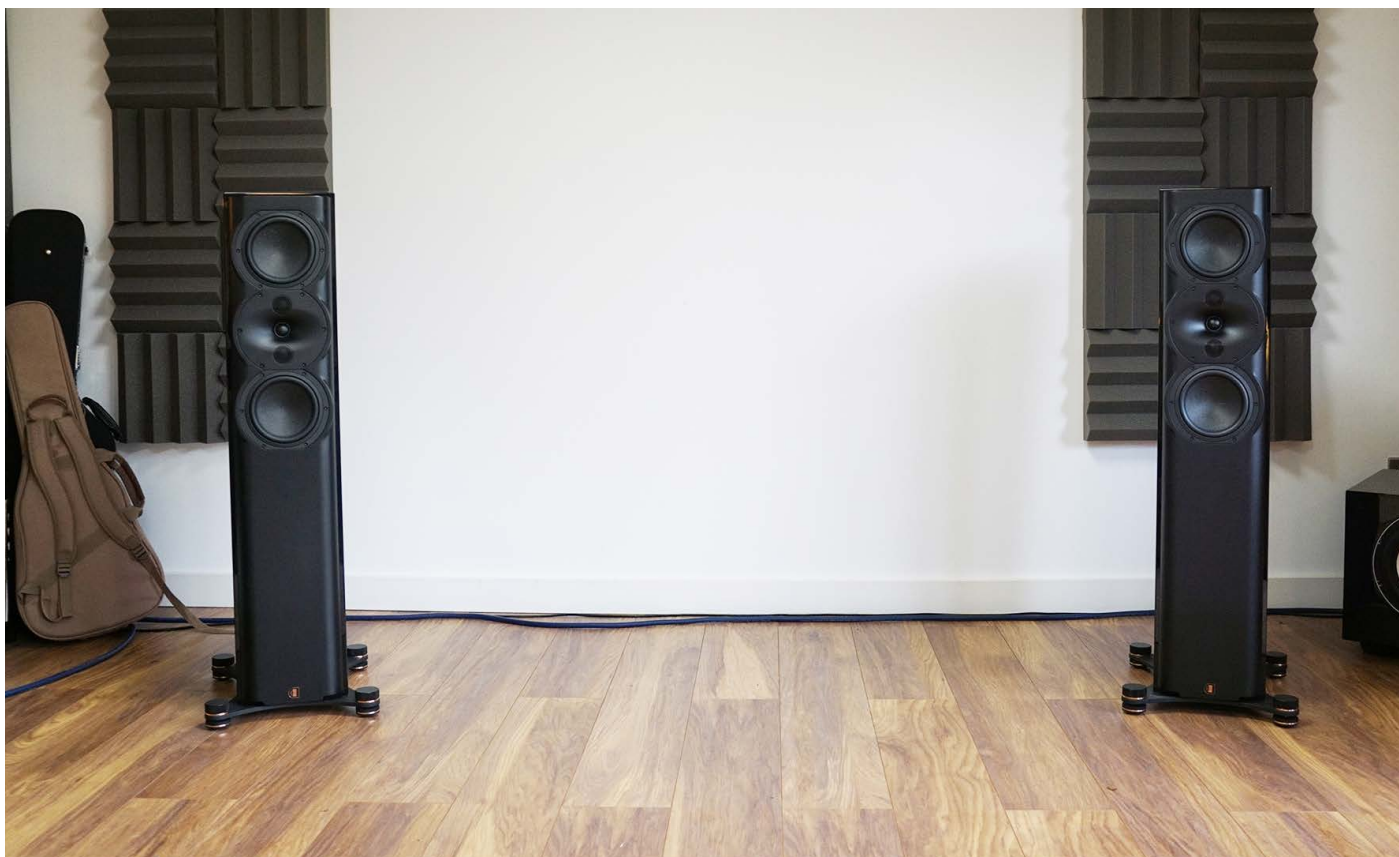


SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 BY **ANDREW SIMPSON**

While there's more than one way to skin a goose, when it comes to designing loudspeakers the quality and attention to detail invested in delivering a preferred approach is just as important as the approach itself.

Hailing from Verona, Perlisten's speakers are designed and engineered in the USA and then made in China. The company is the brainchild of [CEO/Founder Daniel Roemer](#) and [CSO/Partner Lars Johansen](#), both bringing decades of experience from across audio, engineering and manufacturing industries.

A quick glance at Perlisten's loudspeaker line-up tells you the brand's DPC, or 'Directivity Pattern Control' array, is very much part of its raison d'être. It refers to the tweeter and midrange assembly, consisting of a dome tweeter at its centre vertically flanked by upper and lower midrange domes of equal size. These are elegantly placed into a curved waveguide, all of which sits at the centre of each speaker.



*Elegant yet purposeful, the R5t cuts a commanding figure and comes in high gloss black or white*

While Perlisten caters for a host of loudspeaker installations for every home cinema set up imaginable, with bookshelf, centre channel, surround, subwoofer and even in-wall/ceiling offerings, many of its models are also designed for dedicated two channel systems. This includes two floorstander ranges, with the S Series at the upper end of things above the R Series.

Both look outwardly similar with the S models sporting higher grade carbon fibre drivers and Beryllium tweeters, while the R range get silk dome tweeters and bass drivers formed from the brand's proprietary HPF material (more on this later).

## **Gimme five**

The R5t under review here is the smallest of two floorstanders within the R series, sitting below the R7t tower that packs two extra bass drivers.

And despite weighing a substantial 36.5kg each, the R5t is actually the lightest floorstander the brand offers, with the similarly sized S5t tipping the scales at 43.2kg each.



*Like all Perlisten floorstanders, the R5t has a slightly rearward leaning stance to aid its audio projection*

This weight is mostly down to their carcasses being formed from 20mm thick HDF (which is 20% denser than standard MDF) with additional bituminous layers on their internal walls plus several internal braces.

Each speaker is priced individually at £3,450 (£6,900 per pair), giving you more flexibility when incorporating them into a home cinema set up. And what that buys you in the R5t is an extremely solid package (that's reminiscent of Magico's approach) with a well formed slightly sloping back cabinet (two degrees as standard, which can be tweaked via adjustable feet) to help project their signals away from the floor and towards your listening position.

The air moving hardware is elegantly affixed into a protruding curved front baffle that's also formed from HDF, adding an extra 40mm of depth to the R5t's front surface for extra bracing. At the baffle's centre sits a trio of 26mm soft dome tweeters, with the central one set deeper into the DPC waveguide and covering frequencies between 1.2kHz and 20kHz. Above and below this in a D'Appolito arrangement are two matching 26mm domes, hidden behind mesh grilles, tuned for 1.2kHz to 3.2kHz.





*Perlisten's trademark DPC waveguide triple dome tweeter and midrange unit makes them stand out from the crowd*

Completing the driver line-up are a pair of 165mm woofers positioned above and below the central DPC unit, with their HPF material being a 'Hybrid Pulp Formulation' that's comprised of paper plus long and short grain bamboo, wool and wood fibres for an optimal blend of stiffness and damping. Like the high and mid frequency units, these are neatly sculptured into the front baffle to minimise unwanted reflections from the latter.

And perhaps because Perlisten is so proud of its loudspeakers' driver tech and wants every owner to show them off, there's no front protective grille provided as standard.

That said compared to many traditional loudspeaker designs there's less to accidentally damage with the Perlisten approach, with the bass woofers being inverted domes (sans central dust caps) and the only accessible tweeter being inset further into the front baffle. And let's face it, how many of us tend to cover the fronts of our speakers? But if you do need protective covers, these can be supplied at extra cost.



*Sculptured front baffle is very easy on the eye while being designed for form over function*

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## Put a bung in it

Perlisten's approach to low frequency reproduction is just as well thought through, thanks to a large down-firing bass port that can be blocked should you wish with a supplied foam bung, converting them from a bass reflex design to acoustic suspension and lifting their low frequency response from 21kHz to 38Hz.

Experimenting with the bung requires some heavy lifting though, as you need to turn each speaker upside down and install it before fitting the outrigger support plate, so while A-B testing can't be done on the fly, it's still worth experimenting to find the ideal set up for a given space.



*R5t's down-firing bass port with optional foam bung*

Continuing the quality components, the adjustable bolt through feet with copper xfbasstrimmings are a joy to use and offer large domed rubber pads with optional spiked tips to cater for a variety of floor surfaces.



*No spanners required, the R5t's feet with copper details add a dash of glitz while also aiding stability and offering easy adjustment*

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Once you've decided on your preferred approach, bolting the steel outrigger plate in place is easy enough, and at 10mm thick it gives the R5t a solid foundation to rest upon.

When left open, the bass port vents through mesh covered cutouts on the speaker's lower sides and rear panel which again, goes beyond the usual open vent or fluted tube of most rivals.

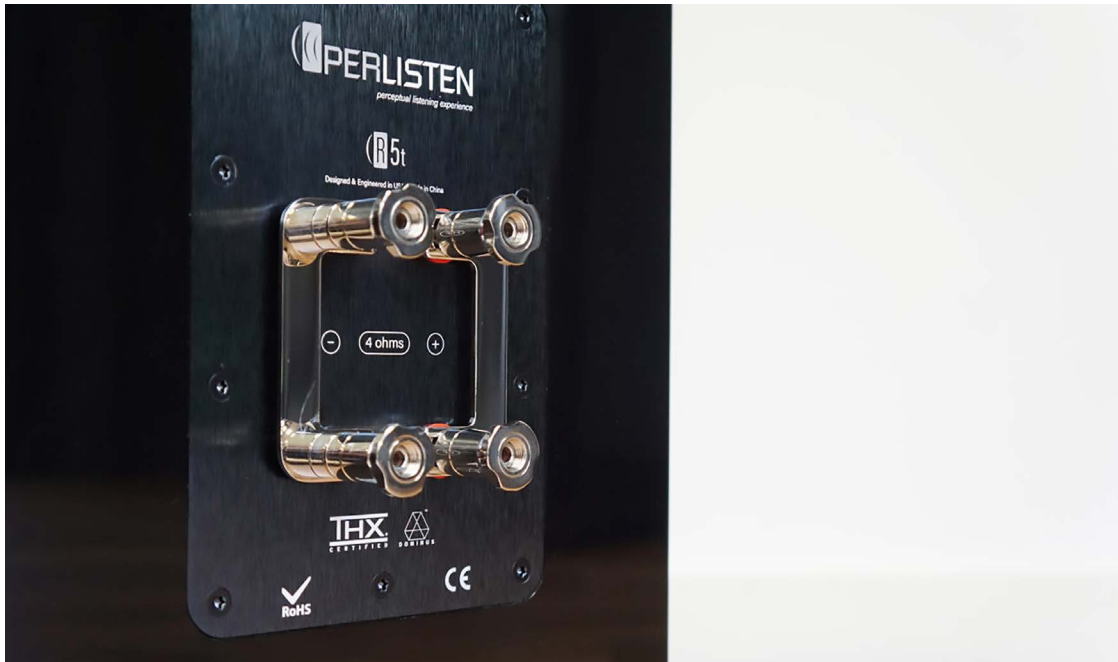


*Practical yet stylish, the R5t's supporting outrigger assembly is nice and solid*

The R5t's multiway speaker binding posts are just as well made, mounted within a brushed steel plate. With separate connections for high and low frequencies, bi-wiring/bi-amping are on the menu should you wish and if not, the matching silver jumper bars continue the quality feel.

Eagle eyed readers will have also clocked the THX monogram, denoting the R5t's [certification for THX Dominus and THX Ultra](#), with the former defined as 'the closest approximation to a public cinema experience that you can achieve in your own home' – official praise indeed.





Rear connections are a step up from average. Note the THX branding nodding to the R5t's official credentials

## Performance

Because you have to fit the baseplate and feet, you may need an extra pair of hands to get the speakers set up, and thankfully the packaging is designed to help, meaning you can stand them upside down without marking the cabinets.

Once together, you can 'walk' them into position on their rubber feet which have plenty of grip.

Positioned around 70cm into my [4.8x6.8m listening room](#), toed in with their axis crossing half a metre or so behind my head gives the best results.

Partnering kit is my Musical Fidelity M6 pre/power amps, Primare R32 phono stage, Primare [NP5 Prisma MKII](#)/NP30 streaming package and [VPI Scout 21 turntable](#).

Unboxing these speakers and my first thoughts are around integration, as the more drive units you have, the harder the designer has to work to ensure all crossover seamlessly, so that what the user hears is an uninterrupted natural performance across the audio spectrum without obvious overlap (which is why for many hifi fans, a single full range driver is their audio nirvana). With five drivers all working together Perlisten has to work harder than most and once the music begins it's clear that they really have.

The clarity that these speakers bring to all the music they're served highlights just how transparent they are. Throw them an average recording and that is what you'll hear, without any artificial polish, but dish them up a quality pressing and you'll be rewarded in spades. This isn't to imply they're overly revealing, because they're not. Like most true reference products what they offer is an honest window into the music and will really sing when served up the best diet you can feed them.

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Through Stephen Fretwell's massively underrated 2007 debut LP *Man On The Roof* recorded in stratospheric stereo the R5t show why vinyl can be just as rewarding in today's hi-res digital age. Side A's *She* with its blend of rhythmic piano, rolling percussion, bombastic bass and thunderous kick drum ensures a thorough workout for any domestic loudspeaker, and hearing how the R5t gets to grips with all of this in the mix shows just how capable they are. Via these speakers, bass notes sound as rounded as I've ever heard them – underlining how they present everything with equal focus, not over focus which is the elixir most high-end loudspeaker manufacturers are searching for.



*Polish at the ready, as to keep those cabinets gleaming you'll want to avoid fingerprints*

## **Big big sound**

Alongside their effortless integration across the frequency range, the other area this speakers excel in is scale, pure and simple. While their 4 ohm load is more demanding than most, this is offset with 89dB of sensitivity, meaning they like a decent amount of watts up them but aren't too difficult to drive. And while they're not petite by any stretch at 1100x230x350mm (HWD), the expanse of the soundstage goes way beyond what you'd expect from a speaker of this size, so much so your room would need to go some way for you to demand those extra two woofers of the R7t model, perhaps of barn proportions.



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The air sucking quality that these speakers bring to R.E.M's plundering bassline on a Qobuz 24-bit/88kHz remaster of *Belong* from the band's 1991 breakthrough *Out Of Time* album is of subwoofer impact proportions. And when the vocal harmonies and jangly rhythm guitars kick in, the soundstage expands in all directions to welcome them. Despite the ample bass that's on offer, what's presented is nicely controlled, so much so I can't see many owners having to reach for the optional bungs to tame things as what the R5t produces is measured and well articulated while being delivered in healthy doses.

How these two attributes of scale and even presentation combine is perhaps the R5t's greatest strength, because you're greeted with a dense mix that's richly populated. Hearing Bat For Lashes' *Daniel* track at a CD standard 16-bit/44kHz resolution and you'd be forgiven for thinking that not only are you hearing a hi-res remaster, but also on more than stereo speakers given the way Natasha Khan's vocals image and swirl through the soundstage, while the pacy percussion seems to emanate from four (rather than two) corners of my listening room.

## In summary

While this brand may be relatively new to the UK loudspeaker market, Perlisten's approach is full of maturity. With a build quality that rivals the best at the price and a sound that's both grand in scale and neutral in tone, this is a package that needs to be on the shortlist of both two channel and home cinema fans. What's not to like?



## Ideal for...

*Those seeking a high-end floorstander for music and movies that promises plenty of transparency and dynamic scale in equal measures*

## Consider...

*Lack of front grille as standard might put some off, limited standard finishes*

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## Specifications

**Product:** Three-way floorstanding passive loudspeaker

**Sensitivity:** 89dB (2.83v/1m)

**Impedance:** 4Ω

**Frequency response ( $\pm 1.5$ dB):** 24Hz-32kHz

**Box principle:** Bass reflex, downfiring port with optional bung

**Crossover:** three way

**Crossover points:** 1.2kHz to 20kHz (tweeter), 1.2kHz to 3.2kHz (midrange drivers) 1.2kHz to 38/21Hz (low frequency drivers and port)

**Bass woofers:** Twin 165mm (6.5") Hybrid Pulp Formulation woofers

**Midrange drivers:** Twin 26mm silk dome

**Tweeter:** 26mm silk dome

**Weight:** 36.5kg (each)

**Dimensions (HWD):** 1100 x 230 x 350mm

**Available finishes:** Gloss black, gloss white

## Price

£6,900 per pair

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