

FINAL M5 Hybrid Electrostatic Speaker Demo Event

Review by David Das

I had the pleasure of attending the FINAL M5 Hybrid Electrostatic Speaker Demo Event on Saturday, March 22nd, 2025.

Greg Wann was gracious enough to host this club event at his dedicated 30' x 20' audio room that he built with his wife and brother-in-law.



Greg ordered this prefab kit from Amazon and since has spent thousands of dollars setting up his Multi-Channel home theater with the technical guidance from **Joe Goswami**.

This is still a work in progress as the following photos would show. Once completed Greg's Audio Shrine could become a great alternative to renting space at the Faith Lutheran Church. It certainly has better acoustics.

This is located at:

9838 N 112th Ave
Sun City, AZ 85351



Joe and **Ravi Velnati** drove down the night before transferring the speakers and associated electronics.

When I arrived at Noon on Saturday, everything was properly set up ready to go.



The [M5 Hybrid](#) Speakers look sleek and elegant.



These slender panels are 11 inches wide and stand 54 inches tall.

A passive 10 inch sealed sub conspicuously hidden behind the panel helps to lower the frequency response down to 45Hz.



Each panel with the sub weighs 44 lbs making it easy to move them around.

Ravi used his OPPO UPD-205 Ultra HD Blu-Ray Disc Player for playing SACDs tracks.



Ravi used a [CODA No.8](#) Stereo Power Amp to drive the electrostatic panels. This delivers the first 18 watts in pure Class A mode and operates in Class AB mode up to 150 watts into 8 ohms.

It doubles the power at 4 ohms and doubles yet again at 2 ohms and again into a 1 ohm load.

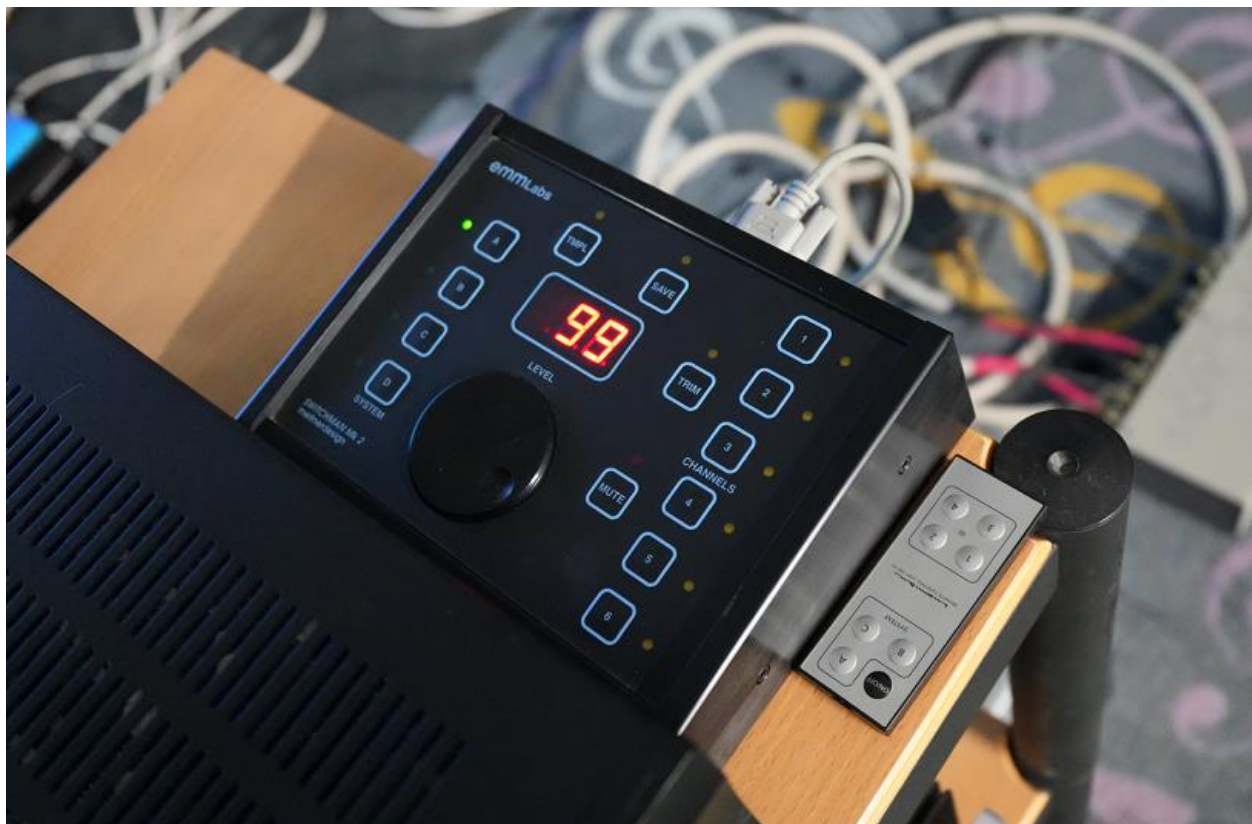
Although the nominal impedance of a typical Electrostat is easy to drive at 4 ohms, the panels dip to *less than 1 ohm at 20kHz*. If one desires the best and most extended high frequency performance that electrostats are capable of, the best option is a power amp that is stable into an impedance of less than 1 ohm. The CODA No.8 is one of the few options and it has a massive 3kVA toroidal transformer with a massive output stage comprising of 20 high output transistors per channel that makes it stable down to 0.3 ohm without a protection circuit. It drives the Model M5s effortlessly. This is the reason why Ravi uses this power amp.

When lesser amps are paired with electrostatic panels the high frequencies get attenuated. You lose the brilliance associated with electrostatic speakers. The magic is lost. Amp matching is crucial when setting up electrostatic speakers.

The effect of using different power amps with FINAL M35 electrostatic speakers will be demonstrated on Saturday, April 26th. I am curious to hear how much more refined Joe Robert's Burmester power amp sounds compared to the CODA No. 8. Do not miss this event!

Ravi used his EMM Labs/Meitner Design SWM3 preamp for switching sources. This ultra clean transparent preamp was specifically designed for Sony for use in their DSD mastering facility.

This is the Switchman Mk2 remote switch box. You can select 4 sets of 6 channel inputs with independent gain settings.



Ravi began the demo with a brief introduction of the [FINAL](#) line of electrostatic speakers.



These panels come in 7 different sizes (M1, M3, M5, M7, M12, M15, M35) with M1 being the smallest measuring 25" x 9" x 1" making them suited for Dolby ATMOS Height speakers.

The [M35](#) is the flagship and the latest addition to the FINAL family celebrating their 35th anniversary.

The bass response of models 3, 5, and 7 can be augmented by attaching a sealed 8" or 10" subwoofer unit that comes in both active and passive Hybrid versions. The higher end models are Full Range and do not need a sub.

Final Sound was founded in 1989 by two Dutch brothers Maarten and Michiel Smits. Philips bought their company and later sold their entire audio visual business in 2013. Maarten Smits decided to relaunch his FINAL line of electrostatic speakers in 2014 under the FINAL AUDIO brand with all new designs that solve the short comings of traditional electrostats.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsUPxYu92f4>



We shall get to meet Maarten in person on Saturday, June 14th at the Faith Lutheran Church. He will discuss the story behind the development of electrostatic speakers with a full demo of a multi-channel setup using an assortment of FINAL speakers.

Ravi began his demo of the M5 Hybrids with the well recorded relaxing track “Why Worry” by Dire Straits. Immediately I sensed the wide expansive sound stage projected by the M5 Hybrids. The delicate textures of the electric guitar filled up the entire room. These speakers were perfectly matched for Greg’s 30’ x 20’ audio room. They sounded way better than what I heard at Ravi’s expansive living space with 25’ high ceilings.

Matching the size of the electrostatic panels to the size of the room plays an important role. The electrostatic panels need sufficient space (at least 3’, ideally 5’) between the back wall behind the speakers and the speakers to make the Dipolar radiating sound come to life.

These line sources are designed to energize the entire space where you are no longer confined to a single sweet spot.

Here were some other notable tracks that sounded wonderful on the M5 Hybrids.

- Avalon – Roxy Music
- Exodus – Bob Marley & The Wailers
- Woodstock – Tierney Sutton
- Welcome to the Pleasuredome – Frankie Goes to Hollywood
- From the Beginning – Emerson, Lake & Palmer
- Chopsticks – Jeff Lorber

Electrostatic speakers sound different from conventional cone drivers. A good analogy would be a floodlight compared to a spot light according to Ravi. Dipole and Bipolar speakers sound different than open baffle designs.

For someone accustomed to hearing front firing cone drivers, it takes a while to get comfortable with the sonic signature of electrostatic line sources. To get the best imaging and soundstage, one must experiment with adjusting the toe in and the distance from the back wall.

The M5 Hybrids offer stunning clarity, resolution and spaciousness all throughout the stated frequency range of 45Hz to 40kHz and beyond. I did not feel any need for additional bass. They are a steal of a deal for \$5,500 a pair with passive subs and would work in rooms sized between 15' x 20' and 20' x 30'.

Ravi being the sole distributor of FINAL speakers in the US can offer these panels at an extremely competitive price. There is no dealer markup. They cost much more in Europe. The M5 Hybrid is the best-selling speaker in the FINAL family.

Keep in mind that you must pair them with a power amp capable of handling impedances down to less than 1 ohm to get the best performance. Tube amps and receivers could drive them but all the high-frequency air would be lost.

The Coda Continuum No.8 Stereo Amp costs [\\$6,800](#). There are even more affordable power amps that are stable down to 1 ohm such as the [Emotiva XPA HC-1](#) High Current Monoblock Amplifier that retails for \$899.

Electrostatic speakers need dedicated power amps specially designed to handle the low impedances when playing frequencies at 20kHz and above.

I remember listening to the [Sanders Model 10E](#) electrostatic speakers at the 2019 Rocky Mountain Audio Fest in Denver. They sounded pristine, clear and lifelike with lots of air. They were being driven by their own [Magtech Power Amps](#).

I came to learn from Ravi that these Magtech Amps were designed by CODA to drive the Sanders Model 10E. Typical power amps have a protection circuit in series to prevent clipping below 1 ohm. This degrades the purity of the sound. The Magtech Amps do not need one as stated in their [White Paper](#). They have an enormous power reserve thanks to their 40 output devices in series allowing them to play clean under low impedance loads.

We had a special guest for the evening. **Daryl Sansevero**, VP of Sales and Exhibitor Experience joined us. Daryl hosts the popular Hi-End Audio Shows across many States.



Here are some of his upcoming shows:

- Southern California – THE SHOW, June 2025
- New York Show – October, 2025
- Las Vegas Show – January 26, 2026

Daryl was curious to hear the [LC1 Bookshelf Monitors](#) designed by Lucca Chesky. Joe hooked them up at the end of the M5 Hybrid demo.



You could hear the immediate collapse of the wide soundstage that we experienced with the M5 Hybrids. After our ears got adjusted to the cone drivers, the LC1 speakers held their own. They are quite an engineering feat at \$1000 a pair and would be perfect in a small bedroom.

Daryl was thoroughly impressed with the sound emanating from these tiny boxes and could see why they are getting rave reviews in the audio circles.

Ravi will be bringing the entire lineup of FINAL speakers to the California Audio Show in June 6-8, 2025. If you wish to listen to them at his home in Ahwatukee Foothills, you can reach him at (248) 520-8628 or via his email highreshifi@gmail.com

This was a fun afternoon. The performance of the M5 Hybrids exceeded my expectations. Thanks to Greg Wann for hosting this event at his custom built audio listening room. We hope to have many more enjoyable visits to Greg's Audio Shrine.

Best regards,

David Das