



HPM-200

5-WAY 5-SPEAKER SYSTEM

Enclosure: Acoustic suspension dual isolated chamber **Speakers:** 10-inch carbon fiber blended cone woofer ×2, 2½-inch soft-dome midrange. High polymer molecular film tweeter. High polymer molecular film super-tweeter **Impedance:** 6 ohms **Frequency Range:** 25—25,000Hz **Sensitivity:** 89dB/W/M **Maximum Input Power:** 200W **Crossover Frequencies:** 150Hz, 700Hz, 2,000Hz, 5,000Hz **Dimensions:** 29"(W)×32"(H)×19"(D) **Weight:** 124lb.

*Walnut veneered cabinet with particleboard rear panel.

Pioneer HPM-200

PIONEER, A MAJOR producer of all types of audio components—tuners, amplifiers, receivers, turntables, and tape machines—has been represented many times in past issues of CONSUMER GUIDE Magazine's Stereo & Tape Equipment Quarterly, but the following test report of Model HPM-200 is our first coverage of a Pioneer speaker system. The HPM-200 holds the top-of-the-line position in Pioneer's speaker offerings.

Description And Features

A FLOOR-STANDING system, the HPM-200 possesses two 10-inch woofers, a 2½-inch soft-dome midrange unit, a high polymer molecular film tweeter, and a supertweeter fashioned from the same material. Each woofer has its own sealed chamber, thus functioning as an air-suspension unit, and the two woofers share the front baffle board with the midrange element. The baffle itself is tilted back slightly to improve dispersion and to minimize the effects of low-frequency reflections from the floor. The two tweeters occupy a separate section of the

enclosure, on a shelf above the woofer/midrange compartment, with the smaller tweeter sitting atop the larger one. The space behind is occupied by an elaborate frequency-dividing network, in which crossover frequencies are 100 Hz, 700 Hz, two kHz, and five kHz. This top section is "open" via grille cloth sections on the sides and rear for omnidirectional dispersion.

The main grille, a bronze-colored fabric, fits over the entire front of the enclosure. The outer sides of the enclosure are made of wood one-inch thick and finished in walnut. Colored binding posts for the hookup are at the rear, where there are also three rotary switch controls for adjusting relative levels of midrange, tweeter, and supertweeter. The unit measures 32 inches high, 29 inches wide, and 19 inches deep, and it weighs 124 pounds in its shipping carton. Recommended for use with amplifiers or receivers that can supply at least 15 watts (RMS) per channel, the HPM-200 is rated to handle up to 200 watts. Input impedance is six ohms.

Performance

IN PROMOTING the HPM-200, Pioneer has made much of the system's new kind of tweeter, a circle of plastic film laminated with metal electrodes. Described as neither electrostatic nor electromagnetic, the polymer film transducer (which, incidentally, has also been used in some headphones) is credited with high acoustic power and linearity (freedom from distortion and coloration). Moreover, since it can be shaped in any manner, the film can be formed so as to disperse sound in a 360-degree pattern.

CONSUMER GUIDE Magazine's audio experts found the tweeter and supertweeter to be undeniably good units, producing commendable upper-end response. On the other hand, these units do not render sound that is clearly superior to that which can be heard from competing systems in this general price range. It is also interesting to note that this advanced technology is bestowed only on the upper midrange and extreme highs: the main portion of the musical range is reproduced by more conventional speaker components.

The HPM-200 is, nonetheless, a very good speaker system indeed, with above-average linearity across the audio band, excellent power-handling capability, and exceptional dispersion characteristics. In CONSUMER GUIDE Magazine's tests, the HPM-200 produced very clean, strong bass with little or no doubling down to about 33 Hz. The harmonic content in this region, even at loud levels, was lower than in most systems. In fact, bass could be heard—admittedly with strong harmonic content—to below the normal 20-Hz mark, while mid bass was smooth and clean with no false emphasis.

This well-defined quality persisted up through the middles and highs to beyond audibility. The

upper Tones were very well dispersed, and signals in the 14 to 15 kHz region were audible off-axis. At 16 kHz the response began a gradual slope. Broad band noise response was generally smooth and very evenly distributed into the listening area.

The three controls at the rear for adjusting relative levels of midrange, tweeter, and supertweeter were found to have relatively little effect on the speakers output, although in their extreme advanced positions they added an overly bright quality to the sound After spending a considerable amount of time adjusting these controls. CONSUMER GUIDE Magazine's testers decided that leaving them all in their flat positions produced the best some quality.

The HPM-200's high-volume music reproduction was excellent. When the speakers were driven with amplifier power upwards of 50 watts, the sound was full, natural, and clear, with well-defined transients and very good balance between tonal ranges. Fed with more power, up to its rated limit of 200 watts, the HPM-200 simply got louder, never harsher or more distorted. At lower volumes, however, the sound tended to thm out a bit, and there was noticeable bass dropout.

In addition to its fairly high power requirements, the HPM-200 is a speaker that needs to be positioned properly. The owner's instructions suggest that it stand at some distance from a rear wall for optimum bass response. Although CONSUMER GUIDE Magazine's audio experts confirmed this

advice as technically valid, few people will wish to place a pair of huge cabinets rather obtrusively in the open areas of a listening room. Moreover, due to its obvious size and weight, the HPM-200 is not the kind of speaker one moves about the room frequently

Summary

PIONEER IS TO be commended for introducing a new kind of sound reproducer, the polymer film driver. Whether it is innately better than other types of speaker components remains to be seen, but that it works, and very well too, becomes obvious upon listening to the HPM-200 system.

As a whole, the system is an excellent performer that should delight many an audiophile. The polymer film tweeter seems well matched with the HPM-200's more traditional midrange and woofer elements. But remember that this is a speaker system which demands high amplifier power for top results; it sounds best when played loudly, and it should be listened to in a fairly large room. Without question an exceptionally fine speaker, the HPM-200 is just as clearly not a speaker for all listeners. Only those owning powerful component systems installed in large listening rooms should consider purchasing the HPM*200 speaker system

Approximate Retail Price: \$500.00
Low Price: \$366.75



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