A BOLD THESIS

What happens when Heed Audio’s latest electronics meet PMC’s newest loudspeaker? Ed Selley has fun finding out.

Heed Audio’s output has been deeply influenced by the designs and expertise of the late and much-missed Richard Hay whose Ion Audio Obelisk was the basis for Heed’s original product and who continued to consult and represent the brand until his untimely death in 2012. Heed hasn’t sat around feeling sorry for itself, though. The Thesis range is the latest to bear the Heed name and represents a move into uncharted territory.

The Thesis range comprises Alpha preamplifier with Pi external power supply and a pair of Omega monoblock power amplifiers – a phono stage is also available. Heed has never been a company to divide the responsibilities of components up in the ‘normal’ way and the Thesis models haven’t seen a sudden nod to tradition. To this end, the Alpha combination digital and analogue inputs in a single chassis and can be used with and without an external power supply, which can provide a separate power source for the analogue section.

Heed Alpha Preamplifier £2,850

The Pi is designed to provide a clean source of power for the Alpha and the Phi phono stage at the same time.

Heed Pi Power Supply £1,600

The Omega monoblock takes Heed’s trademark AC-coupled design principle to new levels and claims up to 160W of output with impedance handling down to an impressive 1.6ohms.

Heed Omega Monoblock Power Amp £1,750

The largest member of the twenty series, the 26 keeps the tweeter and 6.5in midbass from the twenty.24, but increases the size of the cabinet and adds a 50mm soft dome midrange.

PMC Twenty.26 £5,750

Ed Selley
is fitted with analogue inputs as you might expect, but also has a quartet of digital inputs including the all-important 24/192kHz-capable asynchronous USB connection. This allows the Alpha to front a computer audio system with no conventional source beyond a Mac or PC.

The Pi power supply uses a heady combination of over specified components from the major brands in the business like Mundorf and Airlink to deliver an entirely stable and massively over specified supply of electricity to the Alpha and the Phi phono stage. Adding the Pi and Phi not only adds to your Greek alphabet, but also gives your system the coolest connectivity and useful components.

The PMC has an innate grasp of deep, fast and completely believable bass intimate rather than passing understanding of crossover construction. The 26 also benefits from PMC’s work in the National Physics Laboratory, which involved both serious science and for the rest of us the unbridled joy at the idea of firing lasers at loudspeakers.

As a partnership, the Bedfordshire/Budapest axis begins to make sense and the reason for this is the manner in which the electronics and speakers work with one another. Liquid refreshment I shall avoid the cliché of saying that the Heeds deliver with the same passionate conviction and unbridled joy at the idea of firing lasers at loudspeakers.

When you send this to the PMC – a speaker that has an almost innate grasp of deep, fast and completely believable bass as well as the sort of output that creates spaces of whatever size you need utterly unconstrained by the actual size of the room they are in, the effect is righr on perfect. The combination is endlessly appealing and able to handle almost anything you could possibly want to listen to with a believable way behind him. Indeed ‘presence’ features time and time again in my notes with this system and the reason for this is the manner of how the electronics and speakers work together.

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Thesis takes Heed Audio into new areas and power delivery levels presentation that is incredibly easy to enjoy, but immensely rewarding at the same time.

This means that over the course of a listening session where everything from the delicacy of Abi Tapia to the sheer brutality of The Prodigy finds its way onto the playlist, the Heed/PMC is utterly unfazed by any of it. This is a system that has overcome the digital and analogue sides of the Thesis are combined in a single entity means that you listen to and appreciate the Thesis as a single unit rather than different components. When combined with a speaker as effortlessly capable as the PMC you have a system that will deliver truly outstanding musical enjoyment. The Bedfordshire/Budapest axis is not currently one of the “power couples” of modern hi-fi, but a few more setups like this and it soon will be.

Beautiful System

Heed Audio/PMC

Above left: Unmistakably a Heed product, the Thesis range manages to feel more grown up than some compact models

Above: Extensive and useful connectivity is divided up in a slightly smarter and more grown up fashion

Above far right: The twenty. 26 pairs almost perfectly to the strengths of the Thesis components

United we stand

The result of all this is a system that achieves the single most important benchmark that any collection of electronics can, in that it sounds better as a system than it does when the undeniably talented collection of electronics that go into it are listened to on their own. The Thesis range is a step up for Heed, but by evolving its design practices rather than feeling the urge to do anything radically different, they perform with an assurance that should see them in good stead. Above all, the way that the digital and analogue sides of the Thesis are combined in a single entity means that you listen to and appreciate the Thesis as a single unit rather than different components. When combined with a speaker as effortlessly capable as the PMC you have a system that will deliver truly outstanding musical enjoyment. The Bedfordshire/Budapest axis is not currently one of the ‘power couples’ of modern hi-fi, but a few more setups like this and it soon will be.