



PMC Twenty5 26i

Hifiandmusicsource.com review of the PMC Twenty5 26i floorstanding loudspeaker



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REVIEW

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By Simon Wilce.
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DESIGN

This pair of PMC Twenty5 26i loudspeakers could herald the end of my Audiophile journey which is where this website began, nearly 10 years ago.

This PMC Twenty5 26i is the largest speaker in the Twenty5i range and it is the only one to feature a 3-way design with a midrange driver, making it the flagship of this loudspeaker collection. The drivers are a PMC 170mm long-throw g-wave cone with a cast alloy chassis for the low frequencies, a 50mm chambered soft-dome midrange driver and a custom PMC/SEAS 19mm SONOMEX fabric soft dome with a 34mm surround and dispersion grille. This tweeter features across the Twenty5i collection and it is derived from findings made by PMC in their development of the fifty thousand pounds plus FACT fenestria speaker.

Of course, the Twenty5i range features PMC Advanced Transmission Line (ATL) Technology as described in the 22i review here. The ATL Technology effectively acts as a further bass driver using the cabinet's design and interior materials. Only the lowest frequencies emerge in phase with the higher frequencies. The Laminair vents to the base of the speaker cabinet stabilise the ATL air movement and this technology derives from F1 engineering experience.

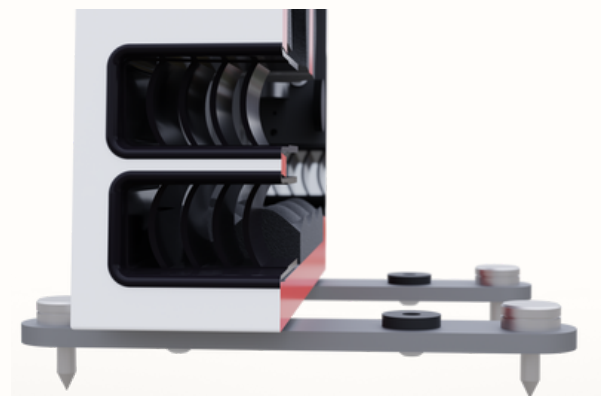
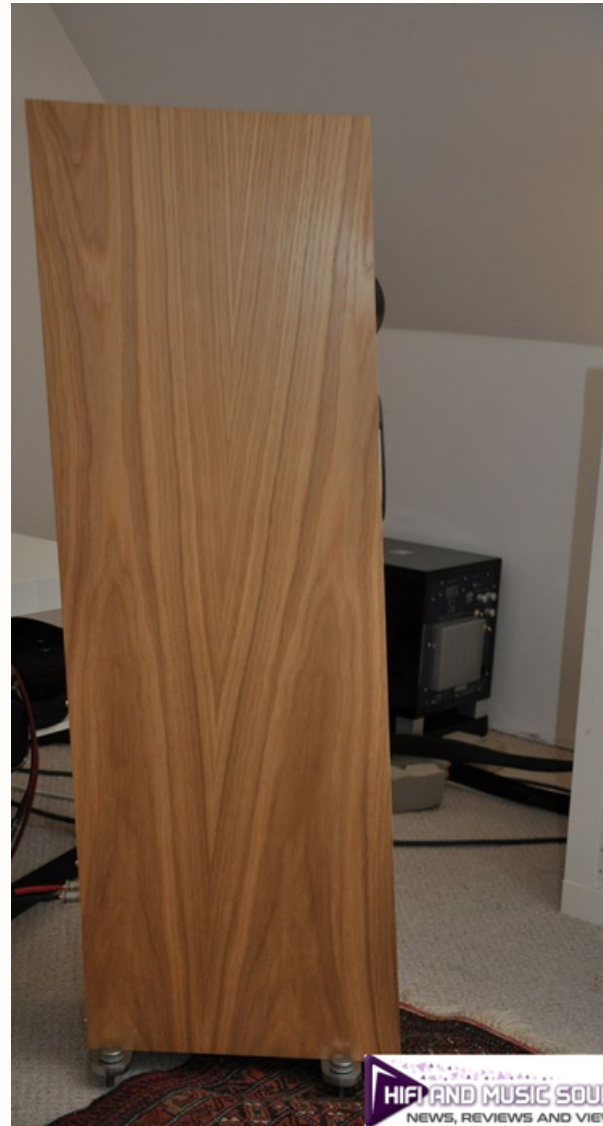


QUALITY

The cabinets are clearly beautifully put together, they feature a mirror matched veneer that is hand-selected by PMC craftsmen. After construction, they are spray lacquered, and hand-finished to ensure the quality you would expect at this price bracket. I have the light oak finish but there is also a walnut, silk white or diamond black alternative. In my experience, and despite my general bias towards black with black, the diamond black finish is a fingerprint nightmare, and this oak finish seems to me to be the perfect home-based compromise.

The cabinets come with a new plinth and spike setup that is part of the 'i' for 'improvement' in the Twenty5i range.

They deal with an unwanted 470Hz resonance peak that was discovered by the R&D team and these new plinth bars have a resonance-absorbing compound (like a rubber grommet) next to the cabinet to isolate it from the floor with the spikes. This new arrangement reduces feedback between the floor and the cabinet improving 'soundstage and high-frequency separation'. The plinth is easily assembled upside down on opening the box.



Plinth bar and isolation detail

DIMENSIONS

The dimensions of each loudspeaker are 104cm (+20mm spikes) x 19.2cm (27.5cm incl. plinth bars) x D 43.9cm (+15mm grille) (HxWxD), they are 25kg each. There are full-length grilles supplied that to me seem to date the speakers a fraction, but I have not used them, save for a quick photo.

PERFORMANCE

REVIEW EQUIPMENT

With the imminent departure of the Auralic Altair G2.1, I'm using a networked iFi Pro iDSD DAC as a source, fixed analogue output to the Moor Amp Angel preamplifier, in turn, feeding my Moor Amps Angel 6 power amplifier which has a claimed 150W/channel into the 8 Ohm impedance in the speakers. I'm using Tellurium Q speaker cables and XLR with the preamplifier.

PHYSICALLY

The speakers are weighty, but happily very easy to move about using the spikes with a pair of gloves. I have ended up with the speakers fairly close to the wall at a foot or so, fairly academic I know, and they are toed in a fraction. I appreciate the simplicity of the sturdy single binding posts to the rear, no messing, just solid and easy to get to. There is no bi-wiring option here, no problem.

I have the loudspeakers around 2.5 meters apart and I'm 3 meters away in my "Maxell, Break the Sound Barrier" chair. The PMC Twenty5 26i retain the trapezoidal look that is a feature of the Twenty5i range. The slightly laid back tweeter at the top of the loudspeaker compared to the low-frequency driver ensures accurate phase alignment from the cabinet to the listener.

Speakers of this pedigree demand their own playlist and I've spent a sizable and enjoyable amount of time cataloguing my tracks and why I choose them, the *Tidal* Playlist is here.



BASS LOADING

These are my kind of speakers; it is the ATL Technology and the sound it produces that sets these speakers from others, for me. I usually start listening from the bass upwards to see where I am with loudspeakers and Hans Zimmer's *Blade Runner 2049* (Tidal MQA 16-bit, 44.1kHz) track is as good a place as any as Ryan Gosling's 'spacecraft' lands in the opening scenes. The low-frequency bass loading provokes an emotional response, it is visceral, controlled and affecting, I duck and tingle as the 'craft passes across the soundstage near 2'04".

More bass and my recent experiences with REL have pointed me towards Newton Faulkner's version of *Teardrop* (Tidal 16-bit, 44.1kHz). Here at the first crescendo around 1'30," the speakers melt into the rear wall; the bass loading is completely felt in your chest. I next turn to Joss Stone's *Snakes and Ladders* (Tidal 16-bit, 44.1kHz) which delivers that same draft of bass loading, even at a lower volume, it is so rhythmic and elegant.



...the speakers melt into the rear
wall



SOUNDSTAGE

Without being too analytical about these loudspeakers, the next key takeaway from these speakers is the size and scale in the soundstage, this is a big sound. Yes, I'm using a huge and classy power amplifier but even a half-hour with a Naim Uniti Star swapped in offers this same substantial soundstage with the commensurate bass loading still affecting my listening. The speaker sensitivity is not that high with these PMC Twenty5 26i at 86dB/W/m, but the Uniti Star happily delivers, though the overall experience, understandably, is not quite as enthralling as that with the Angel 6.

Switching back to the Angel 6, the soundstage around me is also as wide as the seas with the ever-fantastic Fleet Foxes track, *Helplessness Blues* (Tidal 16-bit, 44.1kHz) as the tumult of guitars swirl in front of me. Here too the resolution of the guitars towards the end of the track is outstanding. The same width and separation are evident with George Harrison's very beautiful *My Sweet Lord* (Qobuz 24 bit, 96kHz).

RESOLUTION

Speaking of resolution, these loudspeakers have a delicate delivery in tracks such as Celeste's *Strange* (Tidal 16-bit, 44.1kHz) with her voice as clear as you can dream of. With my eyes closed her breathing and curious delivery come over, again with an emotion I've not quite grasped before this moment. I feel the ace in the pack here surely is the addition of the midrange driver and the smooth 4th order crossover that PMC has developed. There is no better demonstration of this emotion and detail than with the rasping voice of Jamie Cullum's delivery in *Gran Torino* (Tidal 16-bit, 44.1kHz).



RHYTHM

Finally, there is nothing more for me to understand about these speakers, I'm sold, but I'm listening for that foot-tapping immersive feeling with The Weeknd's fantastic track *Save Your Tears*, remixed with Arianna Grande. It's here, indeed just about everything I throw at these speakers sounds raised to a new level, be that Dexter Gordon's breathy saxophone or Yo-Yo Ma's deep cello or Miles Kane's punchy guitars. Another morning slips by with few words written but I'm just smiling at my valuable time with this magnificent HiFi setup that is singing like a sewing machine thanks to the delivery from these PMC loudspeakers.

OVERALL

If you are ever lucky enough to listen to a pair of speakers like this, see if you too can feel the unrivalled bass loading and hear that soundstage as the loudspeakers disappear into the walls in front of you. These PMC Twenty5 26i would be my desert island loudspeakers if that were possible. Their bass control, resolution and dominant presence with the correct amplifier have delivered a sound I possibly will struggle to hear again. Completely misquoting Tennyson: it is better to have heard and returned than never to have heard at all.

There are pianos and there are pianos. Goodness knows Paul McCartney got a tune out of stand-up Yamaha back in the day. There are other loudspeakers that sound good, these PMC Twenty5 26i are like grand pianos, the ones you want for that special performance.

The PMC Twenty5 26i is priced near £9,300 a pair.