

# VUMETRE #7

MAGAZINE HI-FI INDEPENDANT



## Atoll 400 Signature

Statutory amplification

**Davis Acoustics *The Wall***  
Acoustic anti-conformism!

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Pure Class A for everyone

Interview  
**Michka Assayas**  
*The sound of rock*



Phono preamp cream

**Kora Phono Stage**  
Hexagonal wonder

**CH Precision P1 & X1**  
The best?



/ TEST

BOOKSHELF LOUDSPEAKERS

# PMC PRODIGY 1

Nicolas Chestier



**ORIGIN**

Great Britain

**PRICE**

€ 1.490 / \$ 1.699 / £ 1.250

**DIMENSIONS**

32.0 (1.05') x 16.2 (0.53') x 23.7 (0.77') cm

**WEIGHT**

4.5 kg (9.9 lbs) each

**TYPE**

2-way with ATL technology

**SENSITIVITY**

87.5 dB SPL 1 W 1m

**IMPEDANCE**

6 ohms

**FREQUENCY RESPONSE**

35 Hz-25 kHz (-3 dB)

**EFFECTIVE ATL™ LENGTH**

1.91 m



Founded in the early 1990s by Peter Thomas (BBC) and Adrian Loader (FWO Bauch), and since then an essential reference for monitoring loudspeakers for the most renowned recording studios such as the BBC and record labels (notably Decca and Harmonia Mundi), the PMC Audio (Professional Monitor Company) brand is now expanding its range of loudspeakers to offer home and consumer models offering the same expertise as its studio and audiophile models such as the Fact Fenestria. Presented at this year's High End trade show in Munich, the Prodigy range, the brand's new spearhead, comprises the Prodigy 5 floorstanding speaker and the Prodigy 1 bookshelf speaker. We had the pleasure of testing the latter for several days.

Designed and built in Great Britain by engineers Olly Thomas and Elliot White with the same meticulousness as their other references, such as the more high-end Twenty series, PMC's new Prodigy 1 speakers are designed with versatility in mind. Compact and rectangular, they are made of MDF (medium-density fiberboard composite) approximately 25 mm (1") thick, and available only in a smooth black silk finish to great effect. Prodigy 1 can be installed on support feet (not supplied) to maximize their performance, as they position the drivers at an ideal height while offering enhanced stability. Magnetic fabric grilles are not supplied with the speakers, but are only available as an option. As for connectivity, there's no surprise: a simple terminal block is offered, placed in a small notch on the rear, and as for design, there's nothing revolutionary but a search for sobriety and finesse that blends easily into any environment. The Prodigy perpetuates PMC's technical heritage by integrating a 27 mm (1.1") soft dome tweeter, identical to that of the brand's renowned Result 6 monitor speaker, and a 130 mm (5.1") long-throw natural fiber bass woofer, the aim being to «bring the studio home», says Oliver Thomas, PMC's sales director and head of design.

But what really makes these loudspeakers stand out are the two technologies they incorporate, PMC's speciality Advanced Transmission Line (ATL) mounting and

the use of a laminar port. Far from being fanciful, these technologies deliver deep, fast and punchy bass reproduction that's quite impressive for speakers of this size. Neither closed nor bass-reflex, an acoustic transmission line is a long duct that acts as a guide for waves emitted backwards to a vent. The line is covered with materials with a high capacity for selective wave absorption, reducing the effects of reflection and resonance, as well as the speed of propagation inside the loudspeaker enclosure, enabling finer, more precise adjustments. Complex to build and less widespread on the market, this type of





assembly has proved its worth, enabling better highs and midrange control, while considerably improving performance at the lower end of the spectrum compared with a conventional assembly. The resonant frequency of the assembly is directly linked to the length of the line, which is 1.91 m for the model tested. Remarkable on paper, this principle remains very difficult to master, which is why very few manufacturers use it.

The second technology used, again a PMC classic, is the integration of laminar aerodynamic vents (two for the Prodigy 5). Their special shape, incorporating a

blade structure, helps to even out the air flow by dividing it into several channels, thus limiting any disturbance that might generate resistance. On the other hand, the vent increases efficiency, eliminates airborne noise and delivers bass with supreme synchronization and the widest possible dynamic range.

#### SET UP

Presented and heard in Munich, the Prodigy 1 aroused our curiosity and we were eager to examine them in greater depth. Weighing in at just 4.5 kg (9.9 lbs) each, the



Prodigy 1 are light and compact, easily fitting alongside our equipment and requiring minimal space, making them ideal for placement on stands or furniture. Tested over many hours, these were paired with the Cyrus One HD amplifier and Esprit Beta cables. For sources, we used a selection of sonically demanding vinyls, such as Craft Recordings' recent reissues of Miles Davis' *Workin'* and Bill Evans' *Waltz For Debby*, as well as the new Silent Angel Rhein Z1 v2 audiophile music server for high-quality digital sources such as the latest Melody Gardot recording, in order to push these speakers into the most delicate segments of the sound spectrum.

### THE SOUND

What immediately flatters our ears is the exceptional clarity offered by the Prodigy 1. Particularly transpa-

rent, as monitoring loudspeakers generally are, they bring the various vocal and instrumental performances to life with soft, open highs that do not lapse into excessive brilliance, and natural, lively midrange, developing a lively, immersive listening experience. A wide, fairly deep soundstage combined with agile, coherent and dynamic reproduction plunges us even deeper into the music, for an immersive listening experience that is particularly impressive for this type of loudspeaker. The quality of the bass produced by the speakers thanks to the active transmission line is also incredibly precise and well-damped, both faster and deeper, and above all with less distortion. The richness of detail is particularly striking, immersing us in intense, long-lasting sonic pleasure. This is striking when listening to vinyl, demonstrating incredible rigor in the rendering of Evans' crystalline piano notes, or Davis and Coltrane's savory descents of notes. The smooth, swaying notes of Melody Gardot's voice are also reproduced in a warm, energetic soundstage, giving the impression of being right there with her.

### OUR CONCLUSION

The quality of the PMC Prodigy 1 loudspeakers is more than astonishing for this price range, with clarity, dynamics, precision in the placement of the musicians and, above all, a realistic, lively sound of the finest effect, while retaining the essence of the brand's studio and audiophile models. Resolutely transparent and particularly affordable, the Prodigy 1s are more than judiciously positioned in the entry-level audiophile speaker market. Even if this transparency may not suit all music-lover's ears, their performance and ability to fit into most listening spaces make them more than serious contenders with other speakers of the same price, and even with some of the higher end. PMC strikes hard with its new range, and the Prodigy 5 column version is even more impressive. ■