Outwardly, these speakers look very similar to their predecessors, the outgoing Twenty5i range that launched in 2016. Four years isn’t much of a lifespan for a loudspeaker lineup, but PMC has felt an upgrade is warranted, brought about by a trio of new developments. Hence we now have the Twenty5i range. And really these do look high-on-identical. The Twenty5.26 floorstanders, on front left and right duty in our 5.1 setup, has the same exact height, width and depth-dimensions as the Twenty5.26, because it uses the same lean-back cabinet (for improved driver time alignment), albeit with a new White Silk finish option to join the more traditional (okay, more ‘hi-fi’) Walnut and Oak options. There’s also a Diamond Black version that adds a £500 premium to the £8,995 per-pair price.

Best of both worlds

So what is new? Most obviously, there’s an entirely fresh high-frequency driver. The Twenty5.26i – and all other models in the range, which includes two standmounts (the Twenty5.21i and Twenty5.22i), two other floorstanders (Twenty5.23i and Twenty5.24i) and the Twenty5.ci centre – have a 0.75in Sonomex tweeter, a new concoction in collaboration with driver specialist SEAS. Get close to the peekaboo grille and you can see it’s placed within a 1.5in roll surround. This, says PMC, means the tweeter offers both the wide dispersion of a 0.75in driver and the lower response and higher SPL ability of a larger design. A fibre-glass ‘high-frequency dispersion plate’ is also used to further increase soundstage width.

This tweeter refinement has also resulted in a much lower reach, so on the Twenty5i two-way models a 1.7kHz crossover is implemented. On this three-way tower, however, the tweeter drops out of play at 4kHz, and in steps PMC’s 2in soft dome mid-range driver, carried over from the previous generation. Below this on the front baffle is a single 6.5in g-weave bass driver, again a continuation from the earlier range, with a crossover at 400Hz. This feeds into PMC’s Advanced Transmission Line (ATL), the company’s spin on transmission line bass-loading. This claims to control the energy from the woofer ‘in a much more intelligent, efficient way than speaker designs based on ported or sealed boxes,’ and uses a lengthy inner cavity (effectively 3.3m on this model) lined with acoustic material to absorb unwanted frequencies. The ATL terminates in PMC’s distinctive front-facing Laminair vent.

There’s only one new driver here, then, so the rest of the Twenty5i range tested here is about as living room as the company gets, but still comes with the promise of studio-grade performance...

PMC is a brand with professional audio heritage, something that informs the general styling of its loudspeakers. Cast an eye on its SE series or flagship Fact Fenestria and neither would look out of place in a mixing suite. The Twenty5i range tested here is about as living room as the company gets, but still comes with the promise of studio-grade performance...

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then fitting the stainless-steel clips (very cheap, so be careful) and damping discs that aim to decouple the speaker from the floor.

PMC doesn’t sell bundled multichannel packages. Buyers instead are invited to pick and choose. With this in the back of my mind, I plugged a system with floorstanders both front and aft. This might seem extravagant, but against the price of the two-way Twenty5.2Ci tower (£1,040 per pair) it’s only around £2,000 more than the two-way Twenty5.22i standmount, so doesn’t feel that significant considering the cost of the rest of the array.

Skip to an ATL speaker, the Twenty5.24 and Twenty5.26i, and the tweeter and a single 6.5in woofer. Two woofers are used on the centre model (the Twenty5.2i £2,095), flanking the HF unit, but these are smaller 5.5in iterations.

**A sound delivery that has you tensing up, completely immersed in the drama.**

*This is A-grade audio*

Rounding out this array is PMC’s TwentySub (£3,995), which hasn’t been changed since 2016. A tall, slim design with twin Laminair ATL ports for its dual 6.5in woofers, this is clearly descended from PMC’s pre-background, borrowing analogue XLR connections and digital inputs, with associated digital EQ.

None of these speakers are particularly sensitive (the Twenty5.26i is the worst offender with an 86dB rating), and as such should be partnered with amplification beyond the entry-level. But that’s probably obvious.

**Whatta gonna do?**

Having heard an earlier generation of PMC’s Twenty series (the 2014-era range), I knew I could expect a sound performance marvelling on musicality, nuance and transparency. So I began with Bad Boys For Life (UHD Blu-ray) to see how this setup coped with a soundtrack that’s often more about aggression than articulation.

And it fared superbly well. In truth, there was a little recalibration necessary on my part, as I’m mostly used to having my mix on boisterous Atmos soundbars and home cinema-centric sub/sat arrays. Now I was watching Will Smith and Martin Lawrence shoot their way through an abandoned hotel lobby, almost from a different perspective.

This 5.1 setup is able to extract the finest and faintest of details, and place them carefully, lovingly within its soundfield. As the scene builds towards its inevitable explosive finale, there are mice and birds occupying the deserted building that seem to be alive in the room when the lights finally come up. Of course, just the result of speakers with a wide dispersion and a multichannel system singing in unison.

The Colin Farrell Total Recall remake (Blu-ray) has some superb sound design, and it thrilled through this 5.1 set. Chapter 6’s car chase features the pulsing engines of vehicles zipping across the soundstage, accompanied by slick, LIFE whumps. The score hammers along underneath as the chase develops, and there’s the grade of metal on metal as police cars crash, all sounded crystal-clear and without a hint of distortion. It’s an unfatiguing delivery, smooth but not a bad way, and one that you could listen to for hours.

And if it’s musical mastery you seek, you’re come to the right place. Use the Twenty5.26i pair for traditional stereo, and you’ll enjoy an image that’s clean enough to pin-point instruments and delicate sound design, but send music way beyond the speakers’ edges. The any electronic soundscapes of KOAH Sound (16-Bit/44kHz FLAC) extended for miles, leaving me sat in front of a detailed, deep stage of rhythmic throbbbing bass, lush synths and hand-clapped percussion, with high frequencies smooth and unflattered. And with those floorstanding surrounds and overall cohesion, it’s a great setup for multichannel music too.

All-encompassing

My time spent with this PMC setup was pretty open-ended. As expected, there’s been very little evident calibration required here. The PMC Twenty series is protected by a plastic grille (seemingly...) resigned to his fate. It’s the sort of sound that’s often more about aggression than articulation.

**There haven’t been many other 5.1 systems I’ve heard with such a detailed and all-encompassing soundfield**

This array was at capturing some of the sense of height routinely thrown into modern soundtracks. In Blade Runner 2049, there was the butt lesion of the LASER eye, and a single 6.5in woofer. Two woofers are used on the centre model (the Twenty5.2i £2,095), flanking the HF unit, but these are smaller 5.5in iterations.

**Still got atmosphere**

PMC doesn’t yet sell any Dolby Atmos upfirers or integrated models, and I don’t expect it to start soon either. It believes the best solution is in/on-ceiling speakers, the same as in its residential installations (shown here the Twenty5.26i), or doesn’t feel that significant considering the cost of the rest of the array.

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