

ATC

SCM20-2/SIA2-150

Can the disciplines of studio monitoring be realised in the home?

This passive two-way speaker aims to prove so, especially when driven by ATC's own integrated amp

ATC SCM20-2/SIA2-150

PRICE £2732/pair £2422 amp

In the depths of rural Gloucestershire lie the headquarters of one of the world's truly great speaker manufacturers. Its designs are used by many of the world's most famous artists, studios and concert halls. If you want to hear Pink Floyd the way David Gilmour does then, like him, you'd better use ATC speakers at home.

The SCM20-2 (Studio Control Monitor 20-litre volume) passive monitors occupy the lower-mid of ATC's surprisingly extensive domestic loudspeaker range. It's an easy speaker to accommodate by ATC standards, being around half a metre tall with width and depth in proportion. However, weighing around 60lb, it's extremely heavy for its size and demands the use of high quality frame stands.

The significant weight of the ATC is explained by its fabulous build quality. The sealed cabinet of the review pair came finished in charcoal-grey laminate with matt aluminium corner bracing and black wire frame grilles. The design is attractive and modern yet conveys a sense of the model's pro-studio pedigree. The drive unit complement consists of a hand-built ATC 150mm paper-coned

The speakers were installed on 20in open-framed metal stands and positioned around 2ft from the rear wall. Best results were obtained with them slightly toe'd in and around 7ft apart with the listening position 12ft away. My resident Naim

The SCM20-2 made a deep impression on me right away. It exposed the timbre of musical instruments to a degree unmatched by any other speaker I have used at home. The tonal signature between different makes of piano or guitar was clearly revealed – no surprise given these monitors' pro-audio heritage. When listening to a drum kit one was aware of whether the drummer had slackened or tightened the skins and acutely aware of the resulting tone and colour. This additional insight was extremely addictive and proved independent of both source and musical genre. What's more, no frequency extremes were emphasised. The music was immediate and visceral without ever sounding shrill with the result that Karen Carpenter's voice on 'Calling Occupants of Interplanetary Craft' sent shivers up the spine, so beautifully balanced was the sound. There was also a sense of sure-footedness and

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bass/mid driver, and a 25mm soft-dome tweeter built by Vifa to ATC specifications. This tweeter has an unusual double magnet design claimed to deliver frequency response to beyond 25kHz, thus ensuring sonic linearity and compatibility with the latest high-bandwidth formats such as DVD-A.

NAP 250 amplifier was used to power them, via Naim NAC A5 cable. Sources were a Naim CDi CD player and Michell GyroDec turntable. For comparison ATC also provided its SIA2-150 integrated amplifier (see panel opposite), reviewed in these pages before [*HFN* Sept '99].

