



# Marantz PM6006

**T**here's more to the Marantz PM6006 than meets the eye. Yes, it doesn't look much different from the highly rated, entertaining PM6005 it succeeds.

But don't be fooled – the newcomer represents a significant step forward as far as sonic capabilities are concerned.

Compare the specs of the two models, and you'll be left wondering if there is anything different.

Output is still rated at 45 watts RMS per channel into 8 ohms (and 60 watts into 4 ohms). The on-board DAC is still a Cirrus Logic CS4398 operating at up to 192 kHz/24-bit. And the signal-to-noise ratio remains unchanged at 102 dB.

Under the covers, you'll see a beefy toroidal power transformer, separate circuits for the pre-amp and power amp sections, and discrete circuit components. Unsurprisingly, the brand's proprietary HDAM discrete op amp modules are again deployed here, too.

In purely aesthetic terms, the slim Marantz continues the marque's current design approach. The fascia is subtly curved on either side. Large rotary controllers look after source selection and volume adjustment, with smaller controllers looking after bass, treble and balance.

A row of small pushbuttons allow activation of Source Direct and Loudness modes, as well as selecting the speaker set – A, B, both, or none. A full-sized headphone jack is provided, too.

The rear panel confirms the PM6006's versatility. There are three digital inputs – two Toslink optical (one more than the PM6005) and one coaxial RCA – as well as four line-level analogue RCA input sets.

For vinyl lovers, there's a moving magnet phono stage, while a stereo line-out set allows for analogue recordings. The only obvious omission, at least in the modern context, is the lack of USB connectivity.

Robust binding posts for two separate stereo speaker sets are provided. These can be used simultaneously if required. An IEC kettle-type power receptacle is also accommodated on the rear panel.

So what then are the differences between the PM6006 and its PM6005 predecessor? According to Marantz, the new model's amplifier stage has been uprated to deliver more peak current, even if actual output remains the same.

There are also improvements to the power supply, more effective shielding between the analogue and digital sections, and better vibration control from redesigned 'feet'. And then there's the extra Toslink

optical digital input mentioned earlier.

The review unit was hooked up to a pair of B&W PM1 monitors (tough little beasts that demand decent power), with the CD6006 CD player reviewed in our previous issue providing the source signal. Also on hand as alternative sources were an Olive One network player linked to a Musical Fidelity V-DACII, and drawing its musical wares from a Synology 216se NAS.

Once given some time to settle in, the PM6006 delivered a powerful, commanding sound that always seemed bolder and more muscular than the power specs suggest. It has a real talent for wide-open staging and an unwavering, finely focussed image.

The Marantz painted a lavish, engaging sound picture on a sonic canvas easily generous enough to afford the music plenty of breathing space. It shone particularly brightly on large-scale, expansive recordings, but was also easily up to the task of examining and reproducing more intimate material.

The tonal approach was smooth but not attenuated, creating an inclusive impression that was neither too bright nor too warm, but always tonally believable. That tonal poise was mirrored by the control and muscle of the delivery, which ensured that the Marantz was able to project its sonic wares with good pace and energy. There certainly





wasn't anything flabby about the sound!

The on-board DAC displayed a purity of purpose and a level of precision that allowed real insight, without losing the intent of the music. Analogue sources were truthfully projected, always making the most of the signal on offer. And the phono stage was clean and quiet, but perhaps less revealing than expected.

Listening to Fourplay's *Let's Touch The Sky* (Concord CD), the Marantz effortlessly expressed the band's relaxed, liquid sound, but didn't become entrapped by the slightly exaggerated warmth and burnished glow of the recording.

It delivered an expansive, inviting sound underpinned by a solid, authoritative bass that served as a succinct foundation for the rest of the musical picture. On 'Gentle Giant', the piano flowed across the soundstage with a liquid ease, while the bass sounded precise and incisive.



The background stretched wide across the soundstage, while the melodic guitar was allowed to sparkle and shine.

There was a consistent sense of drama and emotion, while the Marantz easily exposed the layered elements of the sound picture, doing full justice to every aspect, even when listening levels were pushed to near party levels.

On 'Angel', from Fleetwood Mac's *Tusk* (Warner 44/16 WAV) the Marantz made the most of the crisp production, placing Stevie Nicks' voice dead centre, with Christine McVie's backing vocals and keyboards in close attendance on the left, and Lindsey Buckingham's jangly, jittery guitar on the right.

The overdubbed, dual-layered lead guitar was clearly positioned, with drums and bass in continuous dialogue behind. There was a real sense of the Marantz translating the recording with both sonic accuracy and musical poise, even when the arrangement becomes increasingly populated – and challenging – towards the end.

Jeff Wayne's *War Of The Worlds* (Columbia 96/24 FLAC) sounded majestic and generous, with the full weight and impact of the orchestra well expressed, yet allowing the electric instruments to be heard clearly, and in a believable context.

The bass guitar was agile and accurately tracked, the synths were spread wide across the sound image, and the drum kit was always rendered with urge and precision. The late Richard Burton's commentary was powerfully projected, to the point of becoming hypnotic.

On 'Horsell Commons and the Death Ray' the guitars sounded almost as ominous as the eerie noise of the unscrewing cylinder. When the lid falls off, I could almost feel the impact. The sound was immersive and compelling.

The PM6006 is a musical and versatile integrated amplifier that always sounds enthusiastic. It has a lot of verve and impetus, linked to a clarity of purpose and a measure of precision that opens up the music. In short, a thrilling all-rounder.

Deon Schoeman

VITAL STATS

- Power output...2x 45 watts RMS (8 ohms)  
2x 60 watts RMS (4 ohms)
- Frequency response..... 10 Hz - 70 kHz
- Signal-to-noise ratio... 102 dB (2V input)
- Digital inputs..... 1x coaxial RCA,  
2x Toslink optical
- Analogue inputs..... 4x stereo RCA,  
1x stereo MM phono
- Outputs..... 1x stereo RCA record out,  
2x binding post sets
- Dimensions (WxDxH)  
..... 440 x 370 x 105 mm
- Weight..... 7,6 kg

**Verdict**  
Breezy, boisterous sound that really opens up the music. Sounds more muscular than the specs suggest. Versatile too – offers MM phono, and has on-board DAC.

Price ..... R13 790

Supplied by ..... HFX Systems  
011-907-9092

e-Mail sales@hfxsystems.co.za

Website www.hfxsystems.co.za

**OUR RATING: 84/100**