

“... fine detail rendered
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EXQUISITE”

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by Max Christoffersen

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

What's in a CV? Well when it comes to Canadian imports it pays to check.

Thankfully, these high-profile Canadians' track record is rock solid. In fact Paradigm has a pedigree of audio achievement that is hard to fault. Couple that with a long list of outstanding reviews and recommendations and this makes for an impressive and easily substantiated audio CV.

I confess, I didn't know a lot about Paradigm, hence the reference check. So when Paradigm's five piece home theatre system arrived, I frankly didn't know what to expect.

Another bunch of largely anonymous boxes? A budget collection of overstated mega-performers at a next-to-nothing-price? A quintet of quiet achievers doing better than they should?

It didn't take long to find out, but these Paradigms fit the last description. And then some.

The Monitor 11
*(Improved over version
reviewed for even
better sound.)*

The five piece set is comprised of the 5-driver, 2-1/2 way ported Monitor 11 main speakers, ADP-350 dipole surrounds, CC-370 centre channel and PW-2200 (12") subwoofer. All of which bear the signature of quality manufacturing and finishing—even if it is to a key price point which appears to be Paradigm's *raison d'être*.

In fact, it's easy to be won over by Paradigm's work ethic. From the well written and informative company/product publication (get one!) to the packaging and overall fit and finish, I was won over by the attention to detail that was evident in all areas of the company's product from packing to grills.



"The PW-2200 is one of my all-time favourite home theatre components ... near seamless integration to the mains coupled with the genuine fright factor of this subwoofer make it an easy pick for a best in 12" class ... It has genuine extension in spades ... simply a class act."

Secondly Paradigm deserve full marks for being more than just a 'box stuffer'. This company doesn't take other's work and pass it off as their own. They make and bake the lot—from drivers that are built in-house to testing equipment, crossovers and amplifiers. Everything is contained and controlled under the one roof.

I set up the Paradigm mains and centre using Kimber Cable 8TC via the extraordinary Rotel RMB-1095 five channel amplifier and used my Yamaha A-1 as a pre-amp. I was immediately seduced by a very articulate and detailed sound. The imaging was exquisite and the fine detail rendered beautifully—all portrayed with a very delicate texture and balance.

To make things easy for these fresh out of the box speakers, I started with two-channel acoustic guitar from the late Michael Hedges *Breakfast in the Field* album. Acoustic guitar is the instrument I know best and the opening track "Layover" is a great audio test because of its simplicity and its full bodied recording.

The detail on this simple instrumental was extraordinary. There is a sweet audio delicacy evident from these multi-driver main speakers. Hedges' guitar is all slides



ADP-370

(Improved over version reviewed for even better sound.)

and hammer ons and offs. Speakers have to be able to handle the dynamics of his percussive style while also revealing the full bodied sound and detail of the instrument and its accompanying brand-new, unstretched steel strings. Small knocks and bangs from Hedge's hitting the sound board rang out in a way I hadn't really noticed before. It's on the recording—but my first impression was 'what is that?' Small, delicate details in sharp focus!

Initially there was a 'leanish' balance to the main drivers, which meant that film soundtracks felt a little 'light' on first audition. But the bass-weight kicked in shortly afterwards as the drivers appeared to break-in over time providing good authority and a sense of speed and snap.

And then there's 'the beast' in this multi-channel relationship. Let me say it from the outset: the PW-2200 subwoofer is one of my all-time favourite home theatre components. The near seamless integration to the mains coupled with the genuine fright factor of this subwoofer make it an easy pick for a best in 12" class. It has genuine extension in spades and coupled with quality build from a cast aluminium frame, rear ribbed driver for strength and dual spiders—it's simply a class act.

But of course this is a home theatre system. Coming equipped with dipole surround speakers the system offers a somewhat traditional approach to home theatre performance (for those who prefer direct radiators that option is also available) and again the performance was all subtle detail with 'The Beast' filling out the rest.

If there is a weakness I found it in the centre channel. Unlike the main speakers I could hear the cabinet in this speaker. It was minimal, but the first impression stayed and I couldn't shake the sound of wood from the dialogue. Frankly—that is getting picky and pedantic.



The New PW-2200

(Improved over version reviewed for evenbetter sound.)

You had to look hard to find anything out of place with this system—this system works beautifully with music, and is equally adept with multi-channel soundtracks. These Paradigms either together or alone, will genuinely please with detail, depth and a fair amount of dynamic.

This Canadian import doesn't need to fake its credentials. One listen and I'm sure you will agree.

Count me a new fan, Paradigm. These Canadians are welcome downunder any time!



The New PW-2200

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