

**Marantz PM6005 | Stereo amplifier | £300**

# Amp star shines bright

**Marantz knows how** to make good budget amps. It has traditionally been very strong in this department, with its PM6004 winning our stereo amp Product of the Year Award in 2011.

Since then, Marantz has had overwhelming competition. The Rotel RA-10 came along with better sound, and the NAD D 3020 offered better features. Now Marantz has put forward the PM6005 - and we're pleased to say it is a very strong riposte.

## No mistaking the lineage

Anyone familiar with Marantz's previous output will recognise the look of the PM6005, which has barely changed since earlier iterations and is once again available in black or Champagne gold. It's a little safe, but there's nothing wrong with maintaining a sense of heritage, especially when there's a matching CD player (the CD6005).

It's a handsome machine. The front has a symmetrical faceplate, which curves away gently at the sides. Build quality has always been good, but this time the knobs are all made of metal.

There's a smattering of buttons. You can flick between two sets of speaker outputs, or use both of them. 'Loudness' turns up the bass and treble to have greater impact on lower volumes. We're not big fans of doing that. 'Source Direct' lets you bypass the tone controls for better sound quality.

## Digital inputs for the new DAC

Around the back you'll find five sets of analogue inputs and one output next to the terminals. You also get digital optical and coax inputs, as there is now a 24-bit/192kHz DAC on board.

This is a most welcome development, even if it feels a little half-hearted: a USB input would have been nice; there's also no sign of Bluetooth. Although we like the Marantz having more features than usual, the PM6005 doesn't push the boat out quite as far as the NAD D 3020.

Onwards to sound, and the Marantz PM6005 is a talented, likeable performer. We heaped praise on the PM6004 when it won an Award in 2011, but its successor is ahead at every turn. The sound is clearer,

more detailed, better timed and more dynamic, all the while retaining the smooth, easygoing demeanour we like. If you're a particular fan of the sound of the PM6004, this one is notably better.

There's a good amount of energy here. The PM6005 feels a little pluckier than its more laid-back predecessors, and this is no bad thing. Lorde's sparse *Pure Heroine* is full of simple bass lines, and these are handled with enthusiasm. It's not quite as punchy or dynamic as the Rotel RA-10, but the Marantz never feels lacking. Indeed, it is a balanced, versatile performer.

## Clarity, detail and space

We're also impressed by the sense of space and the airy presentation. The soundstage is wide and neatly organised. Combine that with an impressive level of clarity and bags of detail, and it's easy to pick out the individual components making up even the most complex of ensembles.

Take Wycliffe Gordon's jazz take on *When the Saints Go Marching In* - a mix of distinct instruments and polyrhythm, and a real tongue-twister for any system. Every sound has its place, and room to perform.

Trombones, banjos and ukuleles are textured and easily identifiable without ever straining for attention. The Marantz demonstrates great control and excellent timing. A switch to a Rotel RA-10, doesn't result in the same level of insight.

We switch to digital inputs and find the on-board DAC to be competent. Its performance is broadly similar to our other

The PM 6005 is available in black, or Marantz's traditional Champagne gold



## In detail

### 1 Digital inputs

This time around the amp offers digital inputs, to take advantage of its new DAC. It's very welcome, but a USB input would be good too.

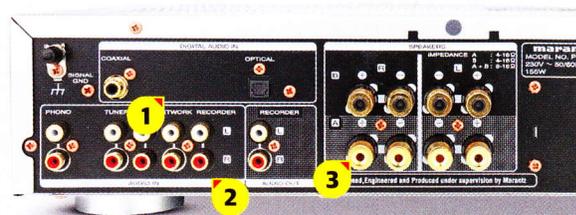
not been forgotten: you'll still find a decent phono stage and a tape loop for recording.

### 2 Line-level

The more old-school inputs have

### 3 Twin speaker outputs

You can run two pairs of speakers from the Marantz, either individually or together.



findings, and we're glad to see Marantz has included it. We hope to see a USB input on the next update, but this is a good start.

By now, it's a pretty safe bet that a Marantz 6000-series amp will do pretty well. That being said, we're pleased at how much progress we've seen. Marantz is back, and its rivals should be worried.

## Rating ★★★★★

**FOR** Spacious, organised sound; great timing; plenty of detail; good energy

**AGAINST** Could be a little punchier; no USB; no Bluetooth

**VERDICT** A hugely talented amplifier and a real comeback for Marantz

## System builder total build £800

### CD player

**Marantz CD6005 ★★★★★ £300**

The amp's partnering CD player is just as much a winner. - A fantastic player and superb value for money.



### Speakers

**Wharfedale Diamond 121**

★★★★★ £200

The latest generation of this classic range are real winners, providing fabulous sound at the price.



## Also consider

**Rotel RA-10**

£350 ★★★★★

Less rhythmically precise and not as well organised, but punchier

