



# ATC SIA2-150

£2,375 ATC 01285 7605610 www.atc.gb.net

PRO SPEAKER EXPERTS PRODUCE A STRIPPED DOWN TREAT OF AN AMP

**A**TC is best known for the active loudspeakers it makes for both the professional and domestic markets, but given that it builds amps for these speakers it was inevitable that the company would eventually get round to producing separate amps like this chunky integrated.

Weighing in at 24kg, ATC has taken the opposite approach to Marantz with this design – it's the sort of product that the phrase 'hair-shirt' could have been created for. Well almost, its one concession to ease of use is a remote. But the basic four line inputs and volume control suggest a no-pussyfooting approach to the serious business of hi-fi

amplification. The back panel doesn't reveal a great deal more, just a tape loop and some tasty speaker terminals.

The case is very nicely executed – not as pretty as the Marantz but it's equally as well made and if the pro aesthetic appeals this will certainly be your cup of tea. The extensive heatsinking down each flank is not for decoration, you could fry an egg on this 150 watt brute (if you wanted to). Seriously though, it certainly produces more heat than any of the other amps in this group, but then again it also produces more power.

### PERFORMANCE

ATC's active loudspeakers are extremely gritty and revealing designs with buckets of power and considerable transparency, albeit with a balance that errs on the incisive. The SIA2-150 is inevitably much the same in character, a warts and all amp that takes no prisoners in its quest for the musical truth.

The sound it produces varies dramatically with the music – if the recording is a great one you get a great sound. If it's not, you hear it. But it's less a case

### VERDICT

- SOUND ★★★★★
- FEATURES ★★★★★
- BUILD ★★★★★
- VALUE ★★★★★

A no-nonsense powerhouse with remarkable transparency and musical integrity. Could be too gritty for some and won't forgive poor recordings, but the truth has a price.

### KEY FEATURES

- REMOTE CONTROL ✓
- STONE CONTROLS ✗
- PHONO INPUT ✗
- LINE INPUTS 4
- TAPE LOOPS 1



of good and bad recordings than different ones. Take one of Frank Zappa's *You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore* CDs, these are compilations of live recordings from different locations using varied recorders and at different stages in his career. You'd expect to hear a change between a two track analogue recording in 1974 and a multitrack digital recording from ten years later but many amps play this down. Not the ATC. It positively revels in the variations of venue ambience and recording quality.

If anything it suggests that despite the protestations of analogue lovers (like me) modern recordings are in fact better than older ones.

The way it maintains musical tension is also extremely engaging, the drama and energy that the musician has felt is there in full effect. It has tremendous musical integrity and encourages you to listen and listen until you're totally exhausted. It might be a bit intense for some and won't gloss over the limitations of aggressive source components, but put a high quality signal in and you'll get it all back with interest.

### LAB REPORT

▶ A real powerhouse that maintains in excess of 2x150W/8ohm and 2x200W/4ohm at all frequencies with 210W, 335W, 300W and 165W available into 8, 4, 2 and 1ohm loads under dynamic conditions. Conservative current-limiting restricts its max output to around 13A.

▶ At the 11-12 o'clock volume position (0dBW re. 500mV in), the amplifier's 0.7dB channel balance error remains high. Better volume pot selection by ATC would improve this.

▶ The S/N ratio is very high, but at 90.2dB (left) and 93.0dB (right), still differs between channels as does the +33mV and +14mV DC offset.

▶ The response shows a rare bass roll-off of -0.75dB at 20Hz while the mid and extreme treble are flat.

▶ Distortion is very low at around 0.001% right across the power bandwidth, increasing to a mere 0.01% at 20kHz, again almost regardless of output. This consistent behaviour is ideal.

### DETAIL - CONNECTIONS

