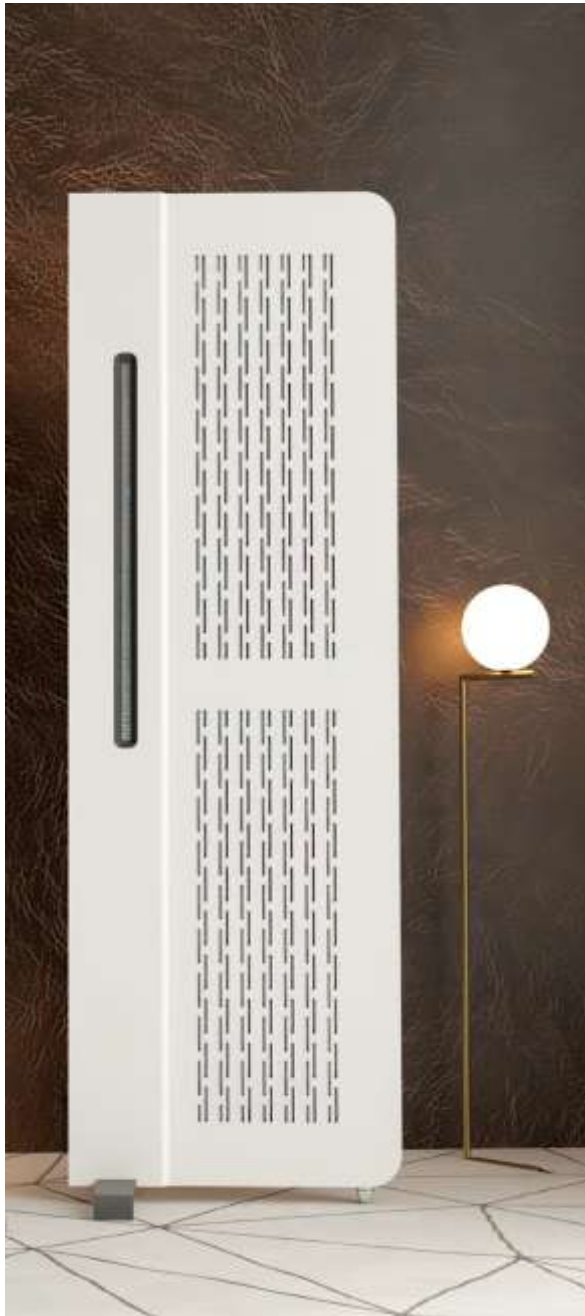




Unveiling the Diptyque Audio DP 160 Mk II Loudspeaker: A Marvel in Sound

Explore the remarkable Diptyque Audio DP 160 Mk II loudspeakers, where art meets engineering, providing immersive sound experiences with innovative design.

An Artistic Endeavor in Audio Innovation

The visionary collaboration between Gilles Douziech and Eric Poix has birthed the French loudspeaker manufacturer, Diptyque Audio. This unique partnership emerged from the desire to blend art and science, resulting in a loudspeaker that not only sounds exceptional but also looks stunning. Gilles initially created ribbon loudspeakers to “broadcast his sound creations in the context of contemporary art exhibitions,” while Eric brought the mechanical design expertise to the table. Since 2001, they have developed a magnetostatic-planar/ribbon hybrid design that prioritizes panel rigidity and precise diaphragm tension, all wrapped in a contemporary aesthetic that is both inviting and engaging.

The materials used in their products reflect a commitment to sustainability and reparability. Diptyque is dedicated to using recycled materials and local resources to reduce the carbon footprint during production. They also contribute to education initiatives, inspiring the next generation to explore

careers in electroacoustic design. Truly, they put their heart and soul into every aspect of their work.

Technical Marvels Behind the Sound

Diptyque employs an isodynamic, or magnetostatic, design originally conceived in the USA. Gilles and Eric have tackled the limitations of this design, especially concerning panel size and low-frequency output. Their innovations include:

- **PPBM® (Push Pull Bipolar Magnet):** This patented architecture involves large bipolar magnets positioned at the front and rear of the diaphragm. This setup ensures that the conductor (an aluminum film stretched along the diaphragm) remains in a constant magnetic field during movement, leading to more dynamic bass and precise transient sounds.
- **Sandwich Mechanical Structure:** The chassis combines MDF with 2mm steel sheets, held tightly by numerous mechanical screws, forming a perfectly rigid structure that guarantees color-free sound and timbre preservation.
- **Proprietary Ribbon Tweeters:** These tweeters are crafted as isodynamic cells, which move within a strong magnetic field produced by neodymium magnets. They cover a wide frequency range and complement the isodynamic cells seamlessly. A simple crossover at 12dB per octave allows for flawless integration of sound.

With increased space between the magnets, the Mylar film can travel further, achieving greater sound extension. While some aspects may seem reminiscent of their U.S. counterparts, the Diptyque's low-frequency extension stands out as something genuinely unique, meeting their goal of enhancing bass response.

Design and Features of the DP 160 Mk II

The price tag of \$30,000 for the DP 160 Mk II comes with impressive specifications. These speakers stand tall at 63.4 inches, stretch 20.9 inches wide, and boast a sleek thickness of 1.85 inches, weighing in at a hefty 110 pounds each. Their modern design exudes elegance, featuring leather edging, a subtle cross-footer, and three stabilization cones.

Color options for the metal finish are standard black or white, with an additional choice of 160 RAL colors available for a premium. The edges can be finished in black, white, caramel, or chocolate leather. The speaker incorporates two bass/midrange cells using Diptyque's PPBM technology and a 21.65-inch-long wideband ribbon tweeter, crossed over at 1600Hz. It is classified as a 2-way system (though I would call it 2.5) with a sensitivity of 87dB/1W/1m.

While it appreciates a decent power supply, with a nominal impedance of 6 ohms, it doesn't present a difficult load for your amplifier. Diptyque recommends amplifiers greater than 60Wpc, but I would suggest matching the DP 160s with amps of at least 100Wpc to unleash its full potential. The advertised frequency response ranges from 30Hz to 22kHz, which aligns perfectly with my observations.

Setting Up for Optimal Audio Experience

When setting up the ribbon tweeter, placing it on the inside and slightly toeing each panel in can enhance the soundstage. For a living room setup intended for a broader audience, you might consider flipping the tweeters to the outside to widen the sweet spot. My space allowed for a minimum distance of 20-24 inches from the front wall and 8-10 inches from the side walls to optimize the dipole design's performance.

The size of the soundstage and image specificity can shift dramatically based on the spacing and angle of the speakers. The Diptyque's performance truly excels in producing a grand sound, offering a volume

that feels expansive, filling the room with vibrant sound, and leaving you in awe of the dynamic range and density achievable from such a seemingly compact setup.

Listening Experience: Joy and Subtlety

Transitioning between different speaker designs can require a listening reset. When switching to planar speakers, it's about appreciating the broader sound canvas they provide. Imagine listening to your favorite album on an IMAX screen— that's what it's like with the Diptyque speakers. While they may lack some image specificity compared to dynamic transducers, the immersive experience they offer is nothing short of spectacular.

For casual listening environments, such as a family room, their expansive sound is captivating and enjoyable. In a dedicated listening room, however, I tend to favor speakers that provide a more detailed resolution, enhancing the subtleties of the music rather than merely expanding the soundstage.

Comparing to the Competition

It's impossible to discuss magnetic-planar loudspeakers without addressing the notable U.S. brand that has set the standard in this arena. The closest comparison would be Magnepan's MG20.7 loudspeaker, a 3-way design that reaches down to 25Hz, has a nominal impedance of 4 ohms, a sensitivity of 86dB, and measures 79 inches tall by 29 inches wide.

While the Diptyque speakers are smaller, their performance speaks volumes. In my experience, they are slightly easier to drive in terms of both impedance and power. The DP 160 Mk II achieves a remarkable balance of size and sound, showcasing capabilities that can rival even the most established names in the industry.

Ultimately, I won't declare a clear winner; both have distinct flavors and characteristics that appeal to different listeners. It's essential to experience both if you can, as each will resonate differently with individual preferences. Additionally, the emergence of newcomers like Clarisys adds to the excitement for planar-magnetic enthusiasts.

Exceptional Sound Quality

The sonic output of the DP160s is truly remarkable. They deliver crisp, dynamic sound reproduction with a warm midrange and impactful low-end that will surely make you smile and tap your foot along with the music. The high-frequency extension is lush and natural, ensuring a complete and immersive listening experience without any harshness. The midrange maintains constant energy, reflecting pace and rhythm while preserving complex harmonic structures that quality panels excel at.

Though I found myself leaning more toward classical and jazz during my time with the Diptyques, they also handled rock tracks with aplomb. The ability to create a vast soundstage, while seamlessly integrating with the room, made my listening sessions nothing short of enchanting. The orchestral dynamics filled the space beautifully, effortlessly transitioning from powerful crescendos to delicate passages.

Conclusion: The Heart and Soul of Diptyque Audio

The planar design of the DP 160 Mk II may divide opinions visually, but it strikes a balance that won't overwhelm your space. I found them easy to pair with various components, appreciating the slightly laid-back presentation of T+A electronics and the meticulous Gryphon Diablo 333 integrated amp.

My time with the Diptyque speakers was genuinely enjoyable, and I felt the passion behind their designs and craftsmanship. If you're considering flat-panel speakers, you owe it to yourself to experience the DP 160 Mk IIs. They stand as worthy contenders with unique qualities that you won't want to overlook.

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Specs & Pricing

- **Type:** 2-way planar-magnetic loudspeaker
- **Crossover:** 1600Hz
- **Sensitivity:** 87dB/1W/1m
- **Impedance:** 6 ohms
- **Bandwidth:** 30–22,000Hz
- **Power handling:** 200W max (suggested amplification >60W)
- **Dimensions:** 530 x 1610 x 47mm
- **Weight:** 50 kg
- **Price:** \$29,999 in standard colors (custom colors are a \$920 upcharge)

FAQs:

- **What makes the Diptyque DP 160 Mk II unique?** The Diptyque DP 160 Mk II features innovative design elements like the PPBM technology and proprietary ribbon tweeters, delivering exceptional sound quality.
- **Is the DP 160 Mk II suitable for large rooms?** Yes, its expansive soundstage and low-frequency extension make it ideal for larger spaces, filling them with rich, immersive audio.
- **What power amplifier is recommended for the DP 160 Mk II?** While Diptyque suggests amplifiers greater than 60Wpc, using at least 100Wpc will ensure optimal performance and bass response.
- **Does the design of the DP 160 Mk II affect its sound quality?** Absolutely! The unique planar-magnetic design enhances transient response and sound accuracy, making for an exceptional listening experience.
- **Are there other models available from Diptyque Audio?** Yes, Diptyque offers various models ranging from smaller to larger, with prices ranging from \$5k to \$50k to cater to different preferences and budgets.