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**Atlantic Technology  
System 2200**  
Test Report Inside

# Atlantic Technology System 2200 Speaker System

Close encounters of the audiophile kind.



BY STEVE GUTTENBERG

**Peter Tribeman, Atlantic Technology's CEO and founder,** is a serious movie buff. So, when Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* advanced the state of the special-effects art in 1977, Tribeman, a native Bostonian, had to fly to New York City to savor the film's full magnificence—in 70mm, six-track surround—at the legendary Zeigfeld Theater. That's

commitment. Not wanting to make the trek alone, he invited Dotty, a woman he had just met at a party, on his quest—"but it wasn't a date." They thoroughly enjoyed the film, immediately flew back to Boston, and married a few years later. Tribeman's wedding present to his bride was a signed *Encounters* poster: "To Peter and Dotty, on the occasion of their ultimate close encounter. Best Regards, Steven Spielberg." Not bad.

I've known Peter Tribeman for a few years and found him to be, in equal measure, a devout audiophile, a home theater maven, and one hell of a businessman. That rare combination of talents is reflected in the sound and build quality of Atlantic Technology speakers. I last raved about his awesome System 6200 in the December 2003 issue, but that was a \$10,000 package. For this review, I scaled back my expectations to assess how much of the high-end system's performance would trickle down to the \$2,000 System 2200.

## The First Encounter

The System 2200 shares the flagship ensemble's handsome styling, and it features a pair of compact 2200 LR stereo front speakers, a 2200 C center speaker, two 2200 SR bipole/dipole surround speakers, and the 422 SB subwoofer. It's a nicely balanced ensemble; however, since Tribeman acknowledges that bipole/dipole surrounds aren't universally admired, you can swap out the 2200 SRs for another set of the 2200 LRs if you prefer monopole surrounds. Also, if you don't need the 422 SB subwoofer's muscle, you can downsize to Atlantic's matching 10-inch 212 SB sub. Atlantic lets you mix and match among their various

offerings, and those switcheroos I just mentioned knock \$230 off the System 2200's bottom line.

The System 2200 shares some of the System 6200's Custom Optimized Room Enhanced (C.O.R.E.) room-tuning features, which is a cool thing because room acoustics can vary greatly. The 2200 C center sits in a cradle that allows you to tilt the speaker up or down to direct its sound at the listening position. Next, the High Frequency Energy switch toggles between three positions: flat, reverberant (in which reduced high frequencies tame bright/reverberant rooms), and damped (which slightly raises the tweeter level to compensate for rooms with lots of stuffed furniture). The Boundary Compensation switch can tame the overblown midbass you often get when you park a speaker next to a TV screen or wall. I can't think of another speaker package anywhere near the System 2200's price that offers this level of flexibility.

Remove the speakers' magnetically attached, perforated metal grilles, and you'll see that the tweeters' faceplates were designed to allow unusually close placement next to their adjacent woofers. The idea is to minimize the phase cancellation and comb-filter effects that play havoc with the sound heard by off-axis listeners.

The 422 SB conforms to the classic cube subwoofer shape, updated with crisp, beveled edges and gracefully curved side panels that lend a contemporary flair. The 422 SB's rated 225-watt amplifier and crossover electronics are proprietary to Atlantic Technology.

The sealed 422 SB sounds smoother and deeper than most subs in its size and price range. Midbass definition is excellent compared with that of

run-of-the mill ported boomers—er, subwoofers.

I have one minor bone to pick with the sub's ergonomics: The level control is hidden behind the grille. Since I like to touch up the sub's

level from one DVD or CD to the next, I wound up leaving the grille off. Great, except that the naked 442 SB isn't nearly as pretty as the fully dressed model, but I guess I should be thankful that the volume

## AT A GLANCE ATLANTIC TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM 2200 SPEAKER SYSTEM



### ◆ SUBWOOFER: 422 SB

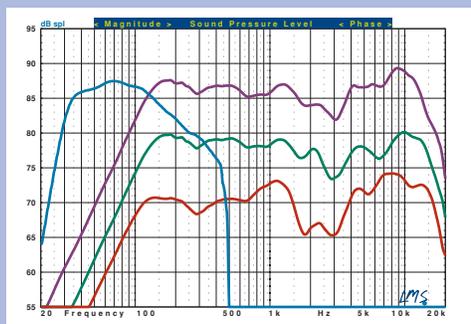
Connections:	Line-level ins and outs
Enclosure Type:	Sealed
Woofer (size in inches, type):	12, long-throw composite cone
Power Rating (watts):	225 (RMS)
Crossover Bypass:	Yes
Available Finishes:	Maple, High-Gloss Silver, High-Gloss Black
Dimensions (H x W x D, inches):	17.75 x 17.25 x 16.9
Weight (pounds):	44
Price:	\$2,000–\$2,120 for system

These listings are based on the manufacturer's stated specs; the HT Labs box below indicates the gear's performance on our test bench.

### ◆ SPEAKER:

	2200 LR	2200 C	2200 SR
Type:	Two-way, monitor	Two-way, center	Two-way, bipole/dipole
Tweeter (size in inches, type):	1, soft dome	1, soft dome	1, soft dome (2)
Woofer (size in inches, type):	4.5, GLH (2)	4.5, GLH (2)	4.5, GLH (2)
Nominal Impedance (ohms):	8	8	8
Recommended Amp Power (watts):	10–140 (RMS)	10–140 (RMS)	10–140 (RMS)
Available Finishes:	Maple, High-Gloss Silver, High-Gloss Black	Maple, High-Gloss Silver, High-Gloss Black	Maple, High-Gloss Silver, High-Gloss Black
Dimensions (H x W x D, inches):	12.9 x 6.4 x 7	7.5 x 14.6 x 7	10.4 x 11.4 x 7.5
Weight (pounds):	7.5	8	7.5
Price:	\$2,000–\$2,120 for system	\$2,000–\$2,120 for system	\$2,000–\$2,120 for system

## HT Labs Measures: Atlantic Technology System 2200 Speaker System



- ◆ 2200 LR L/R Sensitivity: 86 dB from 500 Hz to 2 kHz
- ◆ 2200 C Center Sensitivity: 86 dB from 500 Hz to 2 kHz
- ◆ 2200 SR Surround Sensitivity: 83 dB from 500 Hz to 2 kHz

This graph shows the quasi-anechoic (employing close-miking of all woofers) frequency response of the 2200 LR L/R (purple trace), 422 SB subwoofer (blue trace), 2200 C center channel (green trace), and 2200 SR surround (red trace). All passive loudspeakers were measured at a distance of 1 meter

with a 2.83-volt input and scaled for display purposes.

The 2200 LR's listening-window response (a five-point average of axial and +/-15-degree horizontal and vertical responses) measures +3.37/-4.03 dB from 200 Hz to 10 kHz. The -3dB point is at 106 Hz, and the -6dB point is at 90 Hz. Impedance reaches a minimum of 5.32 ohms at 235 Hz and a phase angle of -42.03 degrees at 143 Hz.

The 2200 C's listening-window response measures +2.17/-4.59 dB from 200 Hz to 10 kHz. An average of axial and +/-15-degree horizontal responses measures +2.22/-5.63 dB from 200 Hz to 10 kHz. The -3dB point is at 104 Hz, and the -6dB point is at 88 Hz. Impedance reaches a minimum of 4.95 ohms at 4.6 kHz and a phase angle of -43.12 degrees at 139 Hz.

The 2200 SR's three-face averaged response in dipole mode measures +3.30/-5.59 dB from 200 Hz to 10 kHz. The -3dB point is at 117 Hz, and the -6dB point is at 92 Hz. Impedance reaches a minimum of 5.29 ohms at 4.9 kHz and a phase angle of -46.40 degrees at 111 Hz.

The 422 SB's close-miked response, normalized to the level at 80 Hz, indicates that the lower -3dB point is at 33 Hz and the -6dB point is at 29 Hz. The upper -3dB point is at 150 Hz with the crossover switch set to bypass. —MJP

control is in front and more convenient to access than it is on a sub with a rear-mounted level control.

### The Second Encounter: Listening

For this review, I used a Harman/Kardon AVR 630 receiver teamed with my Denon DVD-2900 universal player. I started my auditions with the *Persuasions Sing the Beatles* SACD; this a cappella disc can sound awfully thin on sub/sat systems that have recessed midbass response. No problems here. The *Persuasions'* voices had just the right amount of body and soul, and bass man Jim Hayes' resonant pipes were in all of their glory. The finger snaps at the end of "The Ballad of John and Yoko" had just the right amount of fleshy tonality and transient snap.

On the emotionally charged *House of Sand and Fog* DVD, the music and low-level ambient detail properly receded into the background. The System 2200's heightened resolution made the most of the film's themes of possession, abandonment, honor, and family roots. With *Master and Commander*, the System 2200 rallied to convey harrowing volleys of cannon fire; the satellites'

lifestyle-friendly size didn't squash the DVD's wickedly massive sound. Dynamic verve was impressive but didn't quite achieve the in-your-gut oomph of a larger system.

Frank Zappa's 1977 Halloween show in New York City eventually mutated into a concert film called *Baby Snakes*. Thanks to its immersive 5.1 mix and the 2200 SR surround speakers, I felt like I was in the middle of the audience, which was in the throes of Zapped-out ecstasy. The 422 SB's bass wasn't just deep; it was extraordinarily tight and well defined. Electric bass lines "popped" like the real thing. I wasn't surprised; sealed subs often have a definitive edge over ported ones in this respect—and the 422 SB sub is one of the best I've heard in this class.

### The Third Encounter: How Good Is It?

While the System 2200's virtues are many, I doubt it's going to cannibalize sales of Atlantic's bigger packages. Crank up full-bore rock-'n'-roll, and the wee sats' limitations—limitations that weren't obvious with home theater trials—become apparent. The system's midbass weight wasn't there, so we learn yet again that

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Atlantic's *Swan*-like makeover is a ravishing success
- Rock-solid subwoofer
- C.O.R.E. room-tuning features

size still matters; however, in rooms smaller than mine (say, fewer than 400 square feet or so), the System 2200 will kick butt at least as well as any sub/sat combo I've heard. When you consider the System 2200's exceptional room-tuning features, it's easy to see the wisdom of Tribeman's strategy.

If you're looking for full-tilt dynamics, gutsy bass slam, and razor-flat frequency response, do yourself a favor and pay the extra freight to buy grown-up speakers. I'm not claiming that you have to spend \$10,000 on the System 6200; I'd first check out Atlantic's System 4200 THX Select package (\$3,500), which might do the trick. One thing's for sure: Peter Tribeman's perfectionist drive is built into every speaker he makes. 

ATLANTIC TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM 2200 SPEAKER SYSTEM					OVERALL RATING
Build Quality	Value	Features	Performance	Ergonomics	 <p>Atlantic Technology crammed a giant helping of high-end build quality and performance into this affordable package. If you're looking for a system to suit your midsized or smaller room, the System 2200 is definitely worth an audition.</p>
→ The vinyl maple finish looks nice, but the slick black and silver paint finishes are extra snazzy → The speakers have sturdy binding posts	→ Atlantic's building-block approach lets you build exactly the right system for your needs or tastes—and maybe even saves you a couple of bucks	→ The center-channel speaker compensates for adverse room acoustics → Switchable bi-/dipole surround speakers	→ Stable imaging → Effortlessly deep, controlled bass → Rhythmic agility that few sub/sat systems can match	→ Stand- or wall-mountable speakers → You have to remove the sub's grille to get to its level control	
90	92	92	90	85	
<h3>General information</h3> <p>System 2200 Speaker System, \$2,000 (maple) or \$2,120 (high-gloss black or silver)                      Atlantic Technology, (781) 762-6300, <a href="http://www.atlanticttechnology.com">www.atlanticttechnology.com</a> → Dealer Locator Code ATL</p>					