

Marantz CD6002 | £270

★★★★★ www.marantz.com

Marantz's mission to dominate the budget CD market continues: after the runaway success of its CD5001, here's the CD6002

FOR

A fun-filled and insightful sound for the money; excellent build; nice remote

AGAINST

Nothing

VERDICT

For the money, the CD6002 gives terrific detail, dynamic range and timing

THERE WAS a day when Marantz fairly dominated the budget and mid-priced CD markets. However, the company suffered a lull, and was eclipsed by Cambridge Audio, among others.

But, as the presence of this CD spinner here and the equally good value CD5003 (see p18) shows, the company's recent efforts have been very well received. And for good reason.

Offers something for everyone

Maybe the return to form in the budget arenas related to Marantz's latest products near the top of the hi-fi tree. Its £5000 SA-7Si CD player (see p39) earned enough plaudits to make its price-tag look positively reasonable.

Whatever the truth, this CD6002 is good enough to have swept up the sub-£300 CD Award in 2007, and is a firm favourite of our reviewers.

Unlike some recent Marantz players - which have tended to exhibit a rich and smooth character - this one is much happier with more dynamic material. It's still happy reproducing vocals and small-scale classical pieces well, but now has dynamics to spare.

Drop in something like Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, and the Marantz can caress the more subtle moments, while spitting out all the angst and vitriol Kurt Cobain can muster for the chorus. It times beautifully, so a more hypnotic, beat-driven track such as *The Rapture's I Need Your Love* is endowed with the control and punch to draw you

in. Its fleetness of foot is allied to a genuinely engaging midrange that's fluid enough for all styles.

What's really impressive here is that Marantz hasn't just improved on its own players, but it has taken a giant leap forward, hurdling the very best that the rest can muster. The result is a CD player that doesn't sound out of sorts when partnered with much more heavyweight equipment.

"And the result is a CD player that doesn't sound out of sorts when partnered with far more heavyweight kit"

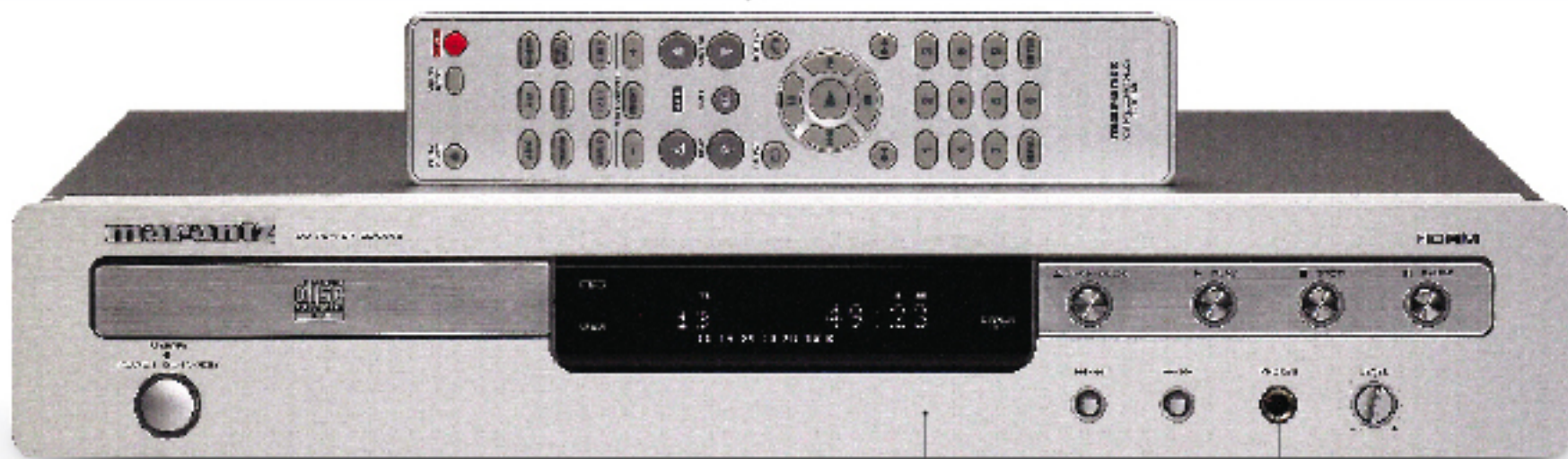
We've had the pleasure of hearing the Marantz in a system comprising a Roksan Kandy amp and ATC's £850 SCM 11 speakers (p98), and the CD6002 held its own in such illustrious company. Sure, you can improve on it in most areas, but to do so would mean spending big money on something like the £600 Rega Apollo before you significantly better this machine.

A great value all-rounder

If you're looking for a great-sounding budget CD player - which is well built, easy to use, and comes with an attractive remote control - then the £270 Marantz CD6002 should be at the top of your shopping list. Audition it!

Precious metals

Round the back, you'll find a pair of gold-plated phono terminals. These are a pleasing spec on what's really a budget machine. You'll find both types of digital audio output, too.



Solidly constructed

It might not be the most exciting looking as far as CD players go, but the Marantz is so well made it still exudes on-the-shelf appeal, especially at the price.

Variable output

You can listen to CDs directly from your Marantz using the headphone output. The volume dial gives you control over level, too. No amp or speakers are needed.

WHAT MAKES IT SPECIAL?



HDAM inside

The analogue circuits use Marantz's 'HDAM' modules built up of numerous discrete transistors. They're said to preserve the music's dynamics and tone without standing speed and timbre.



Display off mode

The CD6002 has a display that can be turned off. The idea is that this mode helps reduce electrical noise and improves sound. OK, so it's a subtle benefit, but we admire Marantz's dedication.



MP3 support

Like most modern disc spinners, the CD6002 can also play discs encoded with MP3 files. It'll also handle your CD-R and CD-RW discs, a product of manufacturers using CD-ROM drives.



Stay in control

The Marantz's remote control hands et al can also control stereo amps from the same company. Similarly, the amp remotes can control CD functions. Good for reducing living room clutter.

SPECS

AUDIO OUTPUTS RCA phono, coaxial digital, optical digital
HEADPHONE OUTPUT Yes
PLAYS CD, CD-R
HD CD REPLAY No
CD TEXT Yes
MEMORY Yes
DISPLAY OFF Yes
FINISH ES 2
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 9 x 44 x 28cm
WEIGHT 5kg

PERFECT PARTNERS SYSTEM PRICE £1026



INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER
MARANTZ PM6002 ★★★★★
£270

A well-specced budget amplifier that'll sit very nicely indeed with its matching Marantz CD player. It provides an articulate sound that captures complex rhythms well, and relays voices with as un-fussed delicacy that belies its price-tag. For more, check out the review on p42.



SPEAKERS

BM685
★★★★★

£380

These powerful, well-balanced designs sound every bit as good as they look, and can easily provide a full, formidable sound on the end of the Marantz electronics, whatever music you throw at them. See p90 for a full review.



ACCESSORIES
SOUNDSTYLE Z2 STANDS/CHORD CO CARNIVAL SILVERSCREEN
★★★★★
£70+6/m

Decent stands and cables are vital to get the best from this system: spending even more on stands will help the B&W focus further still. See p144.



ADDING A RECORD PLAYER?
See p122

TRY THESE

DISC THAT WILL SHOW OFF ALL THE MARANTZ'S SKILLS



NIRVANA

Nevermind

It's as adept with the vast volume shifts of *Smells Like Teen Spirit* and *Liability*, as it is with the subtleties of *Something In The Way*.



THE RAPTURE

Echoes

In the wrong hands singer Luke Jenner's voice can grate, but the Marantz CD6002 communicates his emotions perfectly.



MIKA

Grace Kelly

Fancy championing an on-e-bubble-gum pop? Play this CD single through your Marantz, and you'll be amply rewarded.

Marantz PM6002 | £270

★★★★★ www.marantz.com

From pulsating rock to soothing alt.country, this feature-packed, well-built Marantz is a friend to all those with wide musical tastes

FOR

Sturdy feel and looks; full spec; vivacious, animated sound, especially with voices

AGAINST

The deepest bass notes lack clarity

VERDICT

A superb amp for the money, and one that will provide you with hours of music fun

RATHER UNUSUALLY, OUR first experience of this amplifier was as one-third of a deeply impressive one-make system in January 2008. Ever since, we've been anxious to test it in isolation against the best of its peers – and now that rather interesting opportunity has arisen.

Without a matching CD player and sympathetic speakers to team up with, how does the Marantz cope?

The short answer is: most splendidly. Obviously, you'd like a bit more detail than that, so we'll give you the long answer, too. In terms of build and specification, the Marantz has nothing to fear from the opposition.

Classy construction at a low price

It's as robustly made as we've come to expect from the company – in fact, its budget price-tag is at odds with its beefy tactility.

Nifty things such as a full-featured remote control, switching for two pairs of loudspeakers, five line-level inputs (with two recording loops), and a moving-magnet phono stage make for an impressive specification. And when the discussion turns to sound quality, the good news just keeps on coming. Amplifying a recording of Ike and Tina Turner's *You Got What You Wanted*, the PM6002 serves up a confident, exhilarating sound.

The Marantz is as upfront and enthusiastic as its price rivals, but manages to bring more discipline to bear. The PM6002 is the most

communicative of amps in this category when it comes to vocal expression and resolution. It's happy to charge through up-tempo material but positively revels in the subtle light and shade of Lambchop's *Is A Woman*, exhibiting a surefooted delicacy of touch that belies its price-tag.

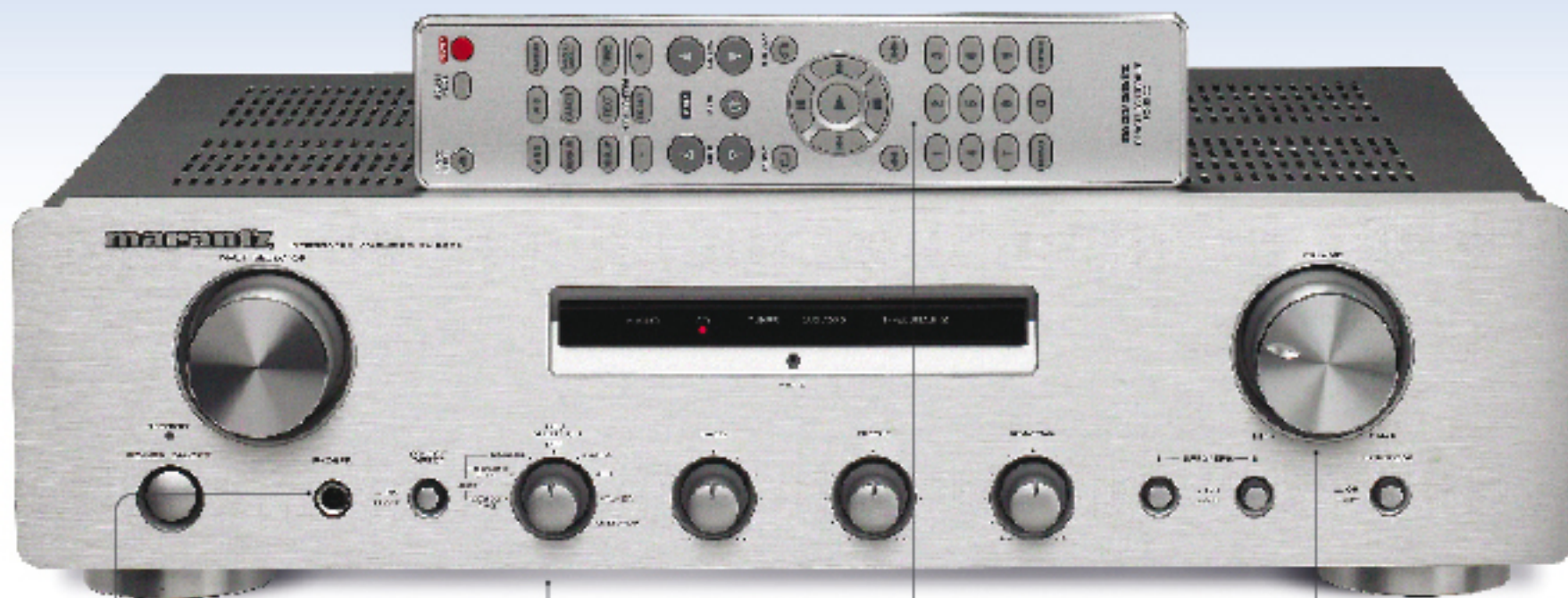
Stone-cold sound from the Queens

Even when the Marantz is knee-deep in the harsher, harder sounds of Queens of the Stone Age, and their underrated fifth album *Era Vulgaris*, the PM6002 still rifles through the tracks and presents a wad of detail. From the alienating, grinding sound of *Misfit*

“Amplifying Ike and Tina Turner's *You Got What You Wanted*, the Marantz serves up a confident, exhilarating display”

Love to the ardent, high-scaled *In the Hollow*, the Marantz brings out the very best of the Queens' semi-raw, under-dubbed sound.

But, if we're to criticise (and if we can, we will), then we'd like a bit more expressiveness to the low end. The Marantz hits plenty hard – as the blast of the Queens will testify – but it's a bit monotonous where very low bass is concerned. That aside, this is an exciting amp, ideal for many budget systems.



Where's your head (phone in) at...?

At the front on the Marantz. Surprisingly, some amps don't have a headphone input at all – let alone on the front. Very handy.

Still a metal guru?

By any definition, we wouldn't call the Marantz's metal front and casing flimsy, but in comparison, some amps are so rigid you can stand on them.

Phat controller

The remote lets you control more than just the amp – if you've a Marantz CD player it'll work with that, too. It doesn't share the same hefty build as the amp, though.

Fill your boost

A loudness button? Retrol! But does it give an exciting listen? No. It adds bass and treble at very low volumes, which normally means a harsher sound. Oh well...

WHAT MAKES IT SPECIAL?



Phono home

For all those who still enjoy vinyl polymer, or records as they were once known, the PM6002 comes with a handy moving magnet (MM) phono input. Time for a trip to the lift...

Mains attraction

The importance of good cables can never be overstated. The Marantz comes with a detachable mains cable. An affordable upgrade means a cleaner sound – see p145.

Room to move

The PM6002 comes with a second set of speaker outputs for a multiroom set-up – ideal, if you want your every move around the house choreographed by the soundtrack to *Dirty Dancing*...

There be gold...

Gold-plated inputs. They sound cool when you're bragging to 50 Cent – we mean about the '6002, but the gold serves a purpose – to reduce signal-path interference and cut surface degradation.

SPECS

POWER 45 watts per channel
LINE-LEVEL INPUTS 5
PHONO STAGE Yes
PREAMP OUT No
TAPE LOOPS 2
SPEAKER OUTS 2 pairs
TONE CONTROLS Yes
HEADPHONE Yes
REMOTE Yes
FINISHES Black, silver
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 12 x 44 x 34cm

PERFECT PARTNERS SYSTEM PRICE £1064



CD PLAYER
MARANTZ CD6002 ★★★★★
£270

Packed with high-end components and circuitry from Marantz's top-end models, all is tailored towards great quality – a class leader, especially at this price point. And it has enough ability to cope with substantial upgrades of an amplifier and speakers without becoming the limiting factor in system performance. See p16.

SPEAKERS
B&W 685
★★★★★
£380

These powerful, well-balanced designs sound every bit as good as they look, and can easily provide a full, formidable sound on the end of the Marantz electronics, whatever music you throw at them. See p90 for a full review.



ACCESSORIES
SOUNDSTYLE 22, CHORD COMPANY CRMSON/CHORD CARNIVAL SS ★★★★★
£70+38+6/m

Before you say "how much for the accessories?" remember these take your hi-fi to its true highs. This combo of stands and high-quality speaker cables will help you get the most from your set-up with their controlled, detailed performance. See p144.



NEED A TURNABLE?
See p122

TRY THESE

THREE CLASSIC SETS TO TEST THE MARANTZ'S SKILL



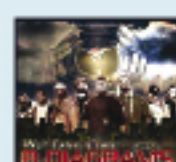
SEASICK STEVE

Dog House Music
His guitar might have only two strings, but boy he sure can play it. Down, dirty and strangely touching blues for the Marantz.



WILCO

Kicking Television Live in Chicago
The spirit of Neil Young lingers in this live set. From clever rock to bitter-sweet melodies – this disc has it all.



WU-TANG CLAN

8 Diagrams
The fifth album from Wu-Tang Clan might not pop a cap into the PM6002, but it will certainly give it a lot to think about.