

Pioneer SC-LX90



£5000

ALTHOUGH PIONEER IS no stranger to high-end home cinema, this price is still uncharted territory for the company: the SC-LX90 is its most expensive multichannel amp yet.

It certainly looks the part, though. Pioneer's development codename for this project was 'Susano', a Japanese god endowed with power over the seas and storms, and the finished amp looks every bit as heavenly as its origins suggest. The Pioneer is also uncommonly large: the pronounced cutaway around its waist serves to

“The Pioneer charges into the fray with amazing zeal – it’s breathtaking”

visually (and technically) separate the box into distinct 'pre' and 'power' units, with the smaller lower section hosting 10 channels of power.

Developed jointly with ICEpower, founded by Bang & Olufsen, these compact Class D power amps are claimed to deliver low distortion, ultra-fast response and exceptionally high power. That inherent speed

↑ FOR

Sensational speed, attack and drive; comprehensive spec; easy to live with; desirable looks; fine build

↓ AGAINST

Very little: it's a shade more forward-sounding than some, but never enough to be a problem

→ VERDICT

A remarkably good foray into this price class for Pioneer: well worth a proper investigation



perfectly fits in with the sonic signature we've come to expect from Pioneer products, in part because the SC-LX90 has been fine-tuned by Air Studios.

Immensely powerful performance

Straight from the off, the Pioneer charges into battle with amazing zeal. Its sheer drive, its ability to capture fast effects shifts, is breathtaking. It can charge from quiet to loud in the blink of an eye, as the 'jump' moment in *I Am Legend* ably illustrates.

However, while the SC-LX90 is undeniably forward-sounding and

direct, it's by no means harsh or hard, even at huge volumes. High frequencies are pin-sharp, but also well-marshalled and accurately defined.

The result is an amp you've just got to listen to. It makes movies thrilling or intimate as needed, and is a more musical listen than many of its ilk. It's a real triumph for the folks at Pioneer.

SPECIFICATION

Channels/power 10 x 140W **Audio inputs** 6 x HDMI, 7 x optical digital, 4 x coaxial digital, 13 x analogue, 8ch analogue **Video ins** 6 x HDMI, 5 x component, 4 x S-Video, 8 x composite **Radio No**

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