

Peavey PR 15

PA speakers

A compact, passive PA speaker benefiting from US manufacture and the reliable Peavey name.

Paul White

Walk into any pub or club that puts on music and there's a good chance you'll see a Peavey HiSys speaker hanging on the wall, and for a good reason: they offer a decent level of performance at an attractive price. However, there's still a market for users who want something a bit cheaper and a bit lighter, which is where this latest offering, the PR 15, comes in. Outwardly, they look pretty much the same as competing plastic-box speakers, but these are built in the US using Peavey's own components.

Two quarter-inch jacks are fitted to the rear panel for connection and onward linking, but there are no Speakons. I feel this is a bit remis on a speaker of this power rating, as there's a limit to the thickness of cable a jack plug can accommodate, and with high-powered speakers, the thicker the cable, the better the performance. Four bass ports are arranged around the woofer, and as well as moulded side carrying handles, there are threaded flying insert points for more permanent installations. A tough steel grille protects the woofer, and as with most plastic speakers, the box tapers towards the rear, which saves space and cuts down cabinet resonances. However, there's no steep rear angle for floor monitor use. A 35mm pole



socket is moulded into the base of the cabinet for fitting to a standard tripod speaker stand.

Rated at a generous 400W RMS continuous or 800W program, the 8 Ω passive cabinet is loaded with a 15-inch woofer, which is powered by a voice coil over two inches in diameter and driven by a neodymium magnet motor assembly. This is teamed with Peavey's RX14 compression driver, sporting a 1.4-inch titanium diaphragm, sitting in a constant-directivity horn flare moulded into the cabinet and providing a 90 (horizontal) x 40 degree (vertical) coverage. The passive crossover includes protection for the tweeter, presumably in the usual form of a series light bulb that increases in resistance at high power levels, thus limiting the current passing through the tweeter when

pushed hard. Overall, the frequency response is specified as 49Hz to 21kHz, though in practice the low end isn't that strong, especially when working at higher sound levels, so if you need to put bass instruments through the system, you'd really need to add a sub. This isn't surprising, because even though a 15-inch driver is large enough to handle bass frequencies, it would need a larger and more rigid cabinet than this to do so effectively.

Modern speakers have really improved in efficiency over what was available a couple of decades ago, and this cabinet can manage a healthy 97dB for 1W at one metre. This is important, as the efficiency figure gives you an idea of how much actual sound level you can expect for the amount of amplifier power.

Performance

With a passive speaker, you ideally need to ensure that you have at least as much clean amplifier power available as the speaker is rated for, otherwise you'll lose out on overall volume and run into distortion at a lower level. A 500W-RMS-per-channel amplifier would be a practical choice. That is pretty much what we used for our tests, and I wouldn't suggest going much lower than 300W per channel. Moulded speaker cabinets seldom sound as good to my ears as wooden ones because it is very hard to damp out all the cabinet resonances. When working primarily with vocals and mid-range instruments, the PR 15s come over as pretty clean, with just a hint of that lower-mid 'Tupperware' tonality when pushed. This becomes more obvious if you put lower frequencies through the system, and though

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Peavey PR 15
£207 (each)

While low-cost plastic box speakers must always be a compromise, the PR 15s deliver plenty of level with good vocal clarity. Their bass performance is a little less impressive, but you can always add a sub if the need arises.

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Tech Spec

PR 15

- 15-inch woofer, RX14 compression driver.
- 400W RMS, 800W program.
- 90 x 40 degree constant-directivity horn.
- Dimensions (WDH): 558 x 434 x 736mm.
- Weight: 16kg.