

hardware

weizhi audio

PRS-6 Power Distributor

as reviewed by Ryan Coleman



I was reading the book "The Time Machine" by HG Wells and it got me to thinking, "In 20 years, how will the audiophile's system differ from today?" Well, first and foremost, I think the dominant medium of software will be high-resolution digital tracks stored on computers, as that wave is already rolling in (but I do believe CDs and LPs will still be around, with LPs growing in importance). Moving on, I think we'll see more space saving designs with no compromise in performance: think CD players integrated with preamps and possibly all-in-one devices: player/DAC/preamp/amp. I also think serious audiophile gear will run on high-tech batteries, as the AC grid will still suck and designers will attempt to relieve us from its poisonous energy.

But in the event I'm wrong about the batteries and we're still using 120v/60Hz AC to power our gear, it's entirely

possible I'll still be using the Weizhi PRS-6 power distributor.

Lord knows it will still be working just as it does today. As a purely passive power conditioner, it has no active parts, no transformers, no chokes, which is another way of saying there is nothing that will ever break, fail, overheat, wear out, or require it to be sent back to the factory for servicing. It's just 3 duplexes in a compact, fancy box, enough to power 6 components, but it's the most over-ambitious power distributor you'll ever see. The chassis is rather inert. Sure, I'd like it better if it had an audiophile-type foot underneath it, but really, the footer won't matter. As I said, the chassis is inert; think of a 12 foot iron rod pounded 11 feet deep into a glacier—that's the kind of inert I'm talking about. The chassis is a CNC-machined solid brick of Duralumin, which will neuter any vibrations coming out of the wall AC wiring, and friends, there's lots of them. When air conditioners switch on & off, when the local contractor is running his band saw, when the refrigerator cycles on, you can bet those motors are sending vibrations right back into the AC grid (which I believe is why the Oyaide WPZ wall plate is a highly effective tweak. It kills vibrations too).

As I run through the bill of materials in the unit, I really don't understand what makes it work so darn well (which I'll get to shortly). Sure, it's using fine parts: the aforementioned chassis, a carbon fiber outlet cover, Oyaide R-1 outlets, a 15a Furutech gold-plated IEC, 6-Nine internal wiring, and then the bizarre: the use of a graphite ground and nanotech coating of the chassis interior. The marketing fluff piece points to the latter as providing the EMI/RFI shielding, but how should I know? I'm not a scientist or a chemist, I'm just an audiophile with a good set of ears and enough of an open mind to try the silly thing (but it did take a number of audio buddies raving about it to convince me to do so first).

And so I did.

When evaluating any new component, the first thing I listen for is dynamics. My system, with 500 watts into Wilson loudspeakers, is designed for dynamics. Heck, the best lesson I ever learned in audio was from Bob Crump (RIP): get dynamics right first, then worry about tone and microdetail—but if there's no dynamics, your system will never approach the reference standard of live music, ever. Sage words. Passive conditioners like the Weizhi have no active parts or circuits to interfere with current delivery at the split second that a musical passage demands it (whereas active power conditioners routinely prove inadequate on a momentary basis, unable to accommodate the current demanded by the music). I suspected, and subsequent listening confirmed, that there was no dynamic restriction whatsoever. Whatever dynamics and pace you had coming out of the wall, you'll still have with the Weizhi.

(I admit it seems screwy to give points for doing nothing, but so often power conditioners do limit dynamics I felt compelled to explicitly state this feature.)

Beyond dynamics, I am listening for two things in a conditioner: noise floor and tone. Noise floor is one side of the coin; the other side being identified as "micro-detail," for when you're speaking of one you is really speaking of both. Elevate the noise floor and you lose detail in the recording, simple as that. Well, I will say the Weizhi PRS-6 brings the noise floor as low as any conditioner I've heard, but never with an inky-blackness that can sound artificial. To use an analogy: some conditioners will make the empty space sound like a wall that's been painted black (flat and impossibly mono-color), while others will make it sound like a moonless night (deep and hollow). The Weizhi sounds like the latter. So does live music. Both may recover the same amount of detail, but one sounds more natural.

And that takes me to the second thing I listen for in a conditioner: tone. The Weizhi's tone is organic and, dare I say, completely developed (though dependent on the AC cord used to feed it, as none is supplied with the unit). This reminded me of when I owned a full range planar speaker. When one has no crossovers, one gets to listen to music without crossover-notch distortions and driver non-linearities, which is a sound that's sweet, inviting, and musical—the antithesis of hi-fi. That's what the Weizhi is like. It took the Weizhi's superior tone to supplant my prior reference conditioner, another passive conditioner which equaled the Weizhi in the noise floor parameter, but sounded a bit tipped in the treble in comparison, and a bit more monochromatic in the upper midrange (traits which I suspect were parcel to the beryllium plating of the AC outlets). The Weizhi was the first product to alert me to these things, as the Weizhi had no frequency that called attention to itself, no area that stood out, and nothing to give the casual audiophile an area to point to and say "look what it does here!" There's no booming bass, no whitish treble, no syrupy midrange. Nothing. And it is this lack of sizzle/boom that makes the Weizhi quite the plug-and-play conditioner. It is not going to compensate for some coloration in your system by providing an offsetting coloration; it is going to try to stay the hell out of the way and let your components do the talking, without imposing itself into the equation.

As you can guess, I'm rather enamored of this silly brick of a power distributor. I don't know why it works, but I've no doubt that if I live another 50 years it will still be working its charms on my whole rig (which incidentally sounded best plugged into the Weizhi, disproving the notion of keeping digital and analog separate, or the notion that amps needed their own dedicated lines for superior current delivery). And with the Weizhi feeding the whole rig, the better cord you use to feed the Weizhi, the better the whole system will sound—instant upgrade for those who like to tip-toe into higher-end AC cords. This combination of features and performance make the Weizhi a fantastic, no-brainer recommendation on my part (other than the considerable price). I ended up buying it and encourage any audiophile in the market to listen to one before making any purchasing decisions. It's that good.
Ryan Coleman

PRS-6
Retail: \$3200

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