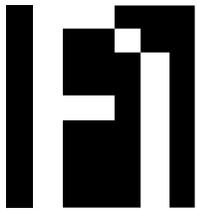


“ ... CLEAR ... ENGAGING
... IMPRESSIVE ... ”

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“Paradigm Titans are a well balanced and highly enjoyable speaker ... gets “the feel” of the music right ... one heck of a value.”

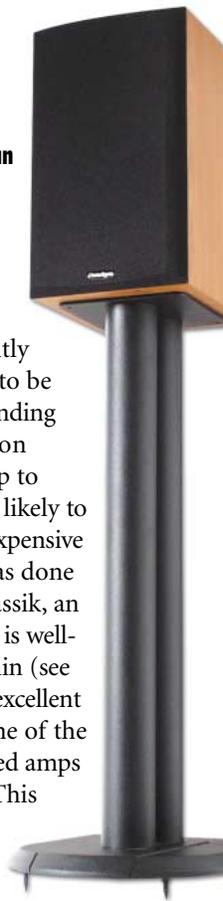
by Wayne Garcia

Part of this Canadian manufacturer’s entry-level Performance Series, designed to provide exceptional sound for a bargain price, the Titans can either be installed on a bookshelf, wall-mounted with special brackets, or stand-mounted. Not having a suitable bookshelf to try them on, and not eager to fuss with wall-mount hardware, I opted for 30”-tall stands, which allowed me to experiment with the speakers in proximity to the rear wall. Although the two-way Titans sounded okay close to a wall (which is where I started listening to them in order to mimic a shelf or wall-mount arrangement) the bass was a bit heavy and the speakers took on a chesty sound—no surprise there, the closer a speaker is to the back wall, the greater the bass boost. Moving the Titans out 15” opened them up significantly and proved to be the ideal placement in my room. (Pulling them out farther opened things up even more, but it also thinned out the balance.)

One word that kept coming to mind while listening to the Titan was “impressionistic.” By that I mean the Titan’s

overall balance is on the slightly soft side, and seems designed to be forgiving of bright or thin-sounding electronics—a wise decision on Paradigm’s part when you stop to consider that most people are likely to match this speaker with an inexpensive receiver. (My own listening was done with the terrific little Linn Classik, an integrated amp/CD player that is well-defined but hardly bright or thin (see *Fi Review* September ’98). An excellent alternative choice would be one of the affordable receivers or integrated amps from Creek, NAD, or Rotel.) This impressionistic nature was evident during the first movement of Boulez’s *Mahler Ninth* (DGG). The opening, low-level harp, horns, and string obbligatos were clear (the upper strings were rather warm and sweet), the orchestra was big and nicely spread from wall-to-wall with a good (if not pinpoint) sense of image placement and center fill, and a reasonable (if not finely layered) semblance of depth.

Titan



"... string obbligatos were clear ... the orchestra was big and nicely spread from wall to wall with a good sense of image placement and center fill ..."

As dynamics grew and the orchestra started to build, the tiny Titans handled the crushing first movement climax with impressive ease for such a modestly priced model, even if the smallest details didn't quite shine through.

"... the tiny Titans handled the crushing first movement climax with impressive ease ..."

Pop music and vocals were nicely served by the Titan and showed off this speaker's strengths—its ability to swing and be engaging. From George Faber's *It Beats Working* (Pope Music), to *Sinatra at the Sands* (Reprise) the Titans were consistently big, bold and open-sounding, with impressive snap and impact to drums and upright bass, and a nice natural sound to acoustic guitars. (In fact, I think the Titan's slightly resonant cabinet actually flatters the sound of acoustic guitars, acoustic bass, and drums, adding an extra degree of richness and body). Despite the speaker's overall softness, the top end of the Titan is a bit on the splashy side—vocal sibilants, cymbals, upper reaches of the piano, are not quite as smooth as one might like.

But all designs have their trade-offs and no speaker, at any price, is perfect. At this low price, the Paradigm Titans are a well-balanced and highly enjoyable speaker. If your budget is limited, or you're after a second set of speakers, and you value a design that gets "the feel" of the music right, if not every last detail, the Titan should not only serve you well, but will prove to be one heck of a value.

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