

“... room-shakingly **POTENT** ...

splendidly **RICH** mid-bass ...

**SEAMLESS** high midrange.”

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Cunning Canucks Paradigm Electronics are entering the UK via Richer Sounds. They reckon their stuff manages to sound fabby for less money. So, does it?

All Canadians, if we are to believe *Due South*, are just a little bit odd. I believe this to be true myself, as I have Canadian relatives. However, they seem to care about sound, for there are some important speaker makers resident in North America's higher latitudes. Paradigm is one such company.

According to its glossy and somewhat repetitive bumpf, it tries to offer more performance for the cash. As we've said before, we do not harp on about absolute cost here on *HCC*; we're more concerned with whether a product is good for its type, and if the money is likely to be well-spent.

And the good news here is that all the right features seem to be in place with this lot, and as promised, for a bit less

than you might expect. This big heap of boxes costs just over a grand. All the loud-speaker drive units are made by Paradigm rather than bought in and all (bar the 12-inch subwoofer) have cast aluminum alloy chassis.

All the tweeters are treated fabric domes and have magnetic fluid cooling and damping. The cast chassis help produce less coloration of the middle tones, while the ferro-fluid makes for tweeters that have much less power compression. They tend to sound more airy, transparent and clearer.

None of these chipboard boxes could really be called petite. A bit like Revolver speakers, these are intended for AV enthusiasts, who are generally quite happy to give up chunks of their living space for the sake of soundtracks and music. Despite claiming to have

7seMk3



small footprints, the spike-standing 7seMk3 speakers, assigned left and right duties, are quite bulky. They have two clear polypropylene cones and a tweeter, above a wide 3-inch curved port vent.

*"... what the PS-1000 subwoofer does is just marvellous. Grumbles, in your face explosions involving [Toy Story's] Combat Karl strapped to the big firecracker, and massive trucks in computer-animated filling stations were all room-inflatingly fat."*

Although the baffles are no wider than anyone else's, the enclosures extend back more than a foot and must contribute to the deep-breathing bass they are capable of making.

The CC-300 centre speaker is the bigger brother of the CC-150, and I could easily hear why Bob Tomalski so enjoyed these smaller cousins in a previous edition of *HCC*.

The model is well-shielded but rather deep front-to-back, which may cause problems for those looking to place it atop a regular TV. Ideally, it should sit on a shelf just above (or below) the TV.

The rears are called Atoms, so I expected a mighty but miniature speaker. What emerged from the packing was only a mediumly-small pair of regular two-ways. They are as dense as hell, weighing in at 4 kilos each, and the grilles are not removable.



CC-300

Along with the subwoofer, they have spring tags to the rear; the three front soundstagers each have two sets of jumper-connected binding posts should you wish to bi-wire the speakers later.

The best way to hook up the PS-1000 subwoofer is via the line inputs. Apart from anything else, if you were using this as the crossover, it has a handy 18 dB per octave 80 Hz high-pass filter at signal level. Paradigm includes a continuously variable phase adjuster knob that is only found on the bigger models from rival maker Mirage, as well as the usual gain, 50-150 Hz crossover point adjuster and an auto on/off sensing circuit.

'WHAT'S WITH HIM?'  
'LASER ENVY...'

*"This set of speakers intrigued me from the off. They seemed to have a strong family sound that matched and melded across and within the soundstage ..."*

This set of speakers intrigued from the off. They seemed to have a strong family sound that matched and melded across and within the soundstage, but somehow, the difference between these and, say, the Mirages (reviewed elsewhere) was substantial. The imaging was enjoyable but lacked a holographic hanging-in-the-air quality. The system was also less deft with low-level background noises during quiet passages, such as the garden sounds behind the *Toy Story* meeting scene. It wasn't that the sound of the Paradigms was not accurate or pleasing; it was more to do with the differences between bipolar sound and single direct-radiating (conventional speaker) sound.

This Paradigm combination is room-shakingly potent on the bass end, scintillatingly tinkly and breathy on the top end, has a splendidly rich mid-bass and a seamless

high midrange. In a nutshell: this is a quality performance.

And what the PS-1000 subwoofer does is just marvellous. Grumbles, in your face explosions involving Combat Karl strapped to the big firecracker, and massive trucks in computer-animated filling stations were all room-inflatingly fat.

The Atoms surround speakers will need sorting on brackets yourself or else putting on a shelf to the rear. But wherever they are, there's no getting away from the fact that they are not all that efficient.

All things considered, though, this problem, and the earlier niggles, don't detract from the fact that this system is absurdly good value, worthy of shortlisting for any auditions.

## F O C U S

For little more than a grand you'll end up with sound quality that warrants a good deal more. Tough, deep with an ability to deliver AV delicacies.



PS-1000

Atom