



WHO'S THE BOSS?

DefTech's affordable new speakers deliver unsurpassed sub/sat-isdiction. > BY SCOTT WASSER



Definitive Technology's ProCinema 1000 loudspeakers deliver sound that almost defies belief given their compact size and affordable prices. The speakers are available as a component 5.1-surround system or individually with a choice of two center channels speakers. Also available is an even more affordable ProCinema 800 System.

The Boss showed up at my door a while back for what was suppose to be a business meeting. But audio elitist that he is, the first order of business was mocking the speaker system that was part of my personal home theater. The Boss gestured at the famous brand sub/sat speaker system in my family room, then turned to me and made a face that resembled my son's reaction to his first taste of broccoli. "Those have got to go if you're going to work for me," he said, only partly in jest. His remarks caught me by surprise. I've never considered myself an "audioholic," but sorting good

sound from bad never seemed to pose any greater challenge than telling an I-Pod from a 1960s-era transistor radio. And until the Boss showed up, I'd been fairly happy with my speakers. In fact, they still sounded OK after he left, but his comments nagged at me: What was I missing?

"sound that almost defies belief"

That question was answered a few months later at the Consumer Electronics Show. Listening to models from the loudspeaker deities such as Thiel and Meridian, I was mesmerized by the sound. These speakers delivered musical

nuances never heard before with the clarity and dynamic range that didn't seem possible. The experience was so ear-opening—pun intended—that the Boss's haughty attitude was quickly adopted. When he suggested we listen to a demonstration of Definitive Technology's inexpensive new compact speaker system, I gave him the broccoli look. "C'mon," he demanded. A few minutes later, the broccoli became a hot fudge sundae with whipped cream and wet walnuts as DefTech co-founder Sandy Gross demonstrated his ProCinema 1000 subwoofer/satellite speaker system with a few movie soundtracks and

several music CDs. The compact speakers sounded so stinkin' good that I suspected Sandy of pulling a fast one. The ProCinema 1000s were located suspiciously close to some of Definitive's highly regarded floorstanding loudspeakers, so at one point during the demo I lurched from my chair to see if our host was playing a high-tech game of three-card monte.

"ability to effortlessly fill the room ... with vibrant sound as remarkable as its price"

My reaction made Sandy laugh. I just shook my head, wondering how speakers less than one foot high and around 6 inches deep and wide could deliver such rich, expansive tones and full-range vitality even when the system's 300-watt ProSub 1000 subwoofer was turned off. The ProCinema system's ability to effortlessly fill the room—in this case, a large pre-fab room with concrete floor covered by thin carpet—with vibrant sound was nearly as remarkable as its price: less than \$1,500.

Experiencing the ProCinema speakers was one of my CES highlights, so I made an appointment to audition them at home. They have been every bit as impressive from the moment their gold-plated, five-way binding posts were connected by 14-gauge Monster speaker wire to a 105-watt/channel Onkyo receiver.

The ProCinema normally comes with the ProCenter 1000 center speaker, but at Definitive's recommendation, I substituted the ProCenter 2000. A \$149 upgrade, it has larger drivers and passive radiators

(5.25 versus 4.5 inches) that provide extended bass response. The four ProMonitor 1000 satellites included in the system have 5.25-inch drivers and radiators, and—like the center speaker—1-inch pure aluminum dome tweeters. Rounding out the system is the ProSub 1000 subwoofer with a 300-watt digital amplifier: front-firing, 10-inch, downward-firing passive radiator.

The radiators, designed to enhance the bass and help the subwoofer blend more seamlessly with the satellites, are new to the ProCinema line. The line also included the ProCinema 800 (featuring 4.5-inch drivers and 8-inch subwoofer for \$1,099). All of the new systems feature a patented new balanced Double Surround System (BDSS) and central wave guide for the driver cones, intended to deliver smoother response and greater dynamic range and stability. The ProCinema satellites and center speakers boast sensually curved cabinets composed of high-density, mineral-filled polymer that resists resonating. They're available in a high-sheen, hand-rubbed black or white finish and feature rear keyholes and brass threads for wall mounting. Or they can perch on optional (\$109/pair) pedestal stands.

Definitive's shapely stands feel like they could support a Hummer, but I used them instead for the left and right front channels and rear surrounds. I placed the ProSub 1000 in a corner about 5 feet from the right front speaker, and put the ProCenter 2000 directly below my 60-inch monitor.

The center channel's vitality and clarity were the first things I noticed. With my famous-brand speakers, it seemed like we



were always pumping up the center channel to better decipher dialogue in DTS or Dolby Digital DVD movie soundtracks. The ProCenter 2000, on the other hand, made it sound as if the actors were in the room. The sats and surrounds delivered similar realism. Once, I jumped up to answer the phone before realizing the ringing was coming from the movie. I've also jumped on more than one occasion when the ProSub 1000 delivered an explosion or similar sound effect with gut-wrenching power.

"spaciousness that makes my 21-by-14-foot room sound like it's two and three times the size"

Perhaps what impressed me most about the ProCinema 1000 system, however, is the way it reproduces music. I'd pretty much stopped listening to music on my home system with the old speakers, but found myself craving couch time after connecting the ProCinemas. I haven't yet found any source material they don't render accurately with a spaciousness that makes my 21-by-13-foot room sound like it's two or three times the size. And despite the speakers' compact dimensions, I've been able to crank my receiver's output as loud as my ears and neighbors would allow

The ProCenter 2000 center-channel speaker delivers crystalline dialogue from a pair of 5.25-inch drivers and a 1-inch aluminum dome tweeter on its face. Two side-firing passive radiators enhance bass response.

"sound quality and construction that are simply unsurpassed for the money"

without noting any distortion. For those reasons, I have no qualms stating that Definitive's new ProCinema system is a worthy successor to its wildly acclaimed predecessor. Or that it delivers sound quality and construction that are simply unsurpassed for the money. But the system's greatest attribute won't be realized until the Boss comes to visit again and they wipe the audio elitist sneer from his face. **DTV**

> RATING ● EXCELLENT

- > DESCRIPTION:** Definitive Technology ProCinema 1000 speaker system
- > HIGH POINTS:** Remarkable sound for the money; outstanding fit/finish and build quality; fairly compact
- > LOW POINTS:** ProCenter 2000 is large enough that placement could be an issue for a typical compact sub/sat buyer
- > CONTACT:** Definitive Technology, 410.363.1748, definitivetech.com
- > PRICE:** \$1,644 as tested, with \$349 ProCenter 2000; ProMonitor 1000s available individually for \$199; ProSub 1000 available for \$499.