



Supply and demand

Ed Selley listens to an eye-catching standmount loudspeaker with a hidden talent to help it dig a little deeper

Extracting extended bass frequencies from compact loudspeaker cabinets is a balancing act that has challenged designers for decades. The laws of physics are a hard taskmaster and unless you push impedance and sensitivity into difficult to drive areas, the amount of air a standmount can move is limited – although refinements to cabinets, drivers and ports help to extend the frequency response of some designs as much as possible. US-based Definitive Technology has taken a slightly different approach with its Demand series of standmount loudspeakers and the outwardly conventional designs employ an alternative technique to help deliver a bit more weight to the bass frequencies by using a passive

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radiator on top of the cabinet. This assumes the role that's ordinarily undertaken by a port and acts to maximise efficiency while at the same time increasing the radiating area.

The Demand D9 is the middle of the three models, measuring 165 x 297 x 304mm (WxHxD), and uses a 133mm mid/bass driver partnered with a 25mm dome tweeter, while the bass radiator is oval-shaped measuring 228 x 127mm and sits beneath a fixed grille cloth on top of the cabinet. Although the radiator is the more unusual part of the two-way loudspeaker design, the main drivers themselves are also not entirely conventional. The mid/bass driver is a polypropylene design that uses what Definitive Technology calls Balanced Double Surround System (BDSS), which is borrowed from

models further up the range to facilitate longer driver excursions along with a distinctive mushroom-shaped central phase plug.

The tweeter is an aluminium dome and the whole assembly is offset in the front baffle, effectively making each cabinet either right or left 'handed.' Definitive Technology says that by doing this and combining it with a 'wave alignment lens' creates a smoother high-frequency response that's intended to improve dispersion. The imagery in the supplied literature suggests that the speakers should be positioned with the tweeters facing outwards, so this is precisely how the Demand D9 is tested.

The combination of these various design decisions means that this is a distinctive-looking standmount loudspeaker. Some parts of the styling are a question of personal taste – the tweeter housing looks uncannily like the Death Star from *Star Wars* to my eyes – but the overall styling is pleasant enough. Magnetic speaker grilles are supplied to cover the front drivers and the bass radiator on top of the cabinet is hidden behind a fixed grille. The drivers are mounted in an inert three-layer front baffle that uses extruded aluminium, and the standard of build is good if not outstanding for the asking price. The multi-layered black or white finishes are polished to a high gloss and should fit with most domestic situations, while other points of contact like the speaker terminals feel solid and carefully implemented.

Sound quality

The sealed-cabinet design with a passive bass radiator on the top makes the Demand D9 easy to position. Applying some slight toe-in on my Soundstyle Z60 stands and placing it close to a rear wall gives a level of bass reinforcement that is consistent and controlled. As the radiator is on the top edge, it is unlikely

to act directly against surfaces and there is very little sense of energy being radiated anywhere other than where it should be.

Connected to a Naim Uniti Nova all-in-one system, the Demand D9 sounds rather bigger than its slender profile might suggest. The presence of that hefty radiator does imbue it with consistently impressive low end – the laws of physics haven't been torn up by its presence, but there is a convincing weight to the lower registers that really helps larger scale material to sound bigger and more capable of filling the room than I expect. The wonderful swell present in Emily King's *Forgiveness* is well integrated into the rest of the frequency response and just about moves into the threshold of being felt as much as heard.

Importantly, there is no sense of the sluggishness that can sometimes accompany passive bass radiator designs – that feeling that the radiator is half a beat behind the main drivers. Instead, the radiator works in unison with the forward-facing drivers here. The complex, fast moving *Ode To The Big Sea* by The Cinematic Orchestra ▶

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Definitive
Technology
Demand D9

ORIGIN
USA/China

TYPE
2-way standmount
loudspeaker

WEIGHT
7kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
165 x 297 x 304mm

FEATURES
• 1x 25mm
aluminium tweeter
• 1x 133mm
dual surround
polypropylene
mid/bass driver
• Quoted sensitivity:
88dB/1W/1m (8ohm)

DISTRIBUTOR
Sound United UK

TELEPHONE
02890 279830

WEBSITE
definitivetechology.
com

Available in
high-gloss black
or white finishes





The offset tweeter makes the cabinets left or right 'handed'



moves with the flow and rhythmic engagement that it needs and combined with the depth on offer, makes for a compelling listen. The tweeter design might look a little odd, but there is a genuinely convincing

A passive radiator assumes the role that's ordinarily undertaken by a port

soundstage on offer. What really helps is that it grows and shrinks in a believable way depending on what you happen to be playing at the time. The lovely, *White Star Liner* by Public Service Broadcasting is reproduced

with a tremendous sense of space that gives the orchestra and supporting electronica the room it really needs to breathe and work together. The more constricted and congested *Girls* by Tricky keeps the deliberately narrow and aggressive delivery in place, highlighting the fact that it's far from easy to wrong foot the presentation. While it might be fair to describe the treble as 'well lit', it is also hard to provoke it into sounding in any way harsh or overly forward.

The limitations of the Demand D9 start to make themselves known in the upper midrange. It never feels recessed, but struggles to pull fine detail of out Dead Can Dance's *Dionysus*, which can hinder how it reproduces voices and some instruments. But this is easy to

HOW IT COMPARES

Bowers & Wilkins' 707 S2 (HFC 438) is a more conventional design than the D9 that can't quite match its bass extension and is slightly more demanding of placement near walls. But it hits back with one of the most natural presentations for a standmount at under £1,000 and crucially, manages to do so while being just as much fun to listen to as the D9. The Definitive Technology is a good speaker, but the 707 S2 still remains the class act of the field.

overlook when you consider the sense of fun it brings to performances that makes it a very pleasant partner to spend hours listening to. If your musical preferences lean towards electronic material in particular, the Demand D9's potent low-end extension, sense of agility and timing is very engaging indeed and has me enjoying whole albums rather than just listening to single test tracks.

Conclusion

Definitive Technology might be new to UK shores, but the Demand D9 makes a highly compelling case for itself at the price. It generates a more than respectable low end from a slimline cabinet while remaining easy to drive, simple to place and capable of impressive rhythmic ability with a wide selection of music. Able to generate big, entertaining performances with apparent ease, it will surely make many friends ●

IN SIGHT



- 1 25mm aluminium dome tweeter
- 2 Bi-wireable binding posts
- 3 133mm dual surround mid/bass driver

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★	LIKE: Impressive bass extension; soundstage; unfussy placement
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★	DISLIKE: Recessed upper midrange; looks won't appeal to all
BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★	WESAY: A clever standmount that delivers a potent and consistently entertaining sound
EASE OF DRIVE ★★★★★	

OVERALL

