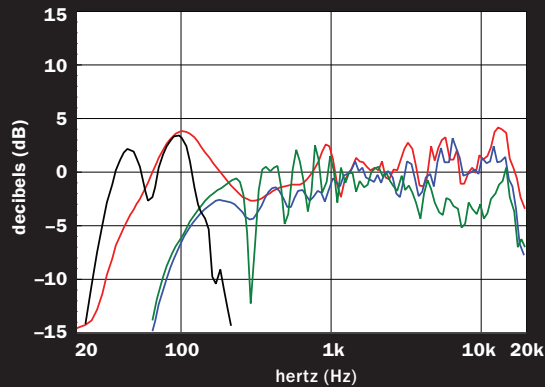


Test Bench



L/R 51 Hz to 19.1 kHz ± 3.7 dB Surround 135 Hz to 16.1 kHz ± 6.7 dB
Center 156 Hz to 17 kHz ± 3.9 dB Subwoofer 32 Hz to 130 Hz ± 3.2 dB

The C336 tower's measurements indicate a wide floor bounce centered at 200 Hz, followed by narrow band irregularities beginning at 800 Hz. The CC225 center displays a similar character at higher frequencies, along with low-frequency response that falls quickly below 400 Hz. Overall,

the center speaker's bass-to-treble balance rises at slightly less than 1 dB per octave, with reasonably uniform directivity up to $\pm 30^\circ$. Both speakers' mid/tweeter arrays emitted fairly acute noises when given our ramped test signals at frequencies below their specified bass limit. The C255ES surround speaker displays the narrow bandwidth and irregularities typical of bidirectional speakers. The PSW310W subwoofer has response up to 400 Hz when its crossover is bypassed, making it useful for pairing with small satellites. The sub has relatively limited dynamic capability and low-frequency extension, but its sound-pressure abilities are uniformly distributed over its bandwidth. — Tom Noursaine

outstanding transparency in the mid to high frequencies. This yields the kind of treble that doesn't sound at all bright, yet is all there: clear, quick, and extended, and not in the least bit forward or sparkly. Voices were unfailingly even, balanced, and, well, *neutral*. Most speakers, even high-end ones, "romance" the vocal range with a subtle extra helping of warmth in the 100- to 200-Hz octave, but not the Classias. This occasionally made them sound a little "cool," but it also encouraged close, high-resolution listening — the kind of sound you hear in a good recording-studio control room.

Something analogous seemed to be happening in the bottom octaves, too, where the C336s delivered solid output to 40 Hz or so, but with less of that penultimate-octave response hump that enhances the impression of bass on so many speakers. The overall effect on material like Richard Thompson's "Hide It Away" (from *you? me? us?*) was intensely but effortlessly intimate, without the tinge of low-end bloat that this midbass-heavy track can often reveal.

On the multichannel front, Infinity's layout demonstrated some welcome abilities. The CC225 center speaker's tonal match

to the C336s was excellent — not perfect, but impressively close for a two-way horizontal design. For instance, comparisons of TV and FM announcers between single- and dual-speaker mono revealed only modest shifts of vocal weight and "hoo," even among baritone male voices. The tonal stability wasn't quite as good when the center speaker was listened to off-axis, but it was still well above average.

The C255ES surround speakers performed admirably in both dipole and bipole settings. They delivered plenty of clean level in my fairly large listening room — even in dipole mode — and made a tight enough tonal match to the C336s in bipole position to please even the most demanding multichannel-music maven.

Gone Baby Gone is one of those 2-hour films that demand full-bore, all-channels excellence for only about 90 seconds — but those 90 seconds are absolutely critical. The brief action interludes are all the more shocking and powerful for the dynamic range they carry, and the Infinity suite delivered this with heart-stopping conviction. For the rest of the film, I was entirely engrossed by its seamless tapestry of dialogue, street-scene and inte-

rior ambience, and subtle musical score. Is there any higher praise for a soundtrack or a sound system?

Last but not least is the PSW310W sub, which has an active 10-inch driver complemented by two 10-inch cones that serve as passive radiators (ports, more or less). It also incorporates Infinity's RABOS single-band parametric EQ, which can help to reduce a primary room resonance. (A kit that includes a test-tone CD and setup graphing tools is a \$60 option.)

The PSW310W didn't get much of a workout from *Gone Baby Gone*, so I turned to a handful of my favorite subwoofer torture tests from classics like *Godzilla* and *The War of the Worlds*. The verdict: impressive. The woof goes admirably low with substantial power, and it sounds clean and tight all the way down. The 'zilla footfalls lacked some of the wall-bending 20 Hz of my everyday sub (a 12-incher about twice the Infinity's price), but they had plenty of slam just the same. It's a solid sub — and did I mention that it's wireless?

BOTTOM LINE

With the Classia speakers, Infinity has managed to combine high sonic capabilities with striking appearance and respectable value. Visually, this system might not satisfy every taste (for the record, I dug them), but for those to whom its unconventional looks speak, it should appeal strongly. Better yet, they'll also enjoy sound that's just as striking. **S&V**

Key Features

C336 (\$1,798/pair)

:: 1-in tweeter; 4-in midrange; (3) 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ -in woofers; 48 $\frac{3}{4}$ in high; 56 lb

CC225 (\$499)

:: 1-in tweeter; (2) 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ -in woofers; 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ in wide; 16 lb

C255ES (\$998/pair)

:: (2) 1-in tweeters; (2) 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ -in woofers; 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in high; 9 lb

PSW310W (\$799)

:: 10-in woofer; (2) 10-in passive radiators; 400-watt amplifier; 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 15 x 14 in; 50 lb

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