

# SR Technology

## PA system Pocket 1500

The latest version of the Pocket sound system from Italian manufacturers SR Technology is described in their brochure as “not only brilliant audio, but also brilliantly practical”, which is always a good place to be with compact portable PA.

### Mike Crofts

The basic approach of SR Technology's Pocket 1500 PA system is the by now fairly common one of using a powered subwoofer that contains not only its own amp module, but also the amp stages necessary to drive a pair of passive satellite mid-high speakers, thus creating a three-box system that only requires a single mains lead and a couple of speaker cables to get the system completely up and running. It's a very practical and convenient approach to portable sound, so the Pocket 1500 would automatically get a tick in the 'practical' box without even trying. Where the SR Technology range differs from some others on the market, however, is that the Pocket 1500 system is designed to be scaled up or down according to the needs of either the performer or the venue, without necessarily changing the major system components. Let's have a look at what is available within the range.

### System basics

At the heart of the Pocket 1500 setup is the Pocket 1500 BA, which is an active subwoofer. All the power supplies, signal processing

and amplification for the whole system is contained within its active module, so whatever size or configuration you need, this is where you have to start. The active subwoofer part itself has a rated output power of 800W, with an amplifier design by Bang & Olufsen ICEpower, who, according to their web site, provided their ICEpower amps for Danley Sound Labs' massive 40kW 'world's most powerful subwoofer'. The driver is a 15-inch unit built by Sica, who are associated with Jensen loudspeakers, and the bass reflex cabinet is made from plywood with a black 'spatter' finish.

The basic system uses the 1500 BA sub in conjunction with two 350W passive mid-high speakers, taking the rig rating, as the name suggests, to 1500W. The SAT 350 units each contain an eight-inch cone driver and a one-inch HF driver, both of which — again Sica units — make use of the latest neodymium magnet technology, which gives excellent performance-to-weight results.

Speaking of weight, the 1500 BA sub at 31kg is actually very easy to handle, and because of its relatively narrow dimensions when getting hold of the strong and well-recessed side handles, lifting it isn't a problem. The SAT 350 speakers are a mere 9kg per cabinet, and have those 'hole in the wood' handles at the top of the rear panel. As the boxes are so small and light, these handles work perfectly well, and their position means that you can carry one box in each hand with no difficulty at all.

So much for the base system, but the Pocket range can be expanded to suit the live sound requirement, and I was also supplied with an additional passive subwoofer, the 1500 BP, which is identical in outward appearance to the 1500 BA. As the active sub is already equipped with a Speakon output socket for the purpose, all that's needed is to run a cable to the passive sub from here and you've now got two 15-inch sub drivers on the go instead

of one — you now have a Pocket 2100 rig. As the subs have pole mount sockets fitted, one obvious setup is to use one per side with the satellite cabs mounted above, which would have a smaller overall footprint than when using tripod stands. Or the subs can, of course, be located next to each other or at least closer together, in order to gain some coupling advantage.

### Powering up

If more output is called for, then it's time to move up the range a notch, by using a pair of higher-power satellites featuring 12-inch and 2.4-inch driver components — known as SAT 700 — which will, when combined with an additional pair of subs, one active and one passive, result in a six-cab Pocket 4000 system. The active sub is already equipped for this task, by means of a safely recessed bridging switch on the back panel, which uses both the mid-high amps to drive a single SAT 700 (ie. one per active sub) instead of two SAT 350s.

Having heard how powerful the Pocket 1500 and 2100 versions can be, I can imagine that the full-on rig would be quite something. Within each 1500 BA, all this power is provided by an integrated module, which makes use of a Class-D switching design amp for the sub and two MOSFET amps to drive the mid-high satellites. The satellite amps incorporate SR Technology's own tube simulation, which carefully manages 2nd harmonic distortion to achieve the desired effect — something they've been developing for some time and which works well. There isn't a massive amount of technical data available, but you can get a good idea of what the company's designs are all about by having a look at the other products on their web site. Their UK people are also very helpful when you phone up.

### Out of the box

I unpacked the four review units and, in the absence of a 'how to' guide, just connected everything up and built me a Pocket 2100 PA in about five minutes — and that included the unwrapping part! The connections are as uncomplicated as it gets, with just left and right XLR inputs (and link outputs) and speaker outs for the satellites. And the only user controls are a pair of level controls for sub

## Performing Musician

SR Technology Pocket  
1500 system £2299

Good construction, great sounds and portability combine in this latest Pocket version to make a highly practical PA system. The new modular approach is very helpful, allowing you the flexibility to scale up or down, depending on the application.

Big Cat Audio +44 (0)1406 365291  
www.bigcataudio.co.uk  
www.srtechnology.co.uk



and satellites, and switches for ground lift and sub contour.

I began my test, as usual, with my favourite CD test tracks, and I found the overall sound pleasing and smooth at low-to-moderate indoor levels. As the weather was being kind for once, I carted the whole lot outside (again, a quick and easy process) and turned it well up. The clarity and sparkle were all there, and there was a warmth to the upper mid-range that was very effective on vocal and acoustic material. My favourite 'smoothness' test track is a recording by Maurice Andre of Michael Haydn's Trumpet Concerto in D Major. The opening movement has an air of spaciousness and tranquillity that the Pocket system managed to retain without becoming harsh and edgy (and if high trumpet notes are your thing, you'll like this piece).

In the interest of balance, I then felt obliged to smack lots of loud, punchy tracks through the Pocket system, and I was impressed by the way in which the sound never became harsh, other than when I stupidly over-EQ'd just to see what it would do. The subs pumped out masses of solid deep bass, which can be modified by means of a shaping switch on the sub's rear panel, depending on whether you want really low rumbly stuff or more punchy, chest-hitting material.

Despite the need to use at least one stand for the SAT 350s, I found that the overall system balance was best — in this particular location — with the two subs both together in the centre (and almost as good with them both at one side). But with so much power on tap, it was perfectly possible to achieve a decent balance with left/right subs, provided they weren't too far apart.

### Rehearsal time

I was able to use the system at a couple of rehearsals — one with a covers band, and one with a vocal harmony group. I didn't bother to take along the passive sub for the vocally-oriented session, and I was really pleased with the sound quality from the SAT 350s. They didn't sound like small speakers giving their max; they just sounded relaxed and clean. The covers band, who apparently enjoy rehearsing at full gigging volume, particularly liked the big thumpy bottom end, commenting on how much bass was coming from just the two compact subs.



▲ The sub is fitted with high-quality twin-wheel castors.

And it was only during a break that I realised the passive sub wasn't actually connected (a Speakon-related finger-trouble issue) and we had indeed been enjoying the sound of the 1500 BA on its own.

Ferrying the Pocket system around in my van and estate car for a week or so, I grew to appreciate the compact dimensions, light weight and the straight-edged shape of the cabinets. They were no bother to lift, carry and transport (mostly by myself) and they didn't roll about during our travels. The black paint finish appeared to be very tough, and despite the inevitable knock and scrape (mic stands don't make the best packing material), they emerged unscathed, needing only a quick wipe over to remove any surface marks. The thickly applied black finish is actually so good that I initially thought the cabinets were moulded out of something rather than covered ply, and the steel grilles on the front are not only made from pretty chunky metal, but are convex and tightly fitted, which gives them additional strength. I also like the full-face black foam covering (glued to the front of the grilles), which should offer a reasonable degree of protection against occasional attack from beer/rain/other fluids. The sub is even fitted with high-quality (not to mention dead neat) twin-wheel castors, which had me wondering, 'Where can I get some of those from?'

### The gig test

Messing around with speakers — even in a field or at a rehearsal — is all very well, but it's out at the gig that really matters, and so I looked for an application that needed quick setup, small physical size and excellent quality all at the same time. What I came up with was a 'HAWD' (husband and wife duo) gig for a corporate client. Over the years I've found that duo acts are often very difficult to please, >>

▣ Connections on the rear of the sub comprise left and right XLR inputs (and link outputs) and speaker outs for the satellites. There are also level controls for the sub and satellites, plus switches for ground lift and sub contour.



## SR Technology Pocket 1500

PA system

“...the Pocket 1500 (or 2100, or 4000) is a highly practical, well-made and great-sounding system...”

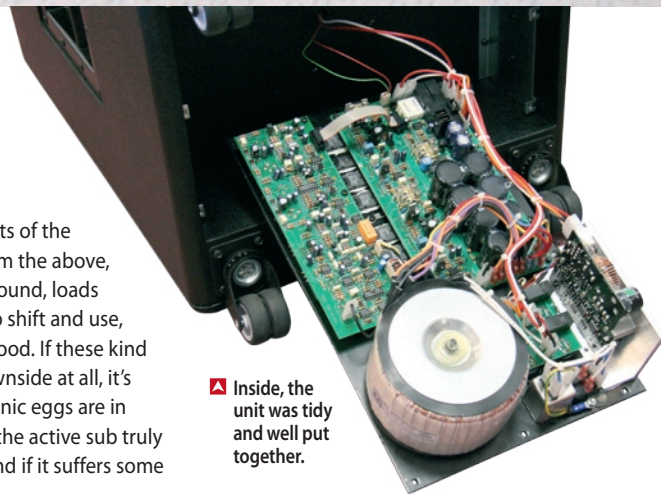
The basic system comprises a 1500 BA subwoofer and two 350W passive mid-high speakers (also sold separately).

» because unless the band members are in complete agreement (which is unlikely in any case, and with HAWDs especially so for some reason) there can never be a majority opinion. In this case, the excellent Paul and Vicki (or Dezin, as they are known to their public) actually agreed that the Pocket 1500 — they were only using the one sub — sounded excellent, and I could have probably sold it to them if it had belonged to me. They used words like ‘natural’, ‘transparent’ and ‘great’, which are always nice to hear coming from the customer, and I would add ‘light’, ‘quick’

and ‘easy’, which should give some idea of what we thought about this tight little rig.

### Verdict

In my opinion, the plus points of the Pocket 1500 are obvious from the above, in that it delivers excellent sound, loads of power, is light and easy to shift and use, and is well built and looks good. If these kind of ‘all-in-one’ rigs have a downside at all, it’s perhaps that all your electronic eggs are in one basket. In other words, the active sub truly is the heart of the system, and if it suffers some



▲ Inside, the unit was tidy and well put together.

### Tech Spec

#### SAT 350

- Frequency response: 120Hz – 20kHz.
- Sensitivity (1W@1m): 97dB.
- Max. SPL: 122dB.
- Crossover: passive.
- System format: two-way.
- Eight-inch neodymium driver, one-inch neodymium horn.
- Coverage angle: 90 x 60 degrees.
- Max. power out: 350W RMS.
- Nominal impedance: 4Ω.
- Connections: Speakon in.
- Weight: 9kg.
- Dimensions (WDH): 255 x 305 x 415mm.

### Tech Spec

#### 1500 BA

- 15-inch woofer.
- Frequency response: 30 – 120Hz.
- Sensitivity (1W@1m): 100dB.
- Max. SPL: 129dB.
- Crossover electronic: 24dB/octave.
- Max. power out: 800W RMS.
- Active outputs: L/R out, SW out.
- Controls: bass volume, high volume, ground lift switch, bass-SW switch.
- Weight: 31kg.
- Dimensions (WDH): 450 x 660 x 450mm.

kind of mishap then your options are a bit limited from that point on.

With this in mind, I undid the six bolts that secure the amp module to the rear of the 1500 BA cabinet and had a look inside. The unit itself looks very tidy and well put together, and there doesn’t seem to be any wiring squashed into place or any parts in danger of working loose or coming into contact with something they shouldn’t. All in all, I think that the Pocket 1500 (or 2100, or 4000) is a highly practical, well-made and great-sounding system that has a pleasing sound character and the ability to scale up or down as the occasion demands. Would I buy one? Yes, I would. ■ PM

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+LIVE SOUND WORLD

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Performing Musician, Media House, Trafalgar Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB23 8SQ, United Kingdom

Email: [subscribe@performing-musician.com](mailto:subscribe@performing-musician.com)

Tel: +44 (0) 1954 789888 Fax: +44 (0) 1954 789895

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