

THE AUDIOPHILE VOICE

"...for audiophiles, for audiophiles..."
Volume 7, Issue 5; \$6.95 US; \$8.50 CAN

**Billie
Holiday -
Complete**

*****3-DIGIT 46F
EXP VOL 6 ISSUE 5
MATCH CODE AM148214WEMX21291
ALFRED T WEBB
4478 RIVERSIDE RUN
ZIONVILLE
IN 46077-9285

Al Kooper
Still The Man
"Rare + Well Done"
Greatest and
Most Obscure Recordings
The Real Convergence

"Networked Entertainment"

Equipment Reviews:

Yamaha RP-U200 Computer Receiver,
Innersound Eros Speakers,
Jolida 202A Integrated Amp



KIMBER SELECT

reference silver loudspeaker cable

reference silver loudspeaker cable



KS 3038

Comprised entirely of our finest silver, the KS-3038 delivers dynamics, focus and harmonics like no other. "Total control of all frequencies; especially deep bass, air, air, and more air, **EVERYTHING** improved across the entire spectrum. This supernatural cable was doing absolutely zero to the signal.

I never knew the signal could be so pure. If there was ever a "superconductor" these cables would be it!"

Andy Genco-Enfield, CT

Visit our website or contact us for more information and nearest dealer.

 KIMBER KABLE

Select

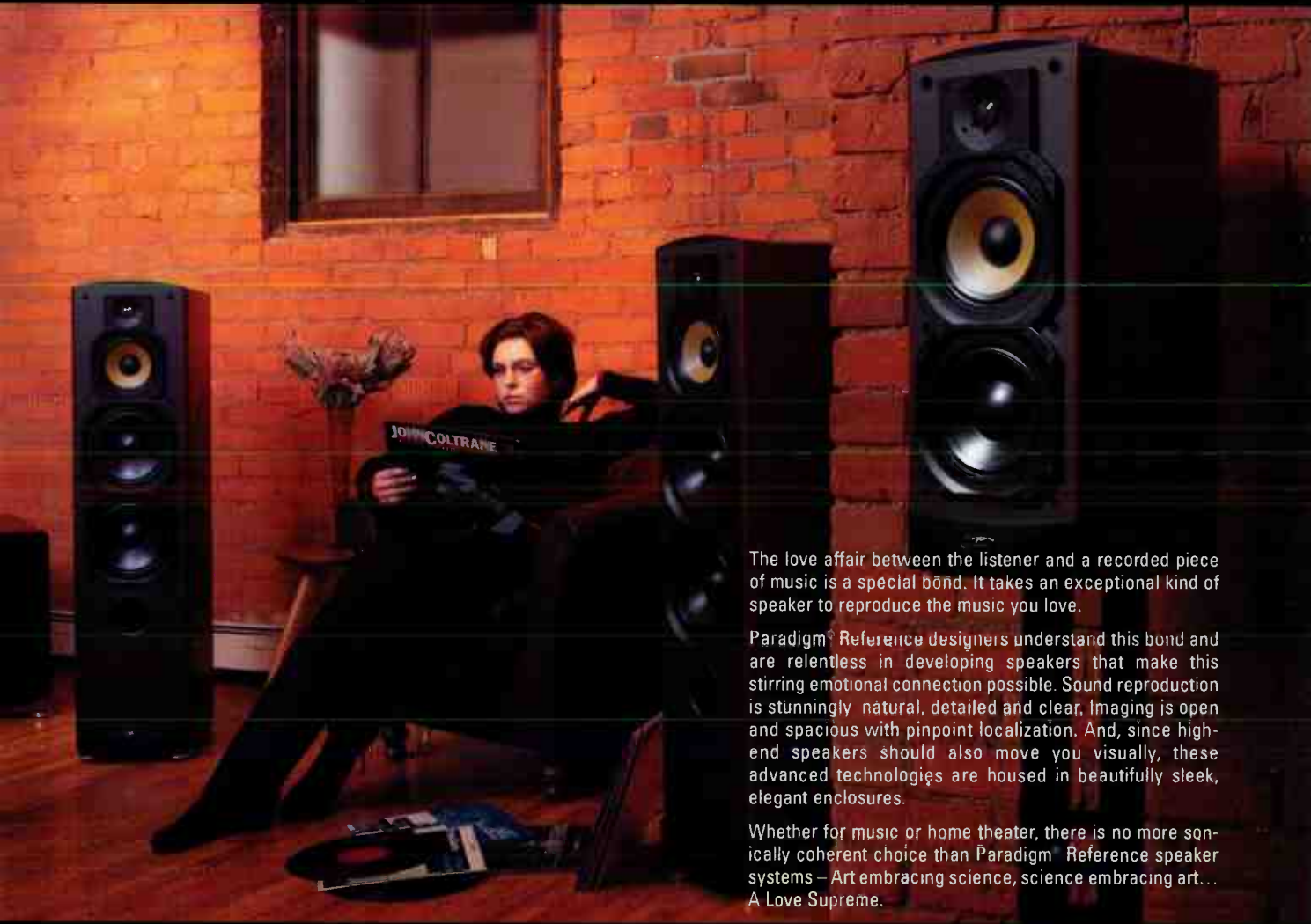
a comprehensive line of loudspeaker cables - digital & analog interconnects

2752 South 1900 West • Ogden Utah 84401 • 801-621-5530 • fax 801-627-6980

www.kimber.com

A LOVE SUPREME

PARADIGM REFERENCE



The love affair between the listener and a recorded piece of music is a special bond. It takes an exceptional kind of speaker to reproduce the music you love.

Paradigm® Reference designers understand this bond and are relentless in developing speakers that make this stirring emotional connection possible. Sound reproduction is stunningly natural, detailed and clear. Imaging is open and spacious with pinpoint localization. And, since high-end speakers should also move you visually, these advanced technologies are housed in beautifully sleek, elegant enclosures.

Whether for music or home theater, there is no more sonically coherent choice than Paradigm® Reference speaker systems – Art embracing science, science embracing art... A Love Supreme.

"... most certainly a serious high-end contender, and a formidable one ... if tonal neutrality is at the top of your list of priorities for speaker performance, and you want a speaker that can play loud without sounding stressed, then you really must listen to the Reference Studio/100."

—Robert Deutsch, Stereophile, Vol. 23 No.6, on the Studio/100



www.paradigm.com

In the US, contact AudioStream MPO Box 2410, Niagara Falls, NY 14302 T • (905) 632-0180 • In Canada, contact Paradigm 205 Annagem Blvd., Mississauga, ON L5T 2V1 T • (905) 564-1994 • Copyright ©2001 Paradigm Electronics Inc. and Bavan Corp.



More Than a Decade of Excellence!
 In 1993, Paradigm® was honored with a one-of-a-kind award from the distinguished publication **Musician** for rating #1 in price/value for an unprecedented **10 Consecutive years!** After repeating again in 2000 and 2001, this has now been extended to **12 years!**

*An annual, independent, nationwide survey of prominent hi-fi critics specializing in hi-fi equipment reviews.

World Radio History

C O N T E N T S

Networked Entertainment: 12

...Now You're Talking Convergence

Bernie Sepaniak

Get The Noise Out! 20

Killing Off Computer RFI

Bernard Kingsley

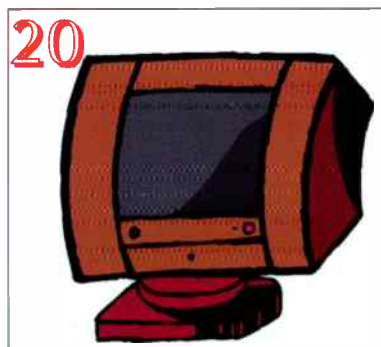
Lady Day - Complete 23

The Columbia Billie Holiday Set

Benjamin Ivry

COLUMNS

- 4 Subscription Information
- 6 New Products
- 8 Dear Editor: Letters
- 10 Editorial — Gene Pitts
- 63 Ad Index
- 64 Back Page — Music City



RECORDINGS

Al Kooper:
Rare + Well Done
Jon & Salley Tiven

27

Bob Dylan:
Love and Theft
Michael Tearson

28

Buffalo Springfield:
Box Set
Michael Tearson

30

Alison Krauss and
Union Station:
New Favorite
Michael Tearson

32

The Conga Kings:
Jazz Descargas
Alfred R. Fredel

33

Scott Holt:
Angels In Exile, Blind Willie
McTell: *The Essential ...* (on
Classic Blues) and *Complete
Recorded Works, Vol. 1* (on
Document)
Gene Pitts

34

Plena Libre:
Mas Libre
Alfred R. Fredel

37

Simon & Garfunkle
*The Complete Columbia Studio
Recordings*
Michael Tearson

38

The Holy Modal Rounders:
The Holy Modal Rounders
Jack Skowron

40

Phillip Johnston:
Normalogy
Jack Skowron

41

Chicago Pro Musica:
The Medinah Sessions
Arthur Paxton

42

Art Pepper:
*The Hollywood All-Star
Sessions*

44

Jack Skowron

Louis Armstrong:
*The Complete Hot Five and
Hot Seven Recordings*
Frank Driggs

46

Wycliffe Gordon:
The Search:
Jack Skowron

48

EQUIPMENT

Yamaha RP-U200 Personal
Computer Receiver
Bascom H. King

49

Rosinante Dulcinea Monitor
Loudspeakers
Dan Pond

52

Innersound Eros
Electrostatic Loudspeakers
George Graves

55

Jolida JD202A Integrated
Amplifier
Mike Driscoll

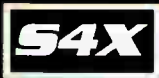
58

Induction Dynamics
S1T Tower Speakers
James R. Frane

61

Exclusive, patented S4X Driver-Control Technology and high performance drivers deliver clear, accurate, undistorted sound and TRUE deep bass.

Experience The Ultimate In Realistic Home Theater



Induction Dynamics has created the ultimate high-end, home theater loudspeaker system designed from the ground up for digital surround sound.

Induction Dynamics has achieved an unmatched level of sound quality with S4X Driver-Control Technology that inductively couples crossover coils and optimizes the performance of each driver. This unique combination of revolutionary technology and ideal, ultra-low distortion drivers creates sound that is precise and free of distortion.

S4X Driver-Control Technology is exceptionally compact, allowing this patented, high-end technology to be transferred into in-wall and on-wall formats.

The high-performance subwoofers generate TRUE deep bass. The compound push-pull subwoofer configuration eliminates low-frequency distortion and generates deep bass in a small cabinet.

Induction Dynamics loudspeakers have the power-handling capability and dynamic range to crank up the volume to extremely high levels and still get clear, undistorted sound throughout the sonic spectrum. You'll enjoy an unparalleled cinematic experience because you'll hear all the sound...thunderous effects, subtle details, and clear dialogue.

Induction Dynamics' extensive line of high-end loudspeakers makes it easy to create the ultimate home theater system. You can use any combination of in-wall, on-wall and freestanding loudspeaker models, and get the same perfectly matched, audiophile-quality sound.



For product information and nearest dealer, visit www.inductiondynamics.com or call 913.663.9770.



INDUCTION DYNAMICS™

Experience True Audio Perfection.™

World Radio History

VANCE DICKASON'S HOME THEATER SPEAKER SYSTEM

Parts Express makes it easy for you to build a great sounding dream home theater system designed by the famous audiophile engineer Vance Dickason. This system, as featured in The Loudspeaker Design Cookbook, rivals systems costing thousands. These attractive pre-finished cabinets are made of MDF (medium density fiberboard), laminated with genuine red oak veneer and beautifully finished in a natural satin polyurethane. The front and rear baffles are painted black. Each speaker in the set comes with a removable black grill and holes for speaker terminals. All driver holes are precision CNC routed for a perfect driver fit and recessed for flush mounting.



www.partsexpress.com

Check us out online or give us a call for all of your audio electronic needs.

1-800-338-0531



FREE CATALOG
CALL FOR YOURS
TODAY!

Source Code: AVM

PARTS EXPRESS
ELECTRONICS & MORE
www.partsexpress.com

725 Pleasant Valley Dr., Springboro, OH 45066-1158
Phone: 937/743-3000 • FAX: 937/743-1677
E-mail: sales@partsexpress.com

Transmission Line Evolution

The
Amygdala



Cantilevered Kevlar
diaphragms

Viscous Gold
damped tweeters

q-TSAL, Filter Theory
Transmission line
loading

For more information:

Buggtussel, LLC
1701 B. Vanderbilt Ave.
Portage, MI 49024 USA
616-321-9660
www.buggtussel.com

Dealer inquiries welcome

Buggtussel at T.H.E Expo 2002
The RIO Rm 1916, Las Vegas, Jan 8-11

the audiophile voice

Editor/Publisher Eugene Pitts, III
Executive Editor Arnis Balgalvis
Senior Editors Mark Block
Russ Novak
Cover Artist George Angelini

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Frank Alles, Bill Brassington, Chuck Bruce, Hector Chrest, Howard Ferstler, Jim Frane, Alfred Fredki, John Gatski, John Hellow, Benjamin Irvy, Bascom King, Bernard Kingsley, Lewis Lanece, Karl Lozier, David Marcus, Dwight Miller, Ron Nagle, David Nemzer, Christopher Noblet, Arthur Paxton, Robert Perry, Dan Pond, Joel Shumer, Michael Teason, Jon Tiven, Les Turczi, Ross Wagner, Jerry Walsh, and Bill Wells.

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Alan Keister, 800/671-4030
FAX, 9-5, Eastern Time: 973/535-3210

THE AUDIOPHILE SOCIETY OFFICERS

Founder	Hy Kachalsky
President	
Vice President	Bill Brassington
Treasurer	Mike Kates
Recording Secretary	David Nemzer
Corresponding Secretary	Mark Block

Inquiries regarding reviews should be made to the Editor at the production offices.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

Postmaster: Please send Form 3579 for change of address to P.O. Box 43537, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043. Periodicals Postage Rate has been granted at Montclair, NJ 07042 and additional mailing office.

Subscribers wishing to change their addresses should send an old address label together with the new address. Allow one issue for address change to take effect, but notify publisher if a replacement copy needs to be sent. Please notify the Publisher of subscription difficulties by writing to P.O. Box P.O. Box 43537, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043. or by e-mail to: Epitts@ix.netcom.com.

U.S. subscriptions are \$30 for six issues (one year) and \$55 for 12 issues (two years); Canadian subscriptions are \$39 (U.S. dollars) for six issues and \$65 for 12 issues; overseas subscriptions are \$66 (U.S.) for six issues and \$110 for 12 issues.

The Audiophile Voice Vol. 7, No. 5; publication date, November 30, 2001, Dewey decimal number 621.081 or 770.5, ISSN 1522-0435, is published bimonthly by Guts & Elbow Grease Publishing Ltd., 215 Glenridge Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042. Printed in U.S.A. by Cummings Printing, Hookset, NH 03106. Film and editorial services by Satellite Image Center, Verona, NJ.

The Audiophile Voice is a registered trademark of Guts & Elbow Grease Publishing Ltd. © 2001. Guts & Elbow Grease Publishing Ltd. All rights reserved. The Editor assumes no responsibility for manuscripts, photos, or artwork. The Publisher, at his sole discretion, reserves the right to reject any advertisement.

PRODUCTION OFFICES

215 Glenridge Ave., Lower Level
Montclair, NJ 07042
973/509 2009
FAX 973/509-2032
E-mail: epitts@ix.netcom.com
Website: www.Audiophilevoice.com
Back Issues: Please use our website for a list of recent feature articles and equipment.



The Dynaudio Audience 42 represents the ultimate in performance and value among compact mini-monitors. This is in large part due to the legendary Dynaudio drivers: a proprietary Esotec 1 inch soft-dome tweeter offering linear high frequency performance, high power handling and reduced distortion, and a 5-3/4 inch one-piece MSP mid/woofer equipped with the huge, 3 inch Dynacoil aluminum voice coil which provides a faster transient response with increased dynamic capabilities. The Audience 42 is the only speaker in its price class equipped with this size voice coil, let alone this advanced level of driver technology and absolute performance. To fit virtually every application or decor, the Audience 42 is also offered in the 42C center and 42W wall mount versions, with either Cherry, Rosewood, Black Ash, Silver or White high quality laminates available on all models. Despite its diminutive size and price tag, the Audience 42 is big on sound, performance and value. There's nothing like a true Dynaudio. *We know. Do you?*

DYNAUDIO
AUTHENTIC FIDELITY

www.dynaudiousa.com



WE KNOW ABOUT TECHNOLOGY

Website: www.DynaudioUSA.com / Info & Brochures: (630) 238-4200 / Loudspeaker: The Dynaudio Audience 42

New Products



The Tributaries Subwoofer Cable

offers an integrated mono/Y output. This allows subwoofers with two audio inputs to be connected to a receiver or amp with a single mono output. Other features include an oxygen-free, high-conductivity copper braided shield around each center conductor to protect against low-frequency noise. Standard lengths are from 1 meter at \$45 to 8 meters for \$80. Custom lengths can be had from a half meter to 8 meters.

Data: www.tributariescable.com

The Cerwin-Vega RL-28W Subwoofer

has been designed to excel as a stereo main, home theater front or effects channel in myriad room sizes and configurations. Its main engineering brief was to produce a high-value system with accurate soundstage, explosive dynamics, and exemplary openness. Its small footprint, less than 1 square foot, will allow it to be placed where few other systems of this quality and performance level can. Price: \$2995.00.

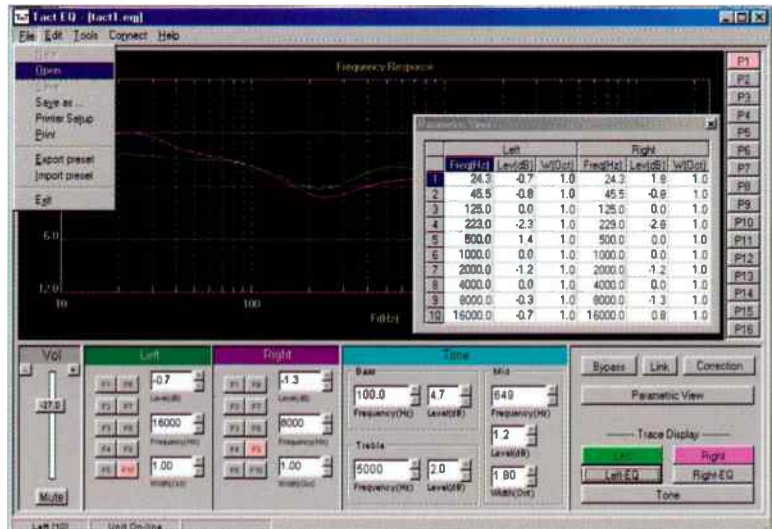
Data: www.cerwinvega.com



The TacT Audio Real-Time Equalization Software

is now available for use with the TacT 2.0 room correction system. The new software offers control of up to 10 filters per channel with each filter adjustable in frequency to within 0.1 Hz, level in steps of 0.1 dB, filter width (Q factor) from 0.05 to 2.5 octaves in steps of 1/100th octave. In addition, the software's tone controls have user-selectable corner frequencies and can be used as shelving filters. Price: \$395.00.

Data: www.tactaudio.com



HI FI FARM

Offering the **world's finest** new and used high end audio for **20 years**. Come by and visit our showrooms in Wirtz, VA or call

800-752-4018

for **personal** and **professional consultations**.

1650 Scruggs Rd
Wirtz, VA 24184



Aloia, Atlantis,
Audio Magic,
Audiomeca, AVM,
Audio Tekne,
B&K, Bedini,
Bright Star,
Cardas, Castle,
Copulare, Creek,
DH Labs, Dodson,
Dunlavy, Epos,
EgglestonWorks,
Goldring, Genesis,
Golden Sound,
Grado, Heybrook,
Joule Electra,
Magnum Dynalab,
Marigo, MIT,
Metronome,
Music Hall,
New Sensor,
Nordost, Oracle,
Piega, QS&D,
Robertson,
Roksan,
Sennheiser,
Seleco, Sound
Organisation,
Spendor, VAC,
Vampire, VPI,
VansEvers, &
much more!

Visit our virtual store, now in its 8th year online. Info, pricing, ordering, & more all at the click of a mouse.

www.hififarm.com

Editor's Choice Award 2000
Sound and Vision, December 2000

Consumer Choice Award 2000
www.audioreview.com

'98 Editor's Choice Subwoofer
SGHT, February 1999

"(the VTF-2) could be reasonably compared to the performance of the \$3,000 B&W ASW 4000!"... "At \$499, it sets a new price/performance standard...I don't think you'll find a better bargain anywhere."

Richard Hardesty, Subwoofers Buyer Guide 2000

"The VTF-2 blasted out 20 Hz at 93 dB and delivered 107.1 dB SPL over the 25- to 62-Hz range - impressive for any sub, especially one with a 10 inch driver." ...

"There are subs costing twice as much that can't match this performance."

Tom Nousaine, Sound & Vision, May 2000

"If you want a subwoofer with maximum boom for the buck, it's hard to beat the offerings from Hsu Research."

Robert Deutsch, SGHT, December 1999

"Allied to this transparency, was a leap in dynamic range from the Quads... widest and deepest soundstage..."

Paul Seydor, TAS, #118

"If you're looking for more bounce from your audio bucks, the Hsu VTF-2 has no equal." .. "easily the best \$500 'tweak' I've ever heard."

Steve Guttenberg, Audio, November 1999

"101dB at 12.5 Hz, 110dB at 16 Hz, 114dB at 20Hz..."

Don Keele, Audio, August 1998

"Bargain of the Century"

Tom Nousaine, CSR, May 1998

Hsu Research True Subwoofers

Offer:

- Unparalleled Value
- Unparalleled User Support
- Unparalleled Flexibility
- Garnered more rave reviews than any other sub!

For more information, contact us at:

Website: www.hsuresearch.com

Email: hsures@earthlink.net

Hsu Research, Inc.

3160 E. La Palma Ave, #D
Anaheim, CA 92806

(800)554-0150/(714)666-9260

(714)666-9261 (FAX)

Available through select dealers or factory-direct with
30-Day money-back guarantee

ET Goes Home

Dear Editor:

I would like to use this space in your "letters" column to thank Gene Pitts and David Nemzer of *The Audiophile Voice* magazine for their support to their readers.

I own an Eminent Technology tonearm (ET-II). As soon as I came across an article about an air pressure regulator that could improve upon its performance, I jumped on it right away. The article appeared seven years ago and was authored by David Nemzer in *TAV*. I contacted Mr. Pitts, *TAV*'s editor and former editor of *Audio*, and a [reasonable time] later I received the back issue. Though Mr. Pitts had repeatedly said in his e-mails that he was looking into doing a follow up on the project, I really wasn't too optimistic that such an outcome would ever happen.

For one, it concerned an article that appeared rather long ago about an underrated product from an extremely low profile company. Secondly, the supplier who carried the regulator at one time did not want to get involved with the project again.

Supprise! I received a big envelope from David Nemzer, the author himself. Inside there was a detailed set of instructions about how to assemble the regulator and where to get the parts. Obviously, they were able to convince the original supplier to provide the parts too.

In this world of rank commercialism, it is refreshing to see people whose lives are not run by the almighty dollar, but by a passion for what they love. Thanks.

Peter Chung
via e-mail

Burn That Mac!

Dear Editor:

In regards to Vol. 7, Issue 4, overall another excellent read. Of particular interest to me was Mr.

Kingsley's article on burning LPs to CDs. I've yet to see any of the PC magazines put together such a complete and concise info source for LP-to-CD conversion. Almost perfect except for a couple of glaring omissions. What about the Mac and Linux variations? Particularly the Mac. The Apple system still holds a rather commanding presence in professional recording.

As a Mac user by choice, Windows user by necessity, and budding Linux neophyte, I believe a stronger mention than you published was warranted even if most people use Windows. Yes, Windows is certainly the dominant desktop operating system, but at approximately 90 million users, just as certainly, the Mac flavor of software deserves some kind of mention in the discussion.

An excellent article none the less.

Jose Ray Vasquez
via e-mail

Mr. Kingsley responds:

The key in Mr. Vasquez's question is the word "professional." While Macs still have a presence in some professional areas, the article was written for the home user who typically uses Windows (Mac's share is down to about 3 per cent). There is also a range of professional audio software out there, for all operating systems, at "professional" prices.

Still, I should have mentioned that MusicMatch does come in Windows, Mac, and Linux flavors; Nero has a Mac version and Steinberg does supply some Mac software (though not Clean!). All other software tested was written for Windows only.

Also, I've found a good source for software of all platforms is <http://tapeless.com/studio/soft.html>

Bernard (Windows user by choice) Kingsley
via e-mail



100% value with a real Linn hi-fi system

A new category of independent product, offering a supremely elegant, neat and complete, CD and AM/FM radio music system combining power, performance and style.

Now with the added ability to control lights,
TV and home security devices

a **classik** by Linn[®]



LINN
THE ONLY SOUND

Simply call **888-671-LINN** or visit our website on www.linninc.com for reviews, dealer locations and information on Linn whole home multi-channel total entertainment solutions.

E DITORIAL



Gene and Sharon Pitts

ETC.

I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE. This issue is late but it is for reasons beyond my control. I have discussed this with many people in the industry, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank many of you, out here in public, for your warm kindnesses. I have tried to be gracious to all in my responses, but in case I have missed out saying "thank you" to some friend, then be pleased to accept it here. For those of you who don't know, I'd rather not have to go through all that stuff again, so please....

Cake and Eat It, Too?

If you are a regular reader of this magazine or, better, have been reading the music or computer trade press over the past year, you will know about Napster, Metallica, and a heavy-duty court case concerning the sharing of music files via the Internet. Napster lost, badly, and is now owned (!) by a record company and run by a former record company executive. A lot of money was at stake, and indeed still is, but more important I think was the principle of what a private citizen could do with something he bought. I still keep thinking about whether it is legal for me to let my wife (see above) listen to a CD I bought. And whether it was legal for me to make a one-off dub from several CDs, including e.g. Eric Clapton's "Tears In Heaven," to run in "continuous play mode" in a Memorial Home.

There have also been reports that Sony Music, AOL Time Warner, EMI, Bertelsmann, et al. have tried out various forms of subscription-based music distribution or sale via the Web or the Internet. Some of these have been very short lived, for proof-of-performance purposes, it appears to me, while others seem to be fairly deliberate moves into such modes of music distribution.

One of the latest head-spinners in news about "A Little 'Net Music" was a story in *The New York Times* for Oct. 22 about a Justice Department inquiry into whether the recording industry is trying to illegally dominate such distribution of music by not licensing their catalogs to distributors competing with them on the 'Net. At stake here is the overhead money, the huge amount saved from not having to press the CD at some plant, put it into a jewelbox (Oxymoron Alert!), print and insert a booklet, and ship the whole thing all over the place. (Never mind that the ratio of manufacture and distribution to final price is *much* lower for CD than it was for LP.)

The article quotes at some length Jonathan Potter, who is director of the Digital Media Assn., a trade group of online-music start-ups: "In the traditional marketplace, wholesalers can't control what retailers charge. Suddenly, in the digital world, the record companies want the exclusive right to control how many copies are made, the technology, the price — the entire consumer experience." It's an interesting argument; is it price-fixing and monopolistic if the copyrighted piece of music can be bought at only one price and from one seller? However, I myself am more interested in whether I can play the music for others. And I cannot see any essential difference, for the purposes of this discussion, between the experience of two people in the same listening room, and their experience of the same piece of music played later on at the end of an e-mail or Internet exchange. Clearly the recording industry's lawyers can. It's not that there shouldn't be copyrights, but that their enforcement shouldn't violate the sanctity of the home.

A perhaps unrelated story in the *Times* the next day described "the latest skirmish between code breakers and digital copyright holders" when an anonymous programmer, using the *nom d'Hack* "Beale Screamer," published software named FreeMe that disables Microsoft technology intended to provide security for copyrighted music by, for example, not allowing copying to an MP3 player or the burning a CD-ROM (see above). For his part, Beale published with his software a criticism of the Digital Millennium Copyright Law (DMCA), saying that the publication of FreeMe was an "act of civil disobedience," apparently in the tradition of Howard Beale, a character in the movie "Network," who uttered the immortal (that's with a *T*, thank you!) line: "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore."

Mad or not, neo-Beale may be in for a up to a \$1 million fine 'cause that's the potential penalty for such things under the DMCA. It just might be, too, that level of fine was what Prof. Ed Felton was thinking about when he was so cautious about telling the recording industry that their current "watermarking" anti-copy code could be removed without leaving "audible fingerprints." Some are claiming that Felton's group never did the deed 'cause he didn't tell 'em how they did it. But he didn't have to if he didn't want to receive the challenge prize money; besides \$10,000 split between a dozen or so researchers in Felton's group doesn't make honor worth very much.



PURIST AUDIO DESIGN

music through the science of sound



Post Office Box 125 · Clute, Texas 77531 · 409-265-5114 · FAX 409-265-1211
Website: www.puristaudiodesign.com · E-mail: purist@puristaudiodesign.com



Networked Entertainment ... Now You're Talking Convergence!

Bernie Sepaniak*

HOW DO YOU MAKE an audiophile scream? Simply say the words "compression," "low bit-rate," "hall," "chorus," "stadium," and "budget processor effects."

Audiophiles are fundamentally concerned about passion, quality, personal style and visceral experience. I'll cheerfully admit to being one, but I'm also the leader of a new convergence technology company that I believe is at the forefront of networked entertainment for the home.

Convergence Technology

I believe a new species of audiophile will rapidly evolve in response to changes in our environment. Home-entertainment equipment is undergoing major changes now due to the widespread introduction of digital technology to meet challenges of the Internet, and it will soon affect the daily listening life of all audiophiles, even the most casual ones.

"Convergence" is a catch-all term often used these days to describe the merging of communications, Internet, computers, home automation, and entertainment media. The most usual examples of convergence technologies include home networks, broadband connectivity, compressed audio-video, residential gateways, wireless micro-networks, and Internet-enabled entertainment devices.

Look at the past 10 years of the Internet era and you'll discover profound changes ... e-commerce alters how we transact business, e-mail allows us to communicate more easily, and the Web offers a way to create and build online com-

munities. Here's the mantra: ... transact, communicate and community. And those funny little acronyms TCP/IP, HTTP, DHCP, IPv4, and UDP have led to a robust, worldwide network infrastructure capable of accessing any content, media or database and delivering it to any device. Extend the mantra: ... network, connectivity.

The revolution in on-line digital music over the past five years is a clear illustration of rapid evolution; here are a few examples. The world's published collection of recorded media can be converted to compressed audio (MP3) format and transferred (via a neo-Napster, say) in peer-to-peer exchanges; personalized playlists and radio stations are streamed to your desktop; portable music jukeboxes or players, with gigabytes of music storage, let you take your music with you, and web sites can immediately deliver meta-data (detailed information, cover art imagery and sound samples) for any obscure but interesting recording and deliver it to your doorstep in CD format within a few days. Extend the mantra: ... peer-to-peer, portability, streaming, playlists, meta-data, fulfillment.

Convergence technologists understand this new digital mantra, its benefits and its limitations. We

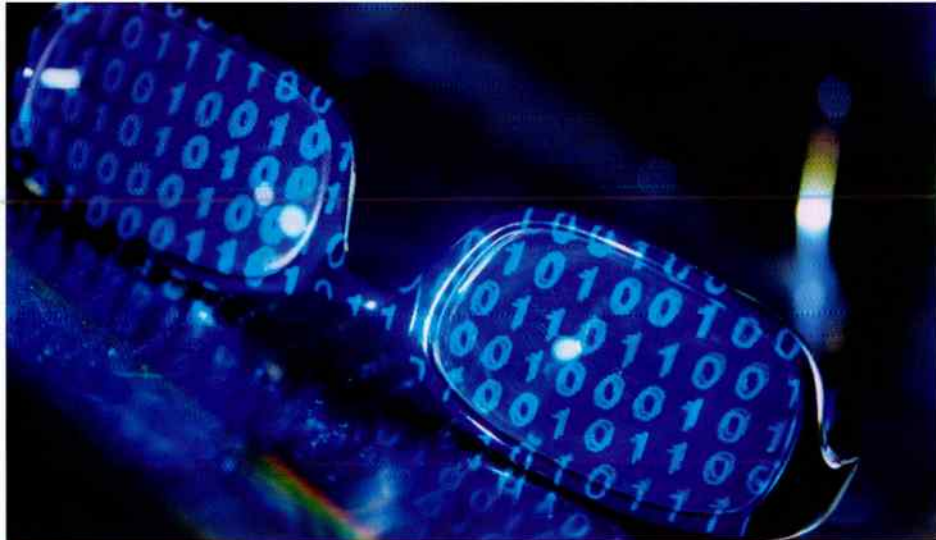
also understand how a home outfitted with a pervasive home network and with access to ultra high-speed broadband Internet connectivity can enhance the entertainment experience in amazing new ways. But we also realize that integration of these technologies into the home will undoubtedly face resistance and failure if it doesn't significantly contribute to and simplify your media enjoyment. I want to give you my insider's vision about how this may unfold over the coming months and years.

An audiophile's environment is composed of power amplifiers, loudspeaker systems, preamps, audio processors, reference CD and DVD players and changers, reference turntables, power conditioners, and exquisite cabling not to mention housing for all this gear. Manufacturers of some of these devices (e.g. CD players) are including ways to leverage the Internet to enhance or simplify the listening experience. An extensive collection of CDs and vinyl might have incredible and incredible amounts of cover art; that's ignoring the discography and other notes that audiophiles treasure. (Think of jazz journalist Dick Shapp, for example, with his encyclopedic notes.) When CDs are inserted into one's reference CD player today, much of that treasured "extra" content (aka meta-data) is typically lost. By adding a simple 56K dial-up modem or home network connection to such devices (or interfacing to a connected PC) and a simple navigation menu for TV display, such meta-data can now easily be associated and displayed while enjoying the music. These newfan-

**President and CEO, OpenGlobe, Inc.,
bsepaniak@openglobe.net,
<http://www.openglobe.net>*

Acknowledgement

Mr. Sepaniak would like to thank Steve Kulka, Sr. Strategic Marketing Mgr. at OpenGlobe, Inc., for contributing to this article.



gled devices are essentially extending the power of the Internet to access and deliver world-class music-recognition technologies and services to devices that are already familiar to most audiophiles. In addition, once your collection is recognized, the associated metadata can be used to create an entirely new way to manage, select and

enjoy music using visual media navigational tools. Such TV-based visual media guides simplify your interaction with your collection and offer deeper insights. It is easy to notice trends and gaps in a collection. Investigating relationships between artists comes naturally. And it will be extraordinarily easy to create song- and album-based play-

lists to match our ever-changing moods or to express our personal style with music.

You may already be an “early adopter” of such Internet-enabled entertainment products as the Escent’s Tunebase which is so astronomically good a CD “handler” it can deal with 6,000 CDs. But you ain’t seen nothing yet. The media innovations that took place first in the PC industry have been newly harnessed in the consumer electronics world and are now being integrated into a slew of new devices that will soon come to market from a host of manufacturers. A simple CD player or changer is now morphing into a powerful CD recorder/player/jukebox, capable of playing standard CD audio, playing CD-Rs encoded (“burned”) with MP3 music, and ripping or encoding an entire CD music collection to a local hard drive in compressed audio formats (MP3, WMA, AAC, etc.). Other things you can use

Table 1 — A comparison of home networking technologies.

Home Networking Technology	Data Delivery Speed (Mbps = mega-bits per second)	Notes
Ethernet (wired) (IEEE 802.3)	10 Mbps	Reliable, proven, with wide industry support Affordable. Somewhat difficult to install since it uses special wiring and often requires hubs and routers.
Fast Ethernet (wired) (IEEE 802.3u)	100 Mbps	Reliable, proven, with wide industry support. Affordable. Somewhat difficult to install since it uses special wiring and often requires hubs and routers
Gigabit Ethernet (wired) (IEEE 802.3z & 802.3ab)	1,000 Mbps (1Gbps)	Reliable. Expensive. Somewhat difficult to install since it uses special wiring and often requires hubs and routers
WLAN (wireless) IEEE 802.11b	11 Mbps	Wireless LAN standard for 2.4 GHz spectrum, Based on Ethernet up to 300 feet between nodes. More expensive than wired 10/100 Ethernet. Signals may be affected by interference & structural blocks Wireless base station is required.
WLAN (wireless) IEEE 802.11a	54 Mbps	Wireless LAN standard for 5.4 GHz spectrum, Based on OFDM Up to 300 feet between nodes. An emerging technology. Wireless base station is required.

already are playing streaming Internet radio stations, securely exporting ripped music to portable or handheld music players, and visually managing entire music collections with simple play-list tools. Such devices will finally unleash music from the confines of its vinyl or CD packaging and provide extremely powerful ways to easily personalize our listening experience. Near-term innovations in such Internet-enabled entertainment devices will integrate music recommendations, be respectful of privacy and security concerns, and provide us with CE-Commerce or the ability to purchase new music (CDs, vinyl, digital), concert tickets, and entertainment merchandise directly from the device. Extend the new mantra: ... personalized recommendations, CE-Commerce, music unleashed, visual media guides.

Emerging Internet-enabled entertainment devices may sacrifice some audio quality for storage and



accessibility purposes, as MP3 has for example, to allow for additional manageability of music and for the ability to transfer music to handheld portable music players. However, Moore's Law applies also to storage,

bandwidth, CODEC and encryption performance, so over the next few years one will easily see such devices offering the visceral listening experience which audlophiles expect.

Table 1 - Home Networking Technologies, continued.

Technology	Speed	Notes
HomePNA (home phonline)	10 Mbps (v2.0); 1 Mbps (v1.0)	A reliable, low cost, emerging technology. Uses existing home phone wiring, up to 500 feet between nodes. Supports Quality of Service levels for multimedia. Simple to install. Hub and router not required. Standard created by Home Phonline Alliance organization.
HomeRF (wireless)	10 Mbps	Low cost, still emerging Operates in 2.4GHz spectrum Base station required Signals may be affected by interference & structural blocks Standard created by HomeRF organization
Bluetooth (wireless)	1 Mbps	An emerging, low cost technology requiring nodes to all have Bluetooth ICs Limited range (10 m) Operates in 2.4GHz spectrum Signals may be affected by structural blocks Standard created by Bluetooth Special Interest Group.
HomePlug (powerline)	14 Mbps	Flexible, uses existing home power line wiring An emerging technology Long range Standard created by HomePlug organization

Key Criteria

in selecting a suitable home networking technology includes: Availability; cost per node; installation difficulty; transmission speed of network; distance (range) between nodes on the network; whether the technology is proprietary or standards-based; whether the technology supports Quality of Service levels supporting delivery of time-sensitive (isochronous) multimedia; whether the technology is subject to signal interference or degrades due to the home architecture (walls); whether the technology requires specialized peripherals to operate (e.g. base stations, hubs, routers, etc.); and whether the network is secure from tampering.



On The Way To The Promised Land

There are many challenges and issues as an audiophile walks into the new world of convergence – some apparent and some hidden. As early adopters fill their entertainment nest with these new Internet-enabled entertainment devices, they will quickly realize that a firm foundation should first be laid.

Some may already have multiple PCs in their homes and decided to network them, share a peripheral or two between them, and thus implemented a simple home network, probably based on home phone line (HomePNA v1.0), ethernet (CAT5 cabling) or RF (IEEE 802.11b & HomeRF v1.0). When high-speed

broadband Internet service became available, we realized we could share the wealth and have our home network share the high-speed connection. Simple, right? Just interface the DSL or digital cable modem to the home network and ... so, what's that tech support phone number again? Many early pioneers learned a lot more about DHCP and MAC and IP addresses than they hoped they'd have to know.

Home network technologies like HomePNA v2.0, ethernet, 802.11b (aka "wireless ethernet"), power line, and RF (HomeRF v2.0 and Bluetooth) are quickly evolving, declining in price and increasing their bandwidth to handle multimedia needs. Such technologies are now being integrated into many

devices destined to be sold to consumers, for communication, information and entertainment-delight. To bridge an in-home network to the outside world (e.g. a broadband network operator's back-end server infrastructure), specialized devices known as residential gateways will soon be at our doorstep. Intelligently-designed, residential gateways are bridges that are highly reliable, highly secure (e.g. embedded firewalls), bandwidth-agile, extremely simple to setup, supportive of multiple in-home network technologies, and are viewed as a key platform for a variety of future interactive services supporting voice, data, entertainment and other Internet-enabled services.

Powerful home networks, residential gateways and high-speed broadband connectivity will be key ingredients for building a firm foundation for future audiophile entertainment centers. This does not imply that one cannot enjoy the benefits of emerging Internet-enabled entertainment products and services without such a foundation in place. For example, many new CD music products will only require a simple 56K modem dial-up and ISP to provide a host of innovative personalized services.

You have reached the promised land, when ... (1) you can easily add devices to your roomnets (islands of connectivity) in a plug-and-play fashion without a technician or user's guide, (2) easily route your collection of media anywhere and at anytime to any location(s) in your home, car or handheld PDA, and (3) when the network infrastructure starts to fade into the background of your entertainment center and just works to enhance your enjoyment.

Will we need to invest in all of these elements for such an infrastructure right away?

Early adopters may wish to make such investments, however as the future unfolds, one might also expect to see more and more devices that will be manufactured as "Internet-ready" or "home network-ready" and we may also find that a powerful ingredient (such as the residential gateway) may be subsidized and offered at very low prices by the broadband network operators. Network operators are those folks at the cable, satellite, telco and independent ISPs that are

ABOUT OPENGLOBE

Headquartered in Indianapolis, OpenGlobe, Inc., an affiliated company of Escent Technologies, LLC, is a leading entertainment services and media device technologies provider, harnessing the Internet to deliver simple yet powerful home entertainment. Working with world-class consumer electronics and personal computer manufacturers, OpenGlobe brings a seamless world of entertainment capabilities into users' home entertainment systems.

OpenGlobe's Internet-based services deliver personalized content, media recommendations, and CE-Commerce buying services that enhance the entertainment experience. Users can easily store and access their media collections, discover gaps, import and use digital media, create favorite playlists, or further access the OpenGlobe services to explore new artists or genres, get customized content, receive media recommendations, and opt into personalized CE-Commerce™ purchasing opportunities.

OpenGlobe and the OpenGlobe logo are trademarks of OpenGlobe, Inc. CE-Commerce is a trademark of Escent Technologies LLC. Tunebase is a registered trademark of Escent Convergence Corp.



Audio Cables, Inc.

Purchase Factory Direct

www.nbscables.com



Electronics, Inc.

SPECIAL PROMOTION

WITH THE PURCHASE OF A COMPARABLE NBS POWER
CONDITIONER SYSTEM

NBS WILL GIVE YOU 50% OR MORE TRADE IN ALLOWANCE ON

ACCUPHASE

BURMESTER

P S AUDIO

SOUND APPLICATIONS

AND MANY OTHER BRANDS

FOR INFORMATION CALL (800) NBS-0204

"GUARANTEED TO BE SUPERIOR"

always trying to charge monthly fees for services. Well, as they struggle to differentiate their offerings, secure customer loyalty, increase their revenues, and compete against each other they will soon discover that entertainment content and meta-data services, as described earlier, may be of interest to their customers. For example, being able to rent digital storage space for an entire audiophile's media collection at the head-end facility of a network operator is a distinct possibility. Or engage in personal playlist ex-

changes in chat-rooms hosted by such operators. Any audiophile worth their salt has a personal playlist that they would want everyone in the world to know about, right?

Yikes – What's That Sound?

Earlier I mentioned that compressed audio recording and storage of a music collection will be a standard feature on some classes of emerging devices. I think I even mentioned MP3. Now we all know

that this format is not always music to our ears. A lot of MP3-encoded music suffers from audible noise (hiss), distortion at high frequencies and frequency roll-off at the high and low-end of the audible spectrum. One may expect to see a variety of technological approaches implemented in the audio pathway to help sweeten the situation, ones like dynamic gain boosters, harmonic fidelity restoration, and volume normalization. Also, expect to see new CODEC formats (e.g. WMA, AAC, and MP3Pro) imple-

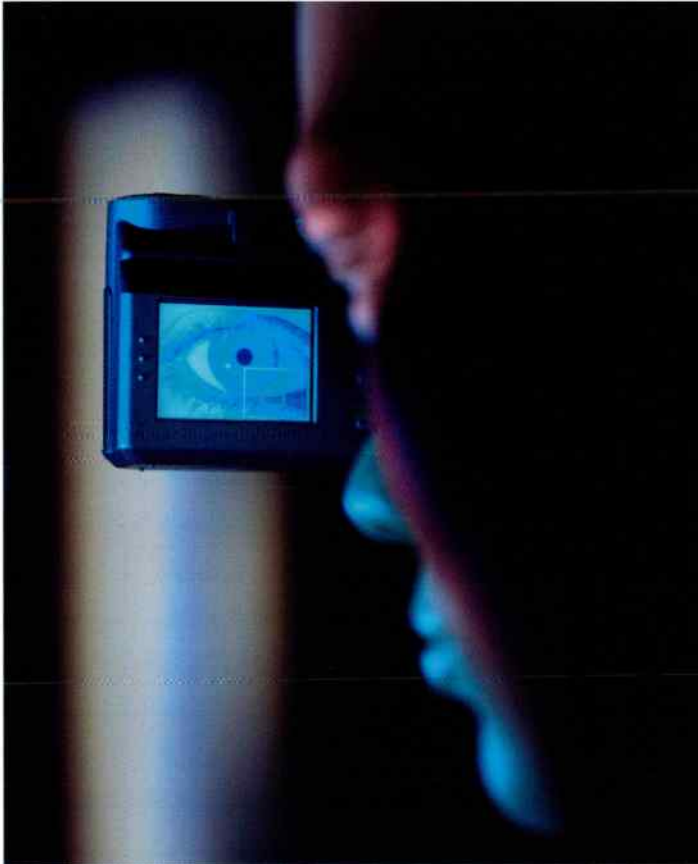
Table 2 — Data rates of various media types.

Media Type	Data Rate
Audio	
CD-DA Linear PCM Audio Uncompressed (44.1 kHz, 16 bits, 2-ch)	1.4 Mbps
MP3 Compressed Audio*	
FM Radio quality (stereo)	64 Kbps
Near CD quality (stereo)	96 Kbps
CD-like quality (stereo)	128 Kbps
CD transparent quality (stereo)	320 Kbps
Dolby Digital (AC3) 5.1 ch. - Compressed	Typically 384 Kbps
Audio tracks on DVD-Video - Compressed (Dolby Digital, MPEG-2, linear PCM, DTS, SDDS)	Typically 384 Kbps, range (32 Kbps to 6.144 Mbps)
DVD-Audio	Up to 9.6 Mbps
SACD-Audio	2.8 Mbps
Video	
DVD-Video	Typically 4-5 Mbps, range: (3.81 – 10.08 Mbps)
SDTV Video (720x480) Uncompressed	166 Mbps
SDTV Video – MPEG-2 Compressed	Typically 3.5 to 4 Mbps, range (1.5 Mbps – 9.8 Mbps)
SDTV Video – MPEG-4 Compressed	Intermediate (64-384 Kbps), High (384 Kbps – 4 Mbps)
HDTV (1280x720p) Uncompressed	885 Mbps
HDTV (1280x720p) Compressed	~70 Mbps
HDTV (1920x1080i) Uncompressed	995 Mbps
HDTV (1920x1080i) Compressed	~80 Mbps

*MP3 (MPEG-2/Layer 3) codec quality is constantly improving. Many new codecs are coming into the marketplace with great improvements (e.g. MP3Pro, WMA version 8, etc.), so these data rate figures will likely change over time.

To estimate the storage required to record a media type, simply multiply the data rate times the duration of the media experience, and convert to "bytes" instead of "bits". For example, a 3 minute MP3 song track that was encoded at 128 Kbps (constant bit rate) will require: 3 min x 60sec/min x 128K bits/sec = 23,040 K bits = ~2.88 MB (megabytes)

Personal Video Recorders (PVRs) typically offer a variety of recording options (good, better, best). These user settings then control the data rate used by the MPEG-2 encoder in the PVR. The higher the data rate, then the higher the quality of the recording. However, higher quality levels will require greater amounts of storage, therefore tradeoffs may be required if storage is limited (as it usually is).



then anarchy reigns and most business models collapse. Free peer-to-peer file exchanges induce a strange illness in ordinary folks, who by day appear perfectly honest, yet by night become raging, byte-hungry hounds, never having enough music files.

That's rapidly changing now. Advanced recognition and filtering technologies are the antidote that keeps the illness from getting too wide spread. Such technologies are not going to entirely pre-

vent the illness from occurring or recurring; they will serve to forestall the epidemic, and give time for a new subscription service to evolve, one which enforces music and radio intellectual property rights at a fair price. Emerging Internet-enabled entertainment products and services will include digital rights management solutions but will also include powerful music discovery services (search, sample, try, and buy). The successful products and services will ensure that they give back more than they take away – from a rights point of view, that is.

nologies, products and services infiltrate an audiophile's entertainment abode; there is a true danger that privacy could be insidiously abused. Suppose everyone knew that you listened to Lawrence Welk albums every morning while showering, well, uh, well, Services that "give" can also "take." It is important that as we acquire emerging Internet-enabled products that we challenge the dealer and manufacturer about whether they can monitor our personal entertainment experience and if they associate such data with personally-identifiable information. Yes, we will all need to read the fine print. READ THE PRIVACY POLICIES. Make sure you understand how usage of data and personally-identifiable information is stored and who has access to it and for what purpose(s). Most manufacturers and service-providers are designing advanced security technologies and privacy procedures so that all anyone would ever know is that some "male" in zip code 46278 listens to Lawrence Welk twixt 6:00 and 6:15 a.m. every morning. (Whew, must be my neighbor.)

mented in devices that rip and encode. If disk drive prices continue to fall while increasing in storage capacity, then who knows, one day you may never even need to care about CODEC issues.

Their Rights

Going digital? But will you respect me tomorrow? Ask any teenager why the D: and E: drive on the home's PC is always full. Ask any PC desk-worker with a fast LAN why they hide the advertising banner area on their Internet radio player beneath the bezel of their monitor. Once you go digital, if you do not respect and enforce the intellectual property rights of content authors and other rights-holders,

vent the illness from occurring or recurring; they will serve to forestall the epidemic, and give time for a new subscription service to evolve, one which enforces music and radio intellectual property rights at a fair price. Emerging Internet-enabled entertainment products and services will include digital rights management solutions but will also include powerful music discovery services (search, sample, try, and buy). The successful products and services will ensure that they give back more than they take away – from a rights point of view, that is.

Your Rights

Did I tell you that you get a free lunch too? As convergence tech-

An Emerging Array

Studies of the Burgess Shale in British Columbia from ancient Cambrian times (550 million years ago) support the theory of "punctuated equilibrium," which argues that evolution is not that smooth, but is somewhat chaotic. The creatures of the Burgess Shale present a series of evolutionary experimentation of amazing diversity. Convergence technology is likely ushering in a similar period of evolution into consumer electronics and into our living rooms. The fittest will likely survive.

Table 3 - A comparison of various data transfer "pipes" to the home.

Pipe	Data Rate
Dial-up Modem	53.3 Kbps (43 Kbps average)
Consumer Cable Modem	1 Mbps (avg max) & 150 Kbps (avg min), with occasional burst downloads up to 5Mbps
Consumer DSL Modem	2 Mbps (avg max) & 150 Kbps (avg min)
DirecPC Satellite	480 Kbps
StarBand Satellite	900 Kbps (avg max) & 300 Kbps (avg min)
Future: NTSC datacasting	~ 4.5 Mbps
Future: DTV datacasting	~ 10 Mbps

As convergence technologies are incorporated into consumer electronics equipment, a variety of new product categories – in fact a dizzying array of such devices can be expected. During the first generation, some manufacturers will simply make current product categories net-ready, such as Internet-enabled DVD players (aka iDVD players) which will add 56K modems and web browsers. Others will massively integrate functionality into A/V receivers and digital set-top boxes, adding DVD/CD player capability, Internet connectivity and other capabilities. Everything in between will also become available, for example dedicated Internet clock radios, massive media servers with TiVo-like personal video recording functionality, portable music players and jukebox servers, enhanced CD player/recorder/jukeboxes, etc. Nearly every home theater component can exploit the Internet somehow, whether it is for data access, commerce, content, or storage. Imaginative products and services will emerge to serve the variety of entertainment needs of the audiophile to Manage, Notify, Learn, Discover, Try, Buy, Store, and Discuss.

Second-generation products will likely evolve back to separate components that fully leverage universal plug and play home networks and wireless connectivity. The storage location of a personal media collection just may be widely distributed across the house, in a personal storage locker at the head-end of the network operator, or in various portable storage media containers. Personal playlists may evolve to become an essential currency of exchange in networked entertainment environments. Music recognition technology will become fully integrated into future audiophile products and enable simple one-step playlist generation from a favorite song. These playlists will become personal radio stations whose program length can be controlled and whose song variety will match a personal mood and attitude. Coupling these powerful music discovery tools with the forthcoming premium music subscription services from the major record labels (MusicNet and Duet) can offer an extremely compelling way to discover and obtain many forms of new music.

Lessons Learned

Networked entertainment consumer products and services, which leverage the Internet are emerging. Integrating a robust home networking infrastructure into your home entertainment center is recommended. Compressed digital audio today is not necessarily a bad thing – even for audiophiles – and eventually may become unnecessary. Networked entertainment is simply a better way to manage a personal

media collection. Metadata is a friend enabling powerful new ways to visualize and manage music. Cool ways to discover new music will soon be available. Respect rights and ensure yours are respected, too. Online digital distribution of premium music content will soon be available from reputable sources.

The future is unfolding before our eyes, fellow audiophile, so stay tuned, but don't get caught in any Burgess Shale.

Holographic Aesthetic Emotional

TOTEM ACOUSTIC

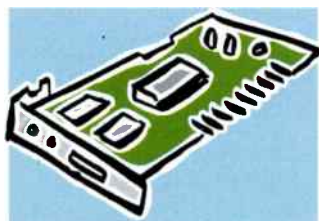
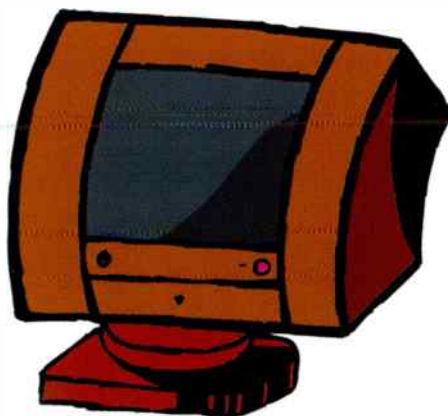
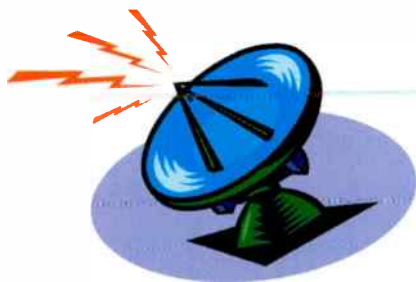
Let the music guide your soul

Follow your **TOTEM**

FOR YOUR NEAREST RETAILER CONTACT:

TOTEM ACOUSTIC

NEW ADDRESS → 9165, Champ D'Eau, Saint-Léonard (Quebec) H1P 3M3 CANADA
Tel.: (514) 259-1062 • Fax: (514) 259-4968 www.totemacoustic.com



Get The Noise Out!



Bernard Kingsley



FOR THOSE WHO truly listen (as opposed to just running music in the background), radio frequency interference (r.f.i.) can be a serious problem. While there are LOTS of external forces which can create r.f.i., the mix of computers and audio gear (both of which now feature processors) can seriously increase the problem.

Make sure first that the computer is the problem, and not an audio component. This is simple to do and therefore should be done first.

Assuming that because the r.f.i. starts when a computer is turned on doesn't automatically mean the "fix" is in the computer. Check the audio system out first to see if changing cables or power outlets makes a difference. Some of those power strips often sold with computers include r.f.i. traps and work fine with audio equipment.

The video monitor may be a prime suspect. Most modern monitors have a ferrite choke at the end of the cable entering the monitor. If yours doesn't, then the monitor connection could be a possibility for causing the problem. Unfortunately, some monitor cables are soldered into the case itself making replacement difficult.

Sometimes the problem IS the computer and must be fixed there. As in audio, many r.f.i. problems are from cables and connections.

There is no shortage of cables on, in and around a computer. Check everything going into the computer. Cables can go bad from stretching and bending and some cables are better (perhaps also more expensive) than others. Most computers and peripherals don't come with the best cables. For example, chances are the best-quality printer

cable didn't come with your \$79 printer. It can easily be that the printer came without a cable whatsoever, leaving it to you to select one. While price is ONE indicator of quality, don't assume price equals reliability. Look for cables that not only meet the best specifications (yes, some peripherals have "specs" for cables), but also look for something that can take punishment. An otherwise high-quality cable that is poorly soldered or has soft, easily breakable pins won't solve your problem.

Internal cables are less likely to be a problem. IDE cables for hard drives, for example, can go bad, but not often. Still, they need to be checked. Don't forget cables from the CD-ROM to the motherboard and the sound card as well as cables to the fans. These cables are often of poor quality.

Zu Cable



Gauge

\$180 10' pair



Julian

\$320 10' pair



www.ZuCable.com

+1-801-605-0535

Ogden, Utah USA

Most people don't like to open their computer case, and it's for good reason. Even a tiny static charge on your hands can wipe out expensive memory chips. Still, most users do end up opening their systems at some time. Read the manual carefully, ground yourself, and invest in an anti-static wristband. Do not touch anything unless you intend to. A surprising number of problem happen because cables and components were touched and became loose while some other component was being worked on.

Don't forget that in addition to cables, the actual connection on the motherboard could be a problem. A good number of PC interface cards (modems, sound-cards, etc.) will work even though the card wasn't completely and securely plugged into the motherboard during initial assembly. Cards have also been known to work themselves loose when the computer is moved (AGP graphics cards are notorious for this). Since these cards are attached to both the motherboard and the computer case, some stretching/displacement can result

whenever the computer is moved even slightly. Firmly push the card into the slot.

An oft overlooked source of problems is the phone cable and connection. Those tiny cables actually carry quite a few wires, and the outlets themselves are often of cheap design (and easy to replace). I

the warranty for r.f.i. leakage, but he SHOULD honor it if the interference is significantly worse than other systems.

Unlike audio components, disconnecting individual internal computer components can be tedious difficult since each component must be removed separately to test if it is the offending card. In some cases, removing certain cards can totally disable the computer so that you won't be able to boot. Temporarily disconnecting and removing the sound card and modem will have the least impact on your system but will

The modern mix of audio and computer gear can easily lead to difficult problems with radio frequency interference.

test two likely suspects. Removing a video card is more dramatic since you may not see anything on your screen as you reboot.

Don't forget that, if you do remove and add a card, Windows may well see this as the addition of new hardware and insist on reinstalling the drivers. Usually you can ignore Window's request to do so, but sometimes a reinstall is necessary.

have solved several connection and r.f.i. problems by simply replacing the phone jack and wire. Usually a telltale sign of a poor phone connection is reduced performance by the modem, though this isn't always evident with bad phone cables. If the computer did not have the r.f.i. problem all along, it might be something you added (sound card, etc.). Check those components first. If it did exhibit this from day one, it will be harder to track down unless you still have a warranty in force. Your vendor may or may not honor

But in any case, good luck in running down and curing your r.f.i. problems.

What they're all talking about



IMMEDIA



With showrooms at our new location 1717A Fourth St., Berkeley, Ca. 94710

Phone (510) 559-2050 fax 559-1855

Lyra Helikon - \$2495 \$1995 with any MC trade

www.immediasound.com

Lady Day - Complete



*Featured
Jazz*

**Billie Holiday The Complete Billie Holiday on Columbia, 1933-44
Legacy Records 85470**

AS WE KNOW, the best of jazz, whether personified by Louis Armstrong or Duke Ellington, creates exuberant and life-giving joy amid tribulations. This has been clear for a long time, with some of the most miserable and unpleasantly unhappy characters in the arts — from poet Philip Larkin to filmmaker Woody Allen — turning to jazz for their own inspiration and salvation. Nowadays, frequent doses of great jazz seem all the more necessary for our well-being. Which makes Sony-Legacy one of the greatest benefactors (for a price) in recent years, with splendid reissues of the Essential Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven Recordings, and now this spectacular 10-CD set of Billie Holiday's complete Columbia records (Legacy Records 85470).

The word "complete" is often overused in recording industry hype, but this set merits the term, with alternate takes and radio air-check material filling three full CDs, most of which will be unfamiliar to non-specialists. This is much of the best of Billie Holiday (1915-1957), which means that this set is among the best-ever jazz singing. Jazz is a supremely instrumental art, in which the individual player can make a trumpet, bass, or even

drum set speak like a wonderfully communicative human voice. To be up to this standard of excellence, a vocalist has to be one of the instruments in the band, that is be a great singing instrumentalist, like the great prototype Louis Armstrong.

Holiday, who was born Eleanora Fagan in Philadelphia into dire poverty, and became a prostitute in her early teens, was enormously influenced by Armstrong. Even the astute pianist Teddy Wilson, who later worked with Holiday on some of her best achievements, initially dismissed her as "a girl who sings like Louis. Cute, but so what?" In fact, Holiday may have been pursuing a parallel path to Armstrong, more than merely imitating his way of singing like an instrument. In song after song in the present set, what sets Holiday above singers in almost any genre, not just jazz, is her extreme musicality. Like Maria Callas redeeming oom-pa-pa Italian operas with a unique vocal timbre, passion, and musical smarts, Holiday was able to take ordinary Tin Pan Alley material and transfigure it. In the present set, there are enough examples to fill a book, but we may choose a neglected Irving Berlin song, "He Ain't Got Rhythm," recorded in 1937. Her backup

ensemble includes Benny Goodman on clarinet, Lester Young on tenor saxophone, Teddy Wilson on piano, and Jo Jones on drums. The personal story behind this session is that according to biographers, Holiday was having an affair with Goodman, who was the love of her life. However, Goodman decided not to marry Billie, because of racial issues very much alive for any touring musician's career in the 1930s and after. This cold decision supposedly threw a disappointed Billie into the arms of a succession of ne'er do well lovers, alcoholics and drug addicts, who got her hooked on their bad habits, and ruined her life in short order. Given Benny Goodman's fearful reputation as "The Ray" for the killing glare he turned on erring musicians, one wonders if Billie's life would have been that much more joyous had she won her man. However, all this is in the future, when they recorded the delightful "He Ain't Got Rhythm." It's a droll song about a man who "attracted some attention/ when he found the fourth dimension/ but he ain't got rhythm, no one's with him, the loneliest man in town." Holiday performs it with ideal slyness, entering ever-so-slightly off-rhythm with the kind of askew comic sense that only a true musical master could accomplish. Her dry recitation of the title character's woes is priceless: "A lonely man is he, bending over his books/ his wife and family keep giving him dirty looks"

The ensemble is just as sparkling, with the truly magical drummer Jo Jones doing one of his delightfully subtle and graceful turns. Like Holiday, Jones could play with muted grace, a kind of elegant cool, that made as much of a statement as the notes being played. Indeed, Jo Jones was so supreme for a generation that he, in company of other wonderful artists Philly Joe Jones and Elvin Jones, started the legend still current in parts of Europe that in order to be a truly great jazz drummer, a musician must be named Jones (!) One of Jones' great qualities is his ideal sense of refinement. There is a famous later Billie Holiday album, "Songs for Distingue Lovers," a title that nowadays may cause snickers, for who among us can truly look at his or her partner/mate and say, yes indeed that's us, we are "distingue lovers"? Still, these performers from a different era, despite the constant indignities that African-Americans were subjected to at the time, managed to be triumphantly polished and refined. Another ideal example is pianist Teddy Wilson, expressive but infallibly dapper and amusing at the keyboard. All this was part of the atmosphere Holiday established with her songs. It is all too clear in this new set where some artists, however famous, simply do not fit in with her esthetic, whether the ham-handed drummer Gene Krupa, or the otherwise excellent pianist Art Tatum, in a 1944 air-check with an "All-Star Jam Band." Tatum's constant and endless rippling runs up and down the keyboard leave no empty space in which the voice can assert itself. Naturally, given this rather claustrophobic accompaniment, Holiday turns to focus on other musicians present, who are more willing to dialogue with her, like clarinetist Barney Bigard, a longtime mainstay of the Duke Ellington band.

For All We Know ... The Best of Jazz ... Before The Problems Set In

The personal mood indigo of Billie Holiday — part of the reason for her success with droll numbers —also contains a certain detachment, a sense of someone who is off in a corner expressing her own message, while nevertheless interacting magnificently with the musicians around her. When the ensembles are less perfect than others, she seems to gravitate to the finest musicians present, whether bassist or trumpet player, and duet with them in emotional closeness of mood. The most legendary team that Billie developed is with sax player Lester Young,

who shared with her not only a muted sense of cool and perfect rhythmic sense and economy, but also a potential for singularity that could tip over to artful weirdness. Lest this be thought pejorative, let us recall that Louis Armstrong himself could be mighty odd — veering on voodoo glee in some of his raunchier comic songs — and such masterful jazz performers like Thelonious Monk or Sun Ra made their oddities inextricable from their genius. As for Holiday, in "Back in Your Own Backyard," an erstwhile sentimental Al Jolson hit, Billie and Lester convey how very strange and even unsettling one's own backyard can be. Young's solo is so introverted as to give off a very odd image of home, and Billie's singing is equally individualistic and inward-looking, not the braying of Jolson's precedent. Instead of the apparent message of the song, that everything is fine back at home, the Holiday-Young message is more like, "Whatever you do, you'll end up back home and we all know what THAT'S like (!!!)" Likewise, with her musical backup, Billie could often transform the traditional approach to some standards like the weepy "My Man," about how a woman clings to her lover even though he beats her, etc. Billie's forceful interpretation is followed by an ensemble effort by the backup musicians that is nothing short of triumphant, totally transforming the lachrymose content of the song into exultation. The same is true of another paean of self-pity, "Moanin' Low," which became a hit in the 1920s in a shapeless interpretation by chanteuse Libby Holman. Very much in command, Holiday by contrast makes it into a smart, no-nonsense, and highly fetching number.

As has often been noted, Billie was not really a blues singer, although her miserable later life did give her this reputation. Any genre in which a singer could triumph by planting her feet and roaring unsubtle emotions, however grandiose, was not really Billie's strong suit. A refined and highly elegant artist, the more complex the material, the better she dealt with it. With so many precise details in these performances, it is delightful to report how much these recordings have been cleaned up for the present release. The compilation was produced by Michael Brooks and Michael Cuscuna, digitally remastered at New York's Sony Music Studios by Mark Wilder and Seth Foster.

The packaging is part of Sony's ever-extending attempt to make a box set look like anything but a box set. The Louis Armstrong Hot Five and Hot Seven set looked like a sepia photo album. The present reissue is the size of an exceptionally large executive calendar with little brown envelopes containing the discs. The

BRYSTON

BRYSTON

ST
POWER

BRYSTON

ST
POWER

www.bryston.ca

14B ST

BRYSTON

Bryston Limited P.O. Box 2170, 677 Neal Drive, Peterborough, Ontario Canada K9J 7Y4, 1-800-632-8217
www.bryston.ca

TAKING POWER TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

World Radio History

accompanying booklet of notes is just large enough to be unwieldy. It includes an essay by the ever-helpful Gary Giddins, longtime doyen of jazz-speak at the Village Voice, who most recently produced the first volume of a planned two-volume biography of Bing Crosby, that claimed that Der Bingel was the greatest singer in American history. As for Billie, Giddins compares her to Edgar Allan Poe, because both died young and used lots of drugs and alcohol, among other things. If literary comparisons continue, someone is bound to compare Screamin' Jay Hawkins to John Greenleaf Whittier or Edna St Vincent Millay. But otherwise, Giddins' essay shows good sense. The same cannot be said of a Columbia academic, Farah Jasmine Griffin, who authored a tendentious and otiose university press study of Billie Holiday's cultural influence and offers an extra essay here much in the same tone. In academic-speak, we are told about "the venerable Elizabeth Hardwick," a characterization the essayist and ex-wife of poet Robert Lowell is hardly likely to relish. Even worse are the notes to each song by one Michael Brooks, who comments on a song Billie wrote and performed with the interesting sax player Tab Smith, "Everything Happens For the Best": "One of Billie's earliest attempts at songwriting. It's nowhere near as good, or pertinent as 'Billie's Blues,' but the juxtaposition of clichés is fascinating and holds the interest, and it's clear to see that there were thought processes going on, rather than an aimless stringing of words together." It would be difficult to be more patronizing, and less understanding, which points to the dangers and pitfalls of writing about Billie Holiday. In fact the song is another example of Holiday's gift for ironic delivery, by the

end of the song it is very clear that no one — least of all the singer herself — is meant to believe that everything DOES happen for the best. It's even difficult to speak about Billie Holiday, and many of today's stars and pseudo-stars that SONY questioned for blurbs in the present edition come up with stuff too silly to quote. (Who really cares what Elvis Costello has to say about Billie Holiday?) A scarce few, who actually met the woman, are more illuminating, although their observations are familiar from other sources, like the mighty jazzman Sonny Rollins, who comments, "People thought she was such a tragedy, but she was really a very upbeat person." And Bobby Short, who states that she had "a lovely, lovely sense of humor.... When she was singing in Los Angeles, a friend of mine was in the ladies' room when she was there, and one of Billie's friends came by and says, 'Oh, Billie, you cut your hair, you've got short hair.' Billie says, 'Yes, girl, short hair, long hair, ain't life worth livin'!' That just tells it all."

Happily, we can reach the same affirmation by simply listening to the body of her work in these key years, leaving her in her late twenties before the tragic events of her life caught up with her. Even by 1941, accompanied by the swank sound of trumpeter Roy Eldridge, her voice starts to acquire some of the hopelessness of tone that makes her later records such sad listening. For most of this new box set, the vibrant rhythms and appetite for joy do indeed exclaim, "Ain't life worth livin'!" There will always be those who prefer the sweet tones of Ella Fitzgerald — Billie had the most unusual vocal timbre of a major singing star before Macy Gray. But in such majestic company as she is here, there is simply no one like Billie Holiday.

MOON

"The Moon P-5 has transparency, very low noise and flexibility of control... and should be considered among the finest line preamps available today... The Moon W-5 is one of those few amps that can convey a real 'jump' with no loss of detail or focus." **Kalman Rubinson - Stereophile - March 1999.**

"Simaudio deserves recognition as a solid state brand of first rank, alongside well known luminaries such as Jeff Rowland, Krell and Levinson." **Moon P-5 & W-5 - International Audio Review #80 - 1999.**

"The Simaudio Moon P-5/W-5 is truly a worthy world-class reference-level 'statement' design package." **David Robinson - Positive Feedback - Vol. 8 #2, 1999.**

"I can enthusiastically recommend the Moon I-5 one of high-end audio's undiscovered gems." **Robert Harley - Fi Magazine - February 1999.**

"The I-5 is a high-quality integrated amplifier that will appeal to anyone looking for a taste of the best." **Doug Schneider - Soundstage! - May 1999.**

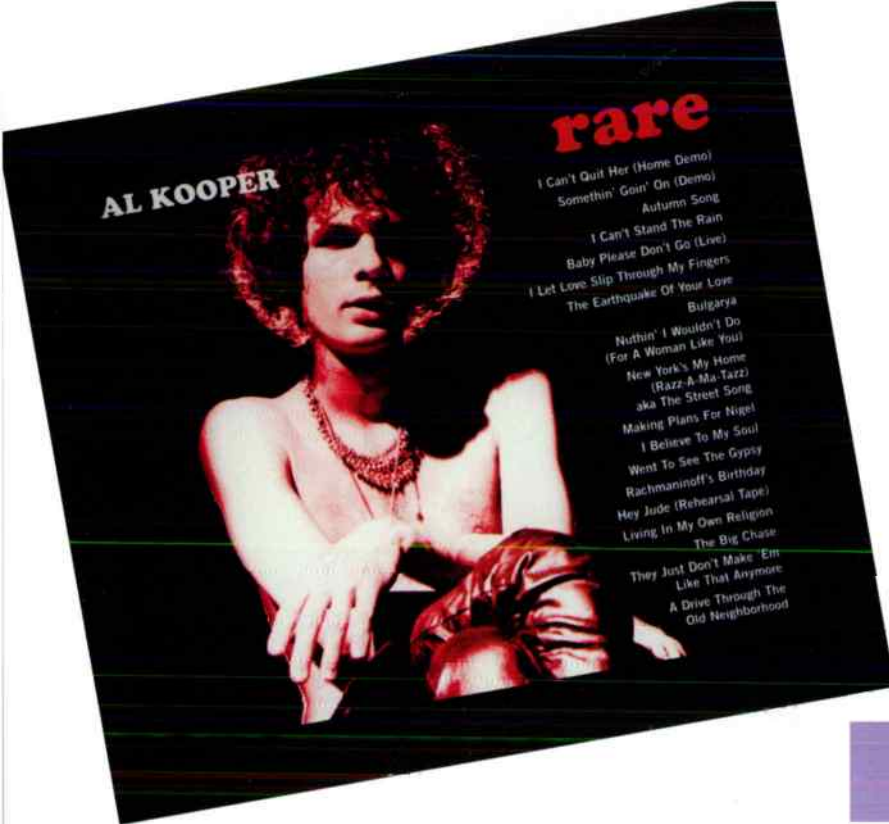
"The key components to its sonic character are openness, rhythmic liveliness, and freedom from noise." **P-5003 - Neil Gader - The Absolute Sound - no. 121**

"... This is the cream of the crop so far. At its price, it is definitely one to check out." **I-5080 - Steve Lefkowitz - Listener Magazine - Summer 1999.**

THE ART OF TECHNOLOGY **WWW.SIMAUDIO.COM**

95 Du Tremblay St., Boucherville, Québec J4B 7K4 **Canada**
21 Lawrence Paquette Drive, Champlain NY 12919 **U.S.A.**

1-877-980-2400 (450) 449-9947 info@simaudio.com



Rock

Al Kooper Rare + Well Done
Legacy C2K 62173

WHEN ONE CONSIDERS what it's taken at any time to "make it" in the music business, it currently seems to have more to do with vibe and appearance than one's ability to communicate with his/her instrument. Back in the '60s and '70s, however, it was of primary importance to be able to write, play, or produce in a unique style in order to distinguish oneself.

Al Kooper became a multi-talented and articulate spokesman for his generation before he even gravitated to the spotlight, being a member of seminal New York group The Blues Project, playing on Bob Dylan's breakthrough record "Like A Rolling Stone," and writing songs that even became teen hits ("This Diamond Ring" for Gary Lewis & the Playboys). When he decided to form his own band and front it, he combined his love of songwriting and brass with woodwinds in Blood, Sweat & Tears, an eclectic ensemble that created a very appealing first album. Of course, he then left or was ditched, and the boys went on to make a bunch of horrendous albums without him, some of which became hits propelled by the momentum of what Kooper had started. Al continued to

insinuate himself into the musical landscape of America, playing sessions with The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, and The Who, producing Lynyrd Skynyrd, being responsible for the first successful rock "jam" album (*Supersession*), and making a string of solo albums. This length of at-the-top performance is the kind of stuff that true musical legends are made of, and Al Kooper is a legitimate rock legend.

But Al never became a solo superstar. This is not to diminish his talent in any way, but the kind of talent that he was blessed with, did not serve to make him a mass-appeal frontman. His cult appeal has won him an audience that is dedicated but not huge, which is comforting to a musician but not as comforting as, say, the stadium crowds that come to feel the love of a Rod Stewart or Robert Plant. He is not the world's greatest singer, although his vocals have a plaintive New Yorker singing the blues appeal which is very winning, at least to our ears. Perhaps if he found a dynamic frontman for his songs, he could have been the American Jimmy Page or something like that. Nevertheless, he has a truly distinguished career as a musician/pro-

ducer/songwriter which is documented quite appropriately in *Rare & Well Done*.

The idea of having two discs, one more or less a greatest hits collection, the other of unreleased material, serves both his fans and the mass-market audiences well. The disc with the familiar stuff works pretty well, spanning Al's solo albums, BS&T, and even the *Supersession* material; personally, I would have concentrated more on the last, as it was probably Al's brightest shining moment as a frontman. The disc with the odds and ends doesn't hold up as something most people would want to listen to all the way through, at least not very often, but there are plenty of things on it that even the casual Kooper fan would not want to miss.

All of us have felt the influence of Al Kooper on contemporary music, in Bob Dylan's best work, in "You Can't Always Get What You Want," and the other places where he has brought his gift to others' work. Here you get the undiluted Kooper, the real Al, and you cannot argue with the talent, intensity, and personality that this one-of-a-kind fellow brings to music. His mama should be proud.



Michael Tearson

Rock

Bob Dylan *Love and Theft*
Columbia CK 86076

TRYING TO GET A GRIP ON Bob Dylan's new *Love And Theft* to write about it was a lot like wrestling a ghost. Just when I thought I had a grip on it, it eluded me again.

Love And Theft is Dylan's first new album since 1997's *Time Out Of Mind*, an album that received nearly unanimous rave reviews. Mine was not one of them. To me *Time* sounded a sour, dour, murky album more obscured than elevated by Daniel Lanois' atmospheric production. Dylan sounded like a cranky old man. [Editor's Intrusion: But Michael, "cranky old men can make good music."] Perhaps my reaction was colored by the then-recent death of my wife. I just didn't want to go near sentiments like "I'm Sick of Love."

Since then Dylan has had a near fatal health scare and a full recov-

ery. He has hit the road with more intensity than ever. His only released song in the time between was "Things Have Changed" from the soundtrack of *The Wonder Boys*, and it won him an Oscar.

Love And Theft is atmospherically a full 180 degrees from *Time*. It is exuberant and playful, even sunny! Stylistically, the album's dozen songs are a grab bag of American song forms, most from the first half of the 20th century.

Much of the album is blues, and the long shadow of 1965's historic *Highway 61 Revisited* looms over several songs here. The opener "Tweedle Dum And Tweedle Dee" has the drive and several guitar licks from the pedal-to-the-metal "Tombstone Blues." The high-octane "Honest With Me" nicks the slide guitar lead figure from "Highway 61 Revisited." The down

and dirty "Cry With Me" recalls the pissed-off and spiteful "Ballad of a Thin Man."

"Lonesome Day Blues" is just pure rollicking 12 bar blues with a compelling, sassy Dylan vocal. "High Water" is a tribute to one of Dylan's early favorites, Charlie Patton, one of the first and greatest Mississippi Delta bluesmen. Larry Campbell's banjo lends a distinctive flavor while the band's Jordanaires-styled vocals add rumble. (By the way, for further insight into Charlie Patton check out the latest in Telarc's series of tribute albums *Down the Dirt Road: The Songs of Charlie Patton* (Telarc CD-83535). *Editor's Note: Revenant has also announced Screamin' and Hollerin' the Blues: The Worlds of Charley Patton, a seven-CD set "housed in a deluxe hard-cover 78-album style book."*)

Photos: David Gahr

The side trips from the blues provide the album's greatest fun and variety. "Moonlight" and "Bye And Bye" sound like songs Bing Crosby would have grabbed in 1931. "Bye And Bye" spotlight's Augie Meyers' roller rink organ. I can imagine the 1947 vintage Louis Jordan swinging out the good times boogie-woogie of "Summer Days." Buoyed by Campbell's violin "Floater (Too Much To Ask)" sounds like a song from a Betty Boop cartoon. "Po' Boy" has an opening figure nearly identical to "Moonlight." The song eerily recalls Josh White's early 1950s recording of "Wandering" both melodically and lyrically. "Sugar Baby," the finale, is a lovely, meditative tête-à-tête with a confused lover who is soon to be an ex.

"Mississippi" was previously recorded by Sheryl Crow in a bouncing upbeat pop arrangement. The song is a leftover from the *Time* sessions and was recently rerecorded for the new album in a slower version. It is so different that until he got to the refrain, I didn't recognize the song. "Mississippi" is one of my favorites here.

One key strength of the album is the solid and energetic performances of Dylan's road-tested band. They come through like the seasoned pros they are. Players include Larry Campbell on guitar and mandolin as well as banjo and violin, Charlie Sexton on guitar and the bass/drums rhythm section of Tony Garnier and David Kemper. As on *Time* Sir Douglas Quintet/Texas Tornado alumnus Augie Meyers adds Vox organ, B3 and accordion. Together, they make the album's songs soar, as they answer every challenge the ever-mercurial Dylan tosses at them. Chris Shaw's sound is vibrant and lively. Sometimes the drums have an oddly airy garage feel, but this fits the proceedings.

Bob Dylan's best songs are utterly timeless, always sounding relevant no matter when you hear them. While nothing here packs the societal impact of "Blowin' In The Wind," "Like A Rolling Stone," "All Along The Watchtower" or even "Tangled Up In Blue," the *Love And Theft* songs feel like they will age well. Even upon first listen, they had the instant familiarity of old friends who come calling wearing snappy new clothes and feel like they have been around for ages.

E DITOR'S NOTE: Under the "never too late to do right" rule, we present a short review of an exhibition of remarkable photos by friend David Gahr written by record producer Peter K. Siegel, whose newly released CD *Doc Watson at Gerdes Folk City* features a Gahr photo on the front cover. Despite the fact that the show closed on March 3, 2001, it still seems appropriate to publish the review as several photos by Gahr grace the booklet that accompanies *Bob Dylan's Love and Theft*, which is reviewed here.

D'Ja See It? Peter K. Siegel

Writing about the blues is difficult. The music, afflicted by decades of published stereotypes, dislikes the written word. The blues wants to be heard. Occasionally, it likes to be seen.

You can see the blues in David Gahr's photographs. Gahr's exhibition at Soho's Staley + Wise gallery

assembled 15 portraits of some of the genre's most compelling performers.

The images were captured as early as the 1950's and as recently as the '90s. The technically superb 20 x 24-inch gelatin silver prints radiate the omniscient smile of Mississippi John Hurt and the frightening intensity of Skip James.

A portrait of the blind harmonica player Sonny Terry shows us the blues in a way that recordings can't. Reflected in Terry's dark glasses, a tree-lined country road freezes a moment of soul in time.

These are intensely personal portraits of some of the 20th century's master musicians. An inclusive definition of the blues allows Gahr to show sides of Sleepy John Estes, Elizabeth Cotton, Reverend Gary Davis, Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Betty Carter, and Miles Davis.

Reflecting both the profundity and the complexity of the great blues singers, Gahr's photographs are a worthy complement to the music.



Preparing for this review, I listened again to *Time Out Of Mind*, and I still have trouble slogging through that one. Not so with *Love And Theft*. The new album keeps muscling off the CD player's tray other CDs I need to spend time with. That's a sign of a great album I expect to return to frequently for years to come.

While actually writing this text, I played *Love And Theft* and *Highway 61 Revisited* back to back. Despite more than 35 years that's

between them, and despite the obvious aging Dylan's voice has endured, the songs on the two albums fit together quite comfortably. That's art.

One last note: There are two versions of *Love And Theft*. The deluxe version adds a second CD with two extra tracks both dating: an October, 1963 demo of "The Times They Are A-Changin'" and a 1961 recording of "I Was Young When I Left Home." These are nice but not essential.

BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD LASTED just a shade over two years, 1966-68. In its lifetime the band scored one monster hit, Stephen Stills' "For What It's Worth," and issued three albums, the final one a post-mortem crazy quilt the band's members never really liked. Why this band is both so beloved by those who were "into" music during the '60s and so crucially significant to that piece of music history is contained in this four-CD retrospective release.

Buffalo Springfield was made up Stephen Stills, Neil Young, Richie Furay, Dewey Martin, and Bruce Palmer. It was a fractious group in which members left and returned to the fold time and again. After bassist Palmer left for the last time, studio engineer Jim Messina took his place. Messina, pretty much on his own, pieced together that final Springfield album, *The Last Time Around*.

What made Buffalo Springfield special? Start with sophisticated song craft.

Both Stills and Young have long been recognized as superlative songwriters. Even early on, both showed terrific songmanship. Even in the first album, Stills already was employing elements of country, jazz and Latin music along with rock and roll. Young used country, bold orchestral arrangements, provocative melodic ideas and flat-out odd personal concepts in his early songs.

Then there was the under-appreciated contribution of Richie Furay, himself a fine song-writing man who, with Messina, formed Poco after Springfield permanently ended. He, too, wrote memorable songs for the seminal group.

Next consider the band's musicianship, especially their vocal arrangements. Stills and Furay both had been members of the Au Go Go Singers back in New York City as the folk boom of the early '60s ended. (Stills had migrated to L.A. to audition for the Monkees.) There they learned the value and the "how

Michael Tearson

to" of intricate vocal arrangements with "rum pah pum" nonsense-syllable backing parts. These became a prominent part of Springfield's palette along with carefully wrought instrumental arrangements.

In short, Stills and Furay brought a polished Brill Building-influenced pop sensibility to the band which afforded them economy and punch. (*Editor's Intrusion:* On and off for many years, NYC's Brill Building has held many offices for important second-tier music industry firms,

set? Excellent logical and mathematical question.

The first three CDs are a chronological log of the band's work. Among the 65 tracks on these discs are an *astonishing* 38 unreleased selections. These latter include early demos, alternate attempts or mixes plus a lot of unreleased songs.

On Disc Four you will find the first album *Buffalo Springfield* in sequence and in mono and including "Baby Don't Scold Me," the song bumped for "For What It's Worth" in a quickly revised version of the debut. Plus you'll find *Buffalo*

Springfield Again in sequence and in stereo.

Nearly all of these tracks also appear in the first three CDs. So why repeat them on Disc Four? Blame Neil

Young. At his insistence, the two "proper" Buffalo Springfield albums are here "for perspective." It is

easy to argue with Young on this, especially from the view that all this might be just a naked grab for consumer dollars. But let's just call it an artistic decision. I have mixed feelings on this one especially since both albums are readily available on their own.

Be that as it may, the previously released material on Discs One to Three are a fan's dream. These tracks are simply a treasure, one that fills in a whole lot of blanks in the band's story. A bunch of the demos later appeared on post Springfield projects; for example, Young's "Round And Round And Round" and "The Old Laughing Lady" appeared on solo albums. His "Down, Down, Down" evolved into "Country Girl" on Crosby, Nash, Stills & Young's *Déjà vu*, and his "The Rent Is Always Due" morphed into "I Am A Child" on *The Last Time Around*. Furay's "What A Day," "Nobody's Fool" and "Kind Woman" all became part of Poco's songbag.

Rhino's sound reproduction and remastering are excellent. A few of the more deeply buried obscurities sound bad, but apparently these



ones ranging from score copyists up to Big Deal publishing and artist management firms. —E.P.)

In the beginning, Neil Young was just "the quirky one with the odd nasal voice." From the dearth of Young-lead vocals on the first album and considering how frequently the smooth-voiced Furay sang lead on Young's songs, either Young or producers Brian Stone and Charlie Greene or all three were hesitant about Neil's wobbly voice.

But Buffalo Springfield was a pure song machine. They simply knocked out gem after gem, doing them in a wide variety of styles and feels. Having three prolific songwriters in the fold gave them a wealth of choices.

How does a band that only released three albums fill a four-CD

wore in poor or primitive shape to begin with.

The booklet is quite handsome. Most of it is a collection of Springfield memorabilia: Pictures, press clips, band documents, etc. Ken Viola's memoir essay is quite illuminating,

but it is rendered nearly unreadable through being spread out through the booklet and being typeset in black over some rather dark brown colors. The log of the band's live dates, discography and song-by-song credits mercifully are all much more readable.

On his latest album Neil Young included a new song called "Buffalo Springfield Again," and he seems to let go of any remaining bitterness about the band. I hope Young can finally look back in fondness. While a reunion tour or album remains most unlikely, at least Young has removed that from the realm of the

impossible. I suspect that the song and his coming to grips with an unhappy but important chapter of his distant past are a large part in finally allowing him to complete compiling this collection.

Buffalo Springfield's *Box Set* has been decades in

coming. It was worth the wait. This treasure trove of previously unheard rarities is staggering, especially if you focus on those songs never before issued anywhere. While the booklet's design is intentionally messy, reflecting how the group conducted itself too much of the time, it is charming. And that fourth CD, while extraneous, is valuable for presenting separately the two albums the band did complete in its all-too-short lifetime. In the end, I am glad it is there.

It took forever and a decade to get it out, but *Box Set* was worth the wait.

It seems like it took forever and a decade to get this retrospective of Buffalo Springfield out, but it was worth it.



PASS LABS



X350 and X250

Introducing the latest X Series amplifier

X 2 5 0

250 watts

Bigger than a X150
Smaller than a X350

for more...

530.367.3690

or

www.passlabs.com



Pass Laboratories, PO Box 219, 24449 Foresthill Rd., Foresthill, CA 95631



Bluegrass

Alison Krauss and Union Station
New Favorite
 Rounder 11661-0495-2



Michael Tearson

ALISON KRAUSS alternates solo albums with projects featuring her crack band Union Station. Her previous CD was last year's wonderful solo *Forget About It*. Thus *New Favorite* features the band.

One other key happening between albums certainly impacted upon this album: the double platinum success of the soundtrack of *O Brother Where Art Thou*. Its key track was the Soggy Bottom Boys' spirited "Man of Constant Sorrow" on which Union Station's Dan Tyminski sang lead, subbing for George Clooney in the film. Whatever the thinking, Union Station gets more of the spotlight on *New Favorite* than it ever did before.

Essentially *New Favorite* is a blend of two distinct albums: one with Krauss singing lead and one by the band. Selections alternate between the two — except for twice when two Krauss leads come back to back. Tyminski sings three songs, Ron Block sings one, and there is one instrumental written by Dobro master Jerry Douglas.

Alison's leads are mostly on exquisite, dreamy, slow to moderate tempo love songs which showcase her angelic voice. Her tougher side really only surfaces on "Take Me For Longing," which also sports some hot Douglas Dobro. The oth-

ers are aching songs with beautiful, economical arrangements and execution. Robert Lee Castleman's "Let Me Touch You" and "The Lucky One," Mark Simos' "Crazy Faith," Bob Lucas' "Daylight" and Dan Fogelberg's "Stars" are all wonderful. The Gillian Welch/David Rawlings-penned title song is a chilling heartbreaker, a great closer.

Save "Take Me For Longing," it is hard to call any of Alison's songs bluegrass. Most have pure bluegrass instrumentation ("Stars" and "New Favorite" each have some subtle Larry Atamanuik drumming), but bluegrass they ain't.

By contrast the five Union Station songs are hard nosed 'grass. Tyminski's songs, Lucas' "Mama Cried" and the traditional "Boy Who Wouldn't Hoe Corn" and "Bright Sunny South" all have that classic high and lonesome Kentucky sound. Block's self-penned "It All Comes Down To You" is a flinty plea for reconciliation. The Douglas instrumental "Choctaw Hayride" is a showstopper.

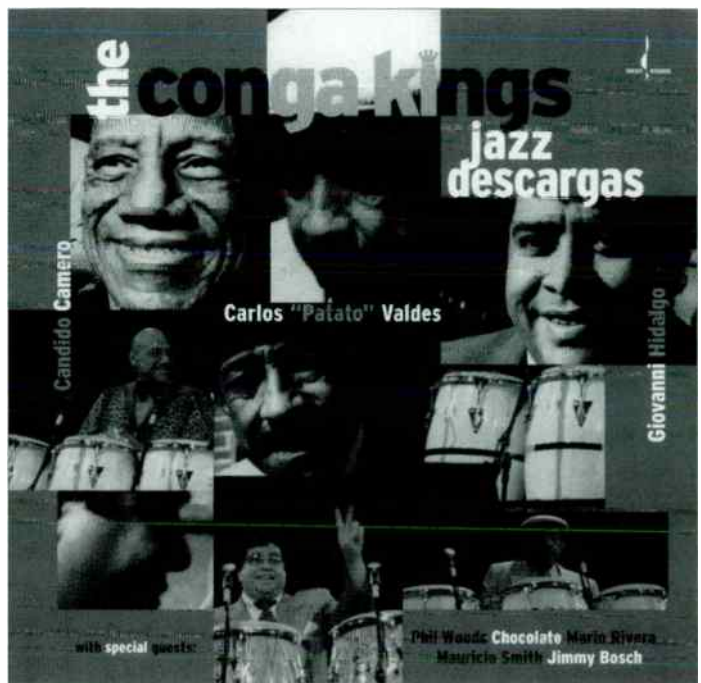
Bluegrass purists will bemoan the paucity of "the real stuff." And in so doing they will miss the point. They will miss how perfect the picking is throughout, whether the song is pop or bluegrass. They will miss how sympathetic a unit Union Station is.

They will miss how generous Krauss is sharing the spotlight with Tyminski's guitar, Block's guitar and banjo, or Douglas' Dobro, lap steel and Weissenborn guitars. And Krauss still gets plenty opportunities to feature her award-winning fiddling. Bassist Barry Block, as always, is rock steady.

A subtle strength of Union Station is its eternal willingness to let the songs have the primary focus. Solos enhance the songs. They never dominate. *New Favorite* just whizzes by. Its 45 minutes are over almost before you know it. The album lives up to its name. It has become one of my newest favorites.

I do a lot of my "new music" listening in the car where I have the fewest distractions and no phone. I can give music my closest ear there. Over and over since I received it, I kept coming back to *New Favorite* as a palate cleanser after other new ones; it keeps blowing other albums away in aspects of performance, technical excellence (the sound is gorgeous), and song quality.

New Favorite may be too subtle an album to just knock you out. But the way it keeps knocking other CDs off the tray and muscling its way back on says a lot. It is an absolutely superb album I expect to listen to a lot as the year wears on.



IT IS SOMETIMES SAID that the beat of the drum is the heartbeat and that it reflects the rhythm of life. If this is true, then Candido Camero, Carlos "Patato" Valdes and Giovanni Hidalgo hold the essence of life in their capable hands. Producers David Chesky and Ray Santos have put together a winning combination with these three renowned "congueros" in a project that is called The Conga Kings. The three legends return to the Chesky label in an album called *Jazz Descargas*, which offers a variety of material that draws from jazz as well as traditional Afro-Cuban music. Recording engineer Barry Wolifson has created a well-balanced album in 96-kHz / 24-bit hi-rez digital recording on which the congas are not overbearing but resound clearly. The recording was made at St. Peter's Church in New York City, where the instruments are given space to resonate. The sound is clean and refined and the album is filled with exceptional players from the jazz and Latin scene including Phil Woods, Chocolate, Jimmy Bosch, and Nelson Gonzalez.

The title of the album suggests that this recording is a jazz-infused jam session that is packed with spontaneity and excitement. Within the context of a "descarga," musicians are free to improvise and

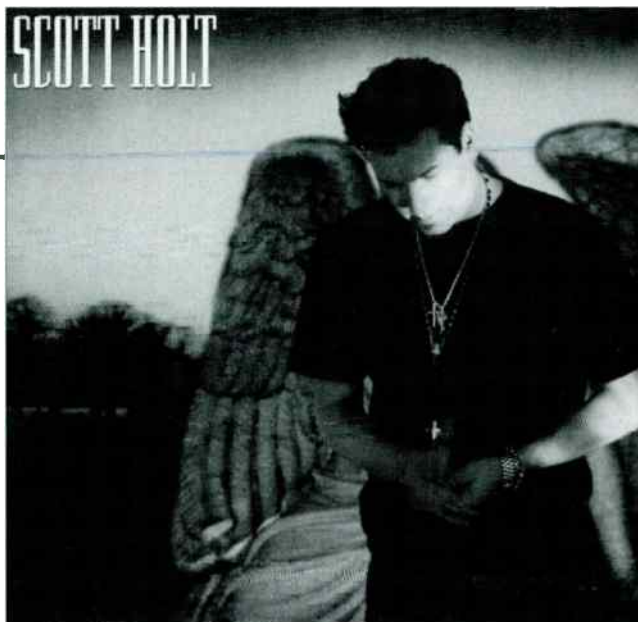
explore new rhythmic innovations. Each "conguero" on this recording exhibits distinguishing characteristics that when blended together form an electrifying listening experience. Candido exhibits a graceful cool sound that is smooth and almost provocative. "Patato," the legendary inventor of the tunable conga which has become the industry standard, plays with a wonderful sense of melodic character. Finally, Giovanni excites the listener with exhilarating polyrhythmic exploration. This unique mixture is filled with rhythmic exploration and the listener can't help but feel their mutual respect. This exchange of rhythmic ideas is highlighted in "Conga Descarga" where these "congueros" pull out all the stops to create a feast of percussive expression.

If this were not enough, Ray Santos has arranged several classics from both the jazz and Afro-Cuban idioms, creating distinctive renditions of these tunes which are not overly produced or pretentious. There is a certain quality in his arrangements of "Caravan" (Ellington) and "Oye Como Va" (Puente) that are both airy and free. In "Oye Como Va," Chocolate plays in a very laid-back style that brings a smooth, silky character to this timeless standard. I was amused to hear the reference to the legendary

cha-cha band Orchestra Aragon with the lyrics "Coma chocolateâ paga lo que debe" (Eat chocolate, pay what you owe) and I still giggle when I hear this little bit of Cuban wisdom. The tres, a steel-stringed guitar which has a sound reminiscent of a Portuguese guitar or Arabic oud, is truly mastered by Nelson Gonzalez. This instrument gives many of the tunes on this album a genuine Cuban feel. Overall, I was most impressed with the rendition of "A Night in Tunisia" (Gillespie), which featured Phil Woods on alto sax. Gone was the classic drum kit, replacing it a complex polyrhythmic groove that helped to bring out the melody line of this jazz standard. The second part of this classic breaks into a heavy Latin groove that once again returns to the original melody. Woods concludes this jazz standard with an impressively strong improvisational statement that is genuinely an enjoyable experience.

If you truly enjoy both Latin percussion and jazz, you should have a copy of this album in your collection. It is accessible, fun and innovative. It is an album that showcases the skill of some of the titans of Latin percussion and jazz. I have found myself reaching for this album over and over again, and I'm sure you will as well.

SCOTT HOLT



Gene Pitts

Blues

Scott Holt *Angels In Exile*
 Blue Storm 3001-2
 Blind Willie McTell *The Essential*
 Classic Blues CBL 200007 (2 CDs)
 Blind Willie McTell *Complete Recorded Works, Vol. 1*
 Document DOCD-5006



OKAY, SO IT WAS PAST 10:00 p.m. and I was cross-eyed tired from coffee that wasn't strong enough, and wall-eyed jittery from too much coffee and not enough nicotine. I was standing around Mixolydian, a recording studio up in far-north Jersey, an hour or more north and west from my home, which is a mile from GSP 151. There's still snow on the ground, back in under the bushes and around the parking lot, though the roads haven't had any on them for weeks. There's a farm across the two-lane road.

The main reason I'm there is to show my 18-year-old guitar-slinger son what this sort of studio is like. He's seen a couple of bigish studios in Manhattan and across the

Hudson in West New York. Mixolydian appears to me to specialize in keeping outside influences to a minimum and track production to a maximum. We've been invited to intrude by Arnie Goodman, who heads up Blue Storm Music, a smallish blues and rock 'n' roll label. Arnie wrote an interesting article, "Searching for Vinyl," which appeared in *TAV* 7/1, and *TAV* reviewed his *Savoy Brown* release not long before that. He's the Executive Producer on the session, and I thank him for the invite.

The leader of the band squeezing out tracks is Scott Holt who's working on his *Angels* album. My son and I are asked to be reasonably quiet 'cause Scott and band are

making good sounds and few mistakes. "He doesn't know anybody's comin'." I really like Scott's blues guitar work; he's roughly in the Stevie Ray mold, but with better vocals and a more lyrical guitar line, though less flash when he goes to chasing that dog. But tonight I'm finding it hard to listen to anything save the thud of my sinuses, so I go to make a small call out in the parking lot.

When I back come in, Scott is standing at the mike, singing with an edgy voice and playing deep guitar, bass and drums live in back of him. He's singing a slow blues with words that just rivet me. They get it in one take, almost, only having to do a single punch-in later that night.

A bit of piano and some organ are added later on. But the song is a total grabber for me, a cover of Bob Dylan's "Blind Willie McTell," a rhythmic and classic blues ballad. Dylan's work is seminal and titanic and strongly personal for me, has been for about 40 years, but Scott's version is so new and different, I just don't remember the song as coming from the Dylan pen. "How can there be any Dylan song I don't remember *all* of the words of?" I say to myself when I learn whose it is. My shivers aren't from being out in the cold, still aren't here today in the August heat of my office. Turns out "McTell" appears most of the way through one of Dylan *Bookleg* CDs, but my Early Editor's Alzheimer's....

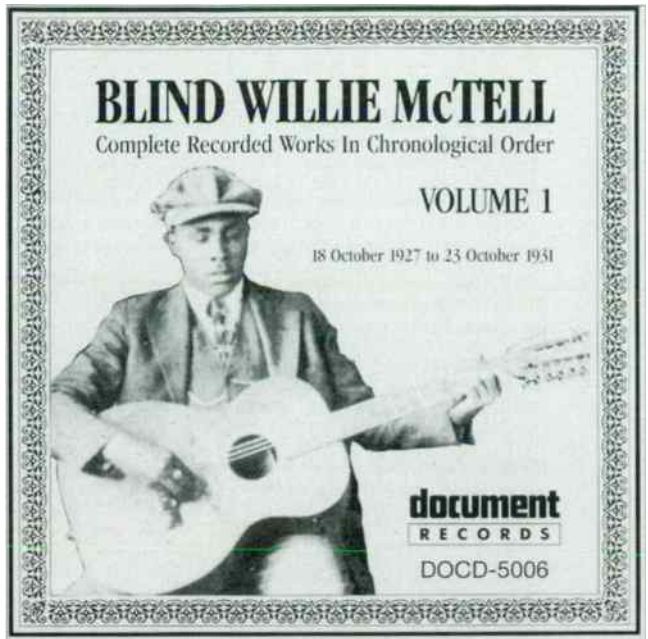
For me, a Dylan freak, it alone is worth the price of Scott's album. For you, it will probably be one of several tracks that go toward making up a solid blues album. My other favorite cuts on the disc are the traditional "I've Got A Mind to Give Up Living" where the singer "has a mind to give up living and go shopping instead - shopping for a tombstone" and the young-man boastful "I'll Make Love to You Anytime." Listening to the CD as I write this

somehow reminds me of hearing Paul Butterfield, singing and blowing harp, live at arm's length in Big John's on Wells Street in Chicago, backed by Mike Bloomfield and Elvin Bishop, when the first Daley was mayor. If you are looking for all those self-conscious, pre-tentious, and often unmusical traits you find in too-many "audiophile" recordings, you're probably better off buying some other disc. This

CD may not be as good as a live concert 'cause there's nothing up on a stage to look at, but you can play it loud enough to make your ears bleed. So, go on with your blues-loving self and buy this. You'll thank me.

Oddly, oddly, less than two weeks later I got a catalog flyer from Allegro in Portland, OR, which included two McTell CDs. Allegro distributes a big batch of small labels that often have historically

important jazz or blues recordings. "Something is happening here, and you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Pitts?" I said to myself. "Well, maybe these two 'real Willies' on two different labels are just the copyrights running out, but it's passing strange that Scott would choose to do Dylan's 'McTell' just all of a sudden like that and these would come so close behind. Better order up these from Document and Classic." It was that BIG flashing



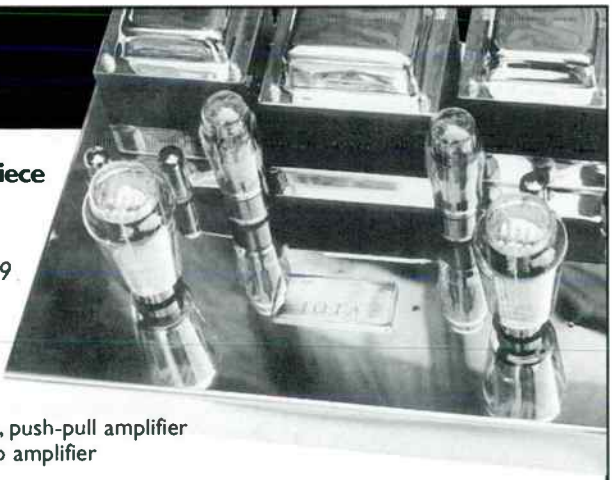
JOTA

20 wpc, zero feedback
pure class 'A', triode
single ended amplifier



"The Jota is a major league statement piece to be considered in the context of the best currently available."

Srajan Ebaen, "SoundStage!", Sept. 1999



INTRODUCING

- JOTA 52BX Version (more power, more current)
- MONO BLOCKS available by special order
- CONCERTO MK. II KT-90 version, class 'A', 48 wpc, push-pull amplifier
- VINYL ONE vacuum tube, MM/high gain MC phono amplifier

Available at these fine audio dealers

(Check out our website for other dealers in your area!)

Sound Images Westport, MA 508.636.3400	Sonic Culture San Diego, CA 858.677.0220	Sounds Right Audio Roswell, GA 770.641.1359	Celestial Sound Evanston, IL 847.424.1480	JC Audio Martinez, CA 925.229.2484	Renaissance Sounds Sarasota, FL 941.955.5888	ne plus ultra Austin, TX 512.241.0000
David Lewis Audio Philidelphia, PA 215.725.4080	Galen Carol Audio San Antonio, TX 210.805.9927	Salt Lake Audio Interiors Salt Lake City, UT 801.366.4733	Primus Audio Pleasure Kansas City, MO 816.421.3655	<i>Art Audio</i>		

34 Briarwood Road • Cranston, RI 02920 • Tel 401.826.8286 • Fax 401.826.3903 • E-mail: catsarta@att.net Website: www.artaudio.com

neon "Coinci-dence" sign again, the one the Big Guy upstairs turns on sometimes. Turned out that the discs were not in the catalog yet, and they didn't turn up in my mail until literally months later. They are very much worth buying for the blues specialist, the sort of hard-core listener who's willing to put up with surface noise from 78s which changes character with each new track or the once-around pops that come from a crack in the only existent pressing of the song.

But the music, oh, the music. It's like listening to Robert Johnson or Leadbelly because of the thoughtful taste and care that some friend of music had in saving the Johnson stampers all those years or the years of lugging a very heavy, big, old open-reel tape recorder around to prisons, fields and factories. This is real music, made because the musician couldn't *not* make it. Whether the ability to play guitar music like this is a gift from God or a plague from the Devil, I don't know. I do know that I tried to play six-string acoustic country blues like this, averaging maybe an hour a day for more than

20 years, before I gave up on no talent. Another dozen years on, it's still fun to play the one riff I can. It was nice to have my son actually listen to me, about something. He sure never left the CDs he swiped from me in their jewelboxes.

If you really like the blues, you'll need both these Blind Willie CDs, but you'll like Scott Holt's *Exiles*, too.

I'm really glad I went after these CDs 'cause Willie's playing is a treasure. I'd heard some of it before, but I don't remember it saying to me, "You *must* have this record!" But here, I have to say that his 12-string really rings true on both discs. I don't hear very much to choose between them. The quality isn't particularly good, as the tunes were originally cut onto 78-rpm singles about 70 years ago, and I scarcely think someone saved the stampers. However, "Mama, 'Taint Long Before Day," "Statesboro Blues," "Stomp Down Rider," "Dark Night

Blues," "Southern Can Is Mine," and a handful of others are special stand-outs. Allegro's Classic Blues pair of CDs has 36 cuts, 19 on the first and 17 on the second, while the Document's single CD has 23 (but don't forget it's only Vol. 1 of the "Complete Recorded Works In Chronological Order," covering 18/10/27 to 23/10/31). The Document CD has a slightly more trebly tone which you will hear if you play one of the duplicated tracks, but that's irrelevant. The Classic Blues disc includes some of the "cutting" or "dozens" talk-songs where some "stag" is pushing forward his prowess at some attractive woman; such songs are just annoying to me, no guitar.

My recommendation: If you are more than a casual blues lover or collector, buy Scott's *Angels* and one and maybe both of the original Willie CDs.

And while you're at it, you might want to go look at the McTell website, www.blindwillie.com, which Arnie Goodman's friend Karen told me about. And you can check out my son's Admiral Byrd CD at www.audiophilevoice.com.



Roksan KC-1 CD player, KT-1 AM/FM tuner, and KA-1 integrated amplifier

Roksan Kandy hi-fi system

Achieve dramatic levels of sound quality.

Side-step the constraints of "ordinary" or "affordable" audio gear.

All the features you need in a classically elegant, subtle design.

"...Solid, well-built units ... make up a smart and easy-to-operate system. Striking range of colors, as well as the standard aluminum, with chunky faceplates. Easy-to-use, full-function remote control. I was surprised, not to say shocked, at the sheer value offered here."

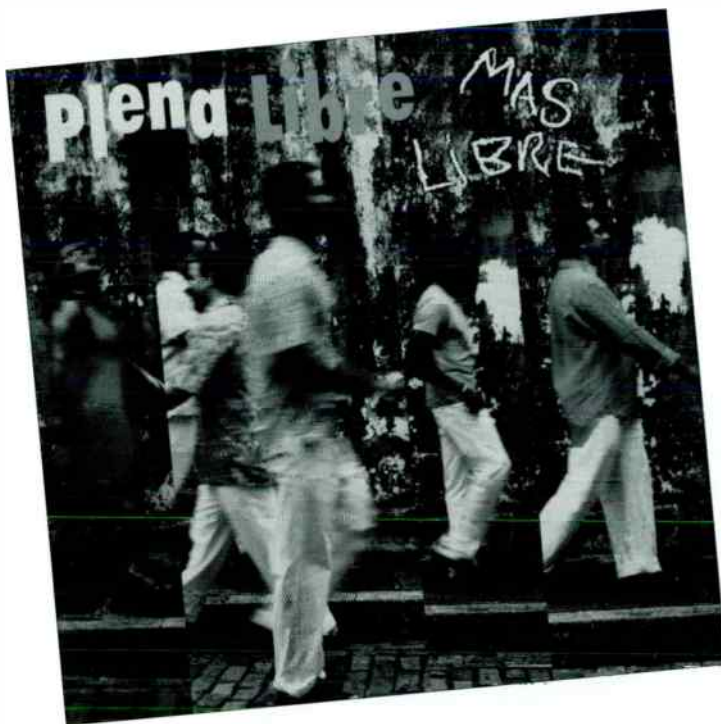
---*International Record Review*, October 2000

May Audio Marketing, 2150 Liberty Dr., #7, Niagara Falls, NY 14304
(716) 283-4434 - FAX (716) 283-6264

Alfred R. Fredel

Latín

Plena Libre Mas Libre
Ryko Latino RLCD-1017



AS LATINO MUSIC becomes more prevalent in the mainstream musical scene, it also becomes difficult at times to separate between Latin genres. And as these musical forms develop, so do the produced or “cookie-cutter” molds that many accept as modern salsa. What listeners sometimes do not acknowledge is that salsa has deep roots in the folklore and musical traditions of both Cuba and Puerto Rico. For its part, a fair amount of attention has been placed on the Cuban influence on salsa, what with revival projects like the Buena Vista Social Club, the music of Barbarito Torres, and the like. Groups such as Muñequitos de Matanzas have long been popular with audiences, bringing the African flavor of traditional rumba to people around the world. Among other rhythms, Cuba by no means holds the monopoly on music with African roots in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

Puerto Rico has shared a great deal musically with Cuba over the years, but has some distinctive and rich musical traditions and instruments of its own. Two of the most well-known African-based musical forms in Puerto Rico are *bomba* and *plena*, with *bomba* more African in flavor, while *plena* has more Spanish influences. Traditionally,

plena was played with unique instruments including *panderetas* (a frame drum), *guiro* (gourd), and *cuatro* (a 10-stringed guitarlike instrument). Later, more modern and diverse instruments such as *timbales*, *accordion* and *congas* were added. Although *plena* has been associated with traditional Christmas celebrations, this musical genre has also found a place on dance floors around the world through the work of several groups including *Plena Libre*.

Plena Libre energized *plena* and brought it to the forefront of the musical scene in Puerto Rico, showing people that there was a place on the charts for a more updated form of this music. Their first album *Juntos y Revueltos* began this awakening in Puerto Rico and can be credited with being both a new development of and bringing increased popularity to the musical form. Led by bassist Gary Nuñez, the group has created modern arrangement styles that have become very popular on the Caribbean island as well as in other Latin markets.

Now with the group's second release, *Mas Libre*, Mr. Nuñez has taken it up another notch by including other rhythmic contemporary music patterns and styles including

songo, *samba*, *pachimbe*, and other forms. He has successfully melded them with *plena* to create an upbeat, modern and fun sound. In “El Bravo,” one can hear how easily *Plena Libre* has incorporated *samba*, a Brazilian rhythm, into this *plena*-infused song. In “Maria Luisa,” the accordion sound of Juan Castillo joins to bring the listener a unique and warm experience.

Mas Libre is an album that is danceable and, most of all, an easy listen. The percussion and rhythm on this album are rock solid. Of particular note is Gina Villanueva, who does not burden the group with overbearing *congas*, playing with respect for the other instrumentalists and percussionists without losing her position of basic importance. Well-recorded by Jimmy Diaz at Los Angeles Studios, the album features such notable guest artists from the Latin music world as flautist Nestor Torres and singer José “El Canario” Alberto.

For those who want to enjoy some of the rhythmic treasures of Puerto Rico, *Plena Libre* offers a great vantage point to see where *plena* has been and the potential direction this musical style is heading as it becomes one of Puerto Rico's most infectious musical exports.

SIMON & GARFUNKEL

THE COLUMBIA STUDIO RECORDINGS 1964-1970



Michael Tearson

Rock

Simon & Garfunkel
The Columbia
Studio Recordings 1964-70
Columbia/Legacy C5K 63815

WHEN COLUMBIA/LEGACY issued the Simon & Garfunkel retrospective *Old Friends* boxed set not long ago, they had remastered the contents brilliantly. With this release of the remaining five albums from the S&G catalog, they have completed the job, and I am pleased to say the tracks on these reissues have been handled with similar care. In addition, each CD in the set includes bonus tracks, and this makes them all more attractive to fans and collectors.

These Simon & Garfunkel albums, especially *Parsley, Sage Rosemary & Thyme*, *Bookends* and *Bridge Over Troubled Waters* have long deserved their cachet of being sonically beautiful works. The new editions restore luster to that reputation.

Simon & Garfunkel actually began as Brill Building song pluggers. They even had a couple minor hits as Tom & Jerry. When they appeared as Simon & Garfunkel at the end of the folk boom of the early '60s, they were two voices and a guitar, the format on *Wednesday Morning 3 AM*. That album included an acoustic version of "Sounds of Silence," the song that would propel them into important hit makers. Sometime after the album's release producer Tom Wilson (also producer of Bob Dylan's landmark *Bringing It All Back Home*) overdubbed electric guitar and rhythm section while Garfunkel was back at Columbia University studying architecture and Simon was off busking in London. The song became a worldwide smash and S&G's career took off.

Sounds of Silence was split nearly evenly between folk-styled acoustic and electrically-backed songs. It spawned the follow-up hit "I Am A Rock."

The October 1966 release *Parsley, Sage Rosemary & Thyme* was the first S&G album designed as a single concept. With producer Bob Johnston (producer of Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde on Blonde*) they created a brief

album, barely 30 minutes, loaded with brilliant songs by the ever more confident Simon. It has had remarkable staying power over time. "Homeward Bound" and "The Dangling Conversation" were the set's hits.

Bookends, released in April 1968, may be S&G's best album. They produced the album themselves along with crack engineer Roy Halee. Simon's songs continue to reach new levels of subtlety and sophistication, and they continue to add new sonic elements to their palette. "Save the Life of My Child" and "Fakin' It" each employ electronic noise to great effect, and each of these is placed next to gentle acoustic songs ("America" and "Punky's Dilemma" respectively) for contrast. Hits here included "Fakin' It," "A Hazy Shade of Winter," "At The Zoo" and their smash hit from their soundtrack album from *The Graduate*, Mrs. Robinson."

Bridge Over Troubled Waters, a January 1970 release, was their most eclectic, ambitious work as they built songs element by element instead of building from voices and guitar. But in the end, it lacked the unity that elevated *Bookends*. The Peruvian pipes of "El Condor Pasa" and the multi-layered percussion of "Cecilia" prefigure Simon's later experiments involving world music. "Baby Driver" sported California surfer music vocal harmonies. "The Only Living Boy In New York" is based upon a churchy organ. Then there is that unforgettable arrangement of the title song.

The more ambitious, the farther reaching the duo got, the tenser their partnership became. Garfunkel chafed at appearing the vocal puppet of his partner, and he branched into acting beginning with *Carnal Knowledge* alongside Jack Nicholson. S&G sundered in the wake of this final duo album.

The S&G albums are very much a product of the 60s, their period. S&G evolved from earnest folkie idealists to *artistes* of grand vision. Inevitably their separate visions

grew them apart. But their work together rings as true and as valid and as vital more than three decades after they did it.

The bonus tracks are a welcome extra. Several appeared on *Old Friends*, but most did not. Several are alternate or demo versions. However three on *Sounds of Silence* are from a final S&G session dated July 8, 1970 when they recorded three traditional folk songs. *Bookends* features the first appearance on CD of the rare B-side "You Don't Know Where Your Interest Lies." The extra songs are nice additions that do add value to the reissues.

Throughout the remastered sound blows away previous CD versions of S&G's albums. I did A-B listening tests, and in all cases the new versions are brighter, clearer, and hotter, with a more revealing sound than ever before. It is as if thick gauze has been removed. Reissue producer Bob Irwin and engineer-remasterer Vic Anesini have performed brilliantly here.

At last, all of the beloved Simon & Garfunkel catalogue has received the technical respect it deserves. These newly reissued CDs are indeed definitive.

Wish List

All Triode

Class A

**Patented,
Direct-coupled
output**

Fully differential

zero feedback

High power

**Stop
Wishing.**

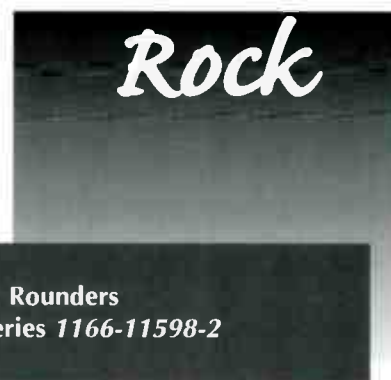


MA-1 Mk II The Absolute Sound's Golden Ear Award winner 2000

Atma-Sphere Music Systems, Inc.
160. So. Wheeler St. Paul, MN
651.690.2246 FAX 651.699.1175
atma-sphere.com
you'll be hearing more from us!



STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, Management, and Circulation of *The Audiophile Voice* magazine required by 39 U.S.C. (Postal Service form 3526, October 1999) Publication title: *The Audiophile Voice*. Publication number: 018-639. Filing Date: September 29, 2000. Issue frequency: Bi-monthly. Number of issues per year: 6. Annual subscription price: \$30.00. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 215 Glenridge Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07042. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: 215 Glenridge Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07042. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Publisher, Eugene Pitts, III, *The Audiophile Voice*, 215 Glenridge Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07042; Editor, Eugene Pitts, III, *The Audiophile Voice*, 215 Glenridge Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07042; Managing Editor, none. Owners: Eugene Pitts, III, and Sharon Pitts, *The Audiophile Voice*, 215 Glenridge Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07042. Known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None. Tax status: Not applicable. Issue date for circulation data below: Volume six, number three (August 21, 2000). Extent and nature of circulation: a) Total number of copies—Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 10,783; Number of copies of single issue published nearest of filing date: 12,100; b) Paid and/or requested circulation: 1) Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on form 3541: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 555; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 559; 2) paid in-county subscriptions stated on form 3541: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 7,286; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 6,967; 3) sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 1,265; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 1,927; 4) Other classes mailed through USPS: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 365; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 336; c) Total paid and/or requested circulation: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 9,471; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 9,789; d) Free distribution by mail: 1) Outside-county as stated on form 3541: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 2; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 2; 2) In-county as stated on form 3541: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 175; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 175; 3) Other classes mailed through the USPS: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 0; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 0; f) Total free distribution: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 177; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 177; g) Total distribution: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 9,648; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 9,966; h) Copies not distributed: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 1,135; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 2,134; i) Total: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 10,783; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 12,100; j) Percent paid and/or requested circulation: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 89 per cent; number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 82 per cent. Publication of statement of ownership is required and will be printed in volume 7, number five issue, to be published in November, 2000. Signature and title of editor, publisher, business manager or owner: Eugene Pitts, III, publisher; September 29, 2001; I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete.



**Holy Modal Rounders
Rounder Heritage Series 1166-11598-2**

THE ABSOLUTE SOUND ran a series on “guilty pleasures,” which was a great idea, but they wimped out in the execution. Seems these guys feel guilty when not listening to Mahler symphonies;-they selected pop music and shows. No Captain Beeheart, Fugs, Tiny Tim, 1912 Fruitgum Co., Archies, Mekons, Sam the Sham, The Residents, William Shatner, or many of the other difficult or weird or bad musical or cultural offerings of the past century.

Well, this is my foray into that zone. The Holy Modal Rounders have been around since the ‘60s. They revolve around Peter Stamfel, who bangs and scrapes on banjo, fiddle, and guitar, and sings in a whiney, jittery, screechy, barely-in-tune tenor, and Steve Weber, who plays guitar and sings like an crooning electric blender. Harmonies are wildly unorthodox, arrangements sparse, and the music that emerges is something I inexplicably enjoy. They manage to combine the innocence and spontaneity of 1920’s country with intelligence, humor, and a wide-eyed lefty Hippie consciousness. Stamfel covers old songs and has his way with them, shame-

lessly stealing melodies, licks, or lines for his tunes. This is a compilation from many albums.

In “I’m Getting Ready To Go,” by Michael Hurley (an on/off member), the protagonist is returning to his maker, only it’s the Devil (classic line, “I got more religion than a dog has fleas”). “Low Down Dog” starts with flatulent sounds, and skewers Feminism and Political Correctness, in an old-timey style. Jeff Frederick’s “Rotten Lettuce” is an ode to a drinking, bank-robbing, murdering girlfriend who’s to be hanged (the narrator-boyfriend would rather she be spared, but what-the-heck?) in a Youngbloods style. The ancient “Bonaparte’s Retreat” uses Napoleon’s defeat as the metaphor for his romantic failure-the fiddle perfectly captures that old style. “Leader Of The Pack” meets “Staggerlee” on Stamfel’s “Bad Boy” (no Brill Building lyrics here: “He’s awfulness incarnate, ... He’s Sodom and Gomorrah”) Visitors from space, early man, evolution, and bad puns populate “Nova” (“Time is on my side, slime is on my tide”). Ken Burns’ “Civil War” must have had an instrumental version of “Year of Jubilo,” but the lyric about

the Yankees whipping the Plantation master’s ass, and Abe Lincoln’s reparations promise of a mule and 40 acres of land is an odd mix of joy and irony in light of the next 150 years of our history.(Weber and Stamfel sing different verses together at one point-no matter.) “Synergy” lampoons attempts to be one with the universe (“Superman’s on the can, contemplating Synergy ...”) in a slightly off-center, off-key shuffle. Stamfel rocks on “Everything Must Go,” which takes the old thrift-store sign into the personal (his woman leaving) and the political (nuclear holocaust), with musical references (from “Spanish Harlem” to “Telstar”) abounding.

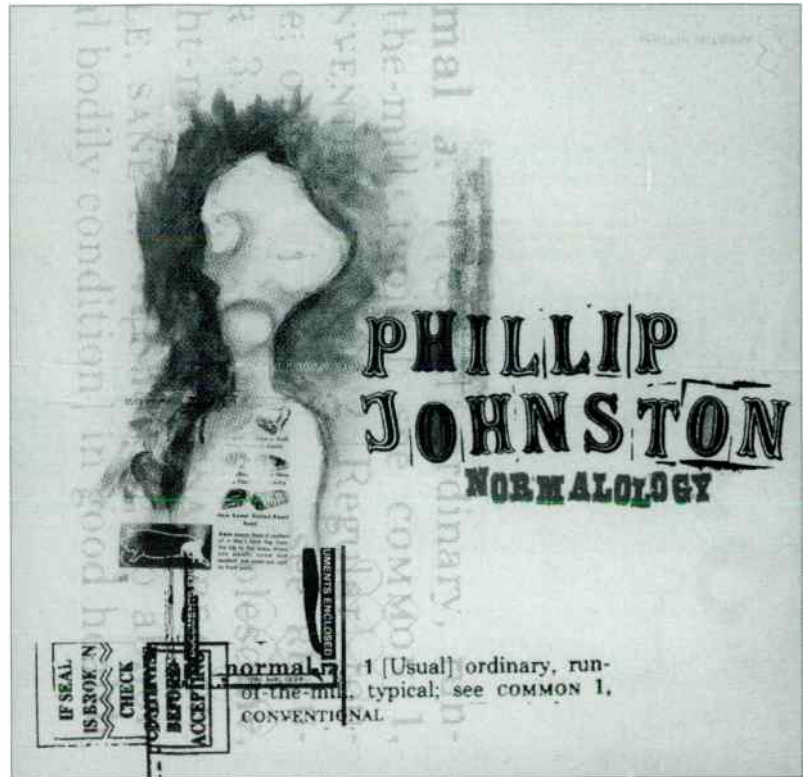
The other thing about this disc is that it SOUNDS GREAT! The stage is open and wide, with instruments spread through a very broad angle across the stage (when larger ensembles play), and the voices have an in-the-room presence (this is downright scary on Weber’s entry on “Bonaparte’s Retreat.”) Banjo has “pluck,” the fiddle has body.

So, while this is not for everyone, for some of you this will be mucho fun.

Jack Skowron

Jazz

Phillip Johnston *Normalology*
Koch Jazz KOC-CD-7884



ONE OF MY FAVORITE groups of the '80s was the Microscopic Septet (you've heard them if you've heard NPR's Fresh Air theme). They featured an unusual front line of four saxes (soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone) which gave them quite a range of timbres and dynamics. They were also fun, a rarity in recent jazz. They ran the gamut of styles, from straight ahead, to rock / R&B, to various international rhythms (tangos, Caribbean, etc). Johnston co-led the group (with pianist Joel Forrester), and this CD has some unrecorded Micros tunes, according to Johnston's tongue-in-cheek liner notes (which shed little musical light but are a fun read. Sample quote: "If you enjoy listening to this album half as much as we enjoyed recording it, then we will have had twice as much fun as you"). Personnel is basically The Micros with Forrester and the baritone sax replaced (which is no surprise, but I won't get into that), and a guest guitarist.

A fine soprano (Johnston's ax)-alto sax duet introduces the title track's attractive theme (dig the warm, fuzzy sound of those four

saxes). A fine baritone solo, interesting four sax and drum transition, then a bass solo lead to a R&B style fiery alto solo, a hotter slide guitar solo, and a reprise of the main theme. Whew! To paraphrase the description of weather in some tropical locales, if you don't like the music, stick around for a few minutes and it will change. "Got Lucky" melds a Ska rhythm and a Tango-ish melody, breaks out into calypso, and has a nice piano solo (Robert DeBellis) of delicate dissonances. A turn of the century (twentieth) ragtime feel and Monkish harmonies characterize "Things Happen", while "Spilled Perfume" starts off softly in *noir* territory, then visits Eastern Europe. "Life's Other Mystery" is in King Curtis territory, with organ and wah-wah guitar; tenorist Paul Shapiro acquires himself well in the Curtis role, playing so greasily it had me reaching for my Lipitor (there's a middle-age metaphor). A few tasty written sections bring on a drunken soul-waltz, with skittering, tipsy piano, and growling, crunching guitar. "Twilight Time Zone", starts out menacing, gets funky, then the tenor

and soprano romp over "Bill Bailey" changes, with stopovers at "Angel Eyes." "Slave Labor" is bebop gone berzerk (Johnston's none-too-fond recollections of his various day jobs), and "No Mistakes In Hell" starts out with a somber, Ellingtonian piano figure behind squalling horns, then morphs into a fast, R&B style blues (reminds a bit of the old "American Bandstand" theme).

I haven't been able to focus much on Johnston's fine, Lacy-derived (tonally anyway) playing, or the fine rhythm section (drummer Richard Dworkin seems never to break a sweat, yet always finds the perfect groove). It's also impossible to get into how intricately arranged the tunes are, with the background constantly shifting. Sonically, there is good timbre, good depth, and good imaging, though the stage doesn't spread past the speakers (interestingly, live the Micros always sat in size order of horns, soprano far left; this is reversed on the CD).

Johnston states most of the bands book remains unrecorded. That means there's material for a follow-up. That's good news indeed!



Arthur Paxton

Classical

Chicago Pro Musica *The Medinah Sessions*
Reference Recordings RR-2102

THIS RELEASE HAS the instant double appeal to the adventurer in me ... and the cheapskate. How often do you get to hear music by Bowles, Martin and Weill performed by Grammy Award winners from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra? How often do you encounter popular large-scale works by Strauss and Rimsky-Korsakov performed by a revealingly sleek ensemble? How often does RR offer two discs for the price of one?

If there is a theme to the musical selections here (which include additional works by Nielsen, Scriabin, Stravinsky, Walton and Varèse) it may be humor, often in the shadow of war. The *Façade Suite* of William Walton reflects the Edwardian penchant for experimental merriment. The young Walton had moved into the Sitwell home in Chelsea, to find Edith blithely playing with the sonic, metrical, and rhythmic aspects of poetry. The young composer knew what he had to do, and a collaboration for voice and sextet was born. According to Osbert Sitwell, the first public performance in 1923 was met with a "shower of abuse and insult." Fortunately, the version before us now, the composer's own 1922 arrangement for chamber ensemble (recorded for the first time), eliminates every trace of voice and stage, including the daft poetry, the offending megaphone, and the unfortunate curtain/façade. What remains is music couched in popular song and dance forms that is timelessly clever and light on its feet.

Following quickly on *Façade's* heels, Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel* has, by contrast, an unexpected gravitas. Immediately, one is struck by the sense of a central character and a story about to unfold. On first listening, I missed the plush, comforting sound of a full string section (generally not the thing one associates with this work so full of virtuosic exclamations from the large orchestra's brass and woodwind soloists). Here however, in Franz Hasenörl's arrangement we only have soloists – five of them to be exact. Individual players respond heroically, filling the role of a bevy of horns or a bank of violins, yet this listener realizes once again the importance of orchestration to Strauss' success.

Certainly, Easley Blackwood's arrangement fully projects the festive energy of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol*. Blackwood must have taken R-K at his word when he claimed, "The opinion formed by both critics

and the public, that the *Capriccio* is a magnificently orchestrated piece, is wrong. The *Capriccio* is a brilliant composition for the orchestra." Blackwood's resetting involves nine instruments including his piano which seems to animate the proceedings from the center of the texture. A bass drum delivers great impact to the final measures. It should be noted that the beginning of this work contrasts sharply with the strikingly modern Varèse that precedes it. Varèse's *Octandre* is hardly one of his cataclysms, but neither does it contribute to the rest of the shenanigans. In it is uncompromising idiom, *Octandre* stands out as a lone wolf in need of some Cowell or Ives for company.

Nielsen's *Serenata in vano* (1914) depicts the efforts of a country band bent on serenading a lady ... in vain. Two musical approaches fail to evoke the slightest interest and the musicians huff off, playing for there own amusement. Martin's well-crafted *La Revue de Cuisine* (1927) maintains the jovial spirit as does Paul Bowles' *Music for a Farce*, salvaged from a scuttled Orson Wells production.

Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera Suite* shares with other works on these discs such forms as march, tango and popular song, but the frequent minor mode and industrial-strength downbeats give a cold gleam to much of the music. *Mack the Knife* is a loose-limbed repose after the hard-edged *Overture* where the trumpet does have pearly teeth. Throughout the recording, the trumpet's articulation is pointed and the tone bright, a contrast to the trumpet sound of recent Reference releases with the Minnesota Orchestra. For example, the trumpet soloist (and then, the full section) in Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* create a wonderfully seductive sound - at the expense of brilliance and bite, qualities appropriate to a fanfare. Of course, the Minnesota Orchestra is a much larger ensemble than any of these pieces require, and those seductive trumpets were definitely in the back, quite a bit farther from the listener's position than any of the musicians here. Hence, my inclination is to sit back and bask in the sound of the Minnesota's fanfare, but to leap to my feet and salute the sound of the Chicago trumpet's fanfare in the *Capriccio*. These performances, originally made in 1983 and 1988 in Chicago's Medinah Temple

are graced by Reference Recordings' characteristic vivid depiction of musicians in a defined space warmed by the natural (empty) hall reverberations. The piano's percussive nature is softened by its position behind the winds which have a bit more immediacy than on recent large ensemble releases.

With Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale – Suite (1918)*, the high-spirited tone is tempered by the macabre machinations of the Devil himself. Combining music, narration and dance, the original *L'histoire du Soldat* is a direct descendent of town-square theatricals which melded entertainment and a piquant moral lesson. Unlike Martin's or Walton's satiric use of jazz, Stravinsky created a jazz language of his own, one quite devoid of clichés. Of course, he avoided jazz clichés, he had never heard any jazz. Nevertheless, in 1918 he set about to write in a jazz idiom, imagining the sound based on an encounter in Switzerland with "jazz" scores by Ernest Ansermet. Naturally enough, the ensuing masterpiece doesn't sound like jazz, but Stravinsky recognized that it did represent a complete break with the European tradition of his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov.

Something about the wry phrases and kicky off-the-beat rhythms brings out the most spirited and individualistic playing by the Chicago musicians. Initially, their customary nimbleness, poise and transparency prevails, but as the Devil turns the screws, mounting intensity gives way to fury. Immediately clear is how much the lifelike recording lets the wit of this music shine through. The cornet used here in the Stravinsky is notably warmer-hued than the trumpet used in the other pieces and the playing is wonderfully liquid in such pieces as the *Pastorale*. In the *Royal March*, the trombonist's robust tone creates a host of ripe partials and

then in *Ragtime*, when muted, sly downward slurs. It is in the recording of the percussion, however that Reference Recordings comes into its own. The larger halo of reverberation surrounding the percussion clearly places it behind the other instruments. The plump-sounding side-drum (without snares) dominate the percussion, handled by one busy player. The cymbal splashes more sound onto loud notes, the tambourine adds a gentle sizzle, and the triangle is delectable in its purity and ping. The *Tango* is basically a sensual duet for violin and drums, then in the final piece the percussionist truly gets a life, as the drums take off on their own, getting louder, gaining speed, until the piece is over. All this sensual effect somehow uncorks an essential quality of the music that too often in recorded performances remains merely latent.

These performances were originally released as RR-16, RR-17, and RR-29. This release was remastered from the original analogue tapes at 24 bits / 88.2 kHz and prepared for CD release with HDCD technology. Turning down my subwoofer (not at a high level to begin with) adequately reduced a rumble (present on both discs), but with playback at concert levels, other noises began to intrude, particularly on disc one, recorded in 1983. Through my main speakers, an undercurrent of background noise, most noticeably erratic pops, were a distraction, the quiet *Pastorale* suffering most. Breathing and fingering sounds also could occasionally be heard, but were not intrusive. Pre-echo was also just audible before the raucous opening of the *Devil's Dance*, but was hardly the on-going distraction of residual rumble in my main speakers. Unfortunately, there is too much of this extraneous noise to get the hearty recommendation this release otherwise deserves.

Audiophiles around the world have found that Placette Audio Preamps and Volume Controls are the most transparent available today at any price. We use only Vishay® S-102 resistors in all signal paths, including the 128 step volume control.

Passive or buffered. Dual-mono. 5 line inputs plus a tape loop. Full I.R. remote control. Custom built for your system.

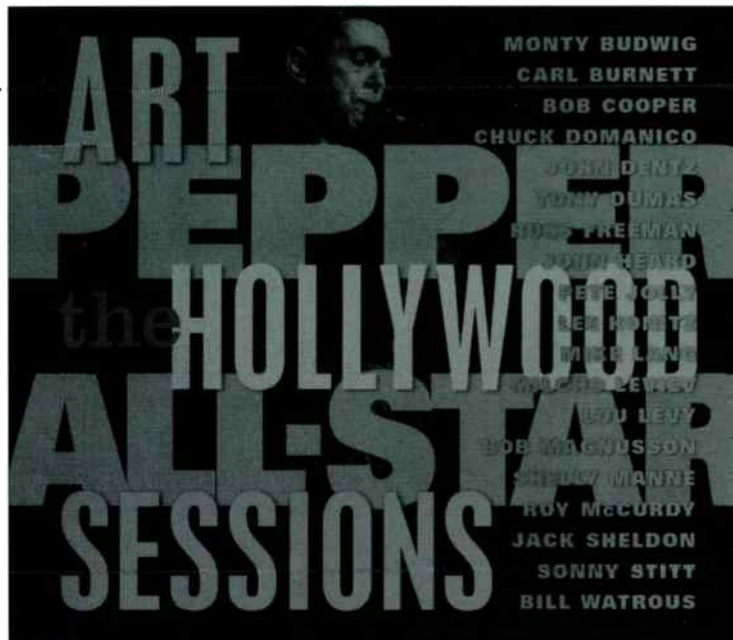
Are you running CD direct without a preamp? Call about our I.R. remote controlled resistive matrix volume control that also uses only Vishay® S-102 resistors.



Placette Audio

Dual Mono Line Stage Preamplifier

208-342-6141 • www.placetteaudio.com



Art Pepper *The Hollywood All-Star Sessions*
Galaxy 5GCD-4431-2

THE STORY behind these CDs is almost as interesting as the music on them. Pepper recorded them for a Japanese label, Axis, pretending to be a sideman to sidestep his exclusive contract to Galaxy. However, Pepper was boss, receiving the highest pay, selecting sidemen, and choosing repertoire (within the concept of replicating the West Coast sound). According to Laurie Pepper (who wrote the informative, personal, and even gossipy liner notes), Art partially bought into the charade, relaxing more than his usual "take no prisoners" approach allowed.

Bill Watrous nominally leads the first date on trombone; he's smooth, facile, melodic, incisive, and has the technique of 10 mortal trombonists. His congenial virtuosity inspires Pepper. Highlights include the two originals here, Watrous' "For Art's Sake" and Pepper's "Funny Blues."

Trumpeter Jack Sheldon "led" the next date. His reputation is that of a somewhat more-schooled (and less-sexy, less self-destructive) Chet Baker, though I hear much Gillespie in his approach. He was Pepper's bandmate in the '50s, and this date has the smooth flow of West Coast

jazz. "Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise" is taken at a medium bounce, the front-liners complementing each other well (Pepper is sharp, Sheldon golden hued), and Milcho Liviev plays a fine piano solo. "Jack's Blues" has a "Dizzy" Sheldon, and mildly dissonant, inventive piano lines. "Historia De Un Amor" is a ballad that features a lovely melody and Pepper's blazing lines—the exciting ending has Pepper circling Sheldon over a two-chord Irish-sounding vamp.

The next session, "led" by pianist Pete Jolly, is a quartet date. "I Surrender Dear" is taken at a medium tempo, Pepper alternating snaking and simple lines, Jolly playing nice flourishes. They trade exciting eight- and four-bar phrases, and go out with Pepper soloing over a vamp. Pepper's "Y.I. Blues" has him at post-Coltrane intensity, probing, pouncing, and springing like a cat.

The next two sessions feature the Clash Of The Altos, with Sonny Stitt, bebopper extraordinaire, his sparing partner. The two have entirely different approaches and sounds. Laurie Pepper tells the tale of the two sessions, the first going to Stitt, as Pepper had a finger injury, and

was drunk and high, and while my scoring is similar, "Wee" from that session silenced a room at the most-recent *Stereophile* show (the section where the saxes trade fours is particularly hot). They're both powerful personalities, Stitt a stone-cold bebop disciple, filling every available space with lovely melody, and Pepper with his own, more acerbic, looser melodic and textural approach. Pepper is on Stitt's turf here, with a collection of bop classics, which induces more histrionics in Art than usual.

The second date has no losers. The gem here is "Lester Leaps In," on which they both switch to tenors. They're still distinct, Stitt sounding grounded, earthy, filling every crevice with melodic improv. Pepper's again more asymmetrical, flighty, airborne. The by now obligatory fours are "lift you out of your seat" great, with each giving a shot of adrenaline to the other.

The next date brings back Watrous and adds tenorist Bob Cooper, whose Getz-ish sound and the "Dixieland meets West Coast" style of arrangements make this a less-intense, but just as satisfying session. On "Just Friends," a medi-

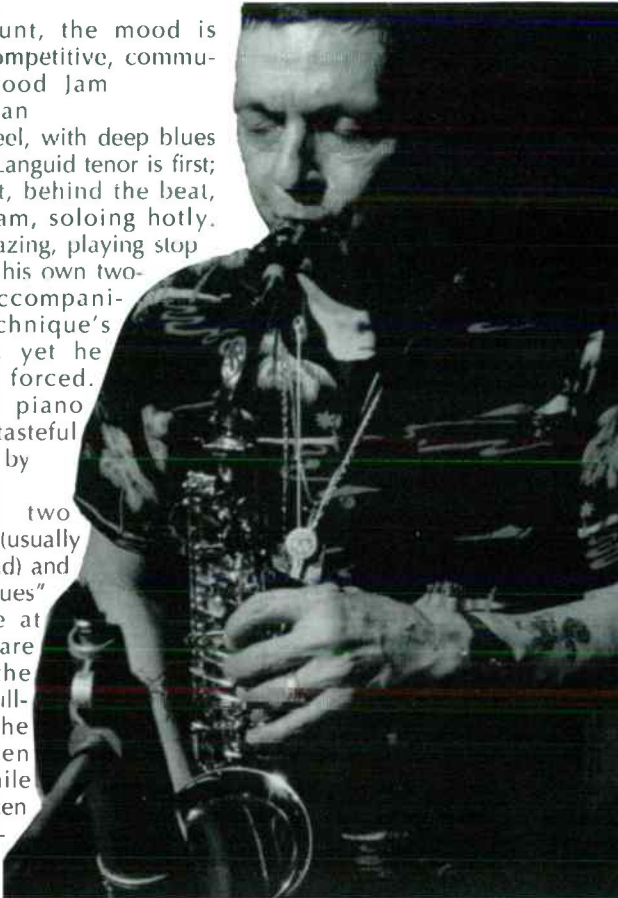
um-tempo jaunt, the mood is lighter, non-competitive, communal. "Hollywood Jam Blues" has an "after hours" feel, with deep blues being spoken. Languid tenor is first; Pepper is next, behind the beat, gathering steam, soloing hotly. Watrous is amazing, playing stop time providing his own two-note chord accompaniment. His technique's unbelievable, yet he never sounds forced. Some bluesy piano chords beget tasteful unison soloing by the three horns.

The next two tunes, "Lover" (usually done as a ballad) and "Limehouse Blues" (usually done at warp-speed), are change-ups, the former taken full-speed, with the three hornmen unfettered, while the latter is taken at a uncharacteristic, revealing slow

tempo. On "Limehouse ..." the piano opens with crystalline notes, Watrous is suave, relaxed, dignified, cool, and swingin'. The tenor enters self-effacingly, and delivers a pleading solo reminiscent of Ben Webster. Pepper also enters gingerly, picks at the tune, then takes it up yet another notch.

The last session again features two altos, with Lee Konitz doing the honors, but it contrasts sharply with the Stitt session as Konitz is self-effacing. Rather than complementing each other, I find the combination to be a little like oil and water. Konitz is all angles, with a wispy, cerebral bent, quite the opposite of the fiery Pepper. Still, the playing by each is excellent, with warm feelings evident between the principals. Konitz's "A Minor Blues In F" has an interesting melody line. Pepper is melodic and exploratory. Konitz makes an off-kilter odd entry, soloing with his unique, laconic approach. The schmaltzy "Anniversary Song" morphs into a fine jazz vehicle, which is no small feat.

Sound on the Compact Disc is good, with nice highs (maybe slightly increased in the mastering but not



annoyingly so), and it's got a nice, wide stage; Pepper's horn sounds appropriately edgy. The soundfield between the instruments sounds open, though this is not as much as you might find in an audiophile recording made from scratch. Bass has some increased energy in its upper mid-bass region, but I think this is a sound Pepper liked and went after.

So, is this the set to buy? Well, to me there's no bad Pepper, and this set, with all its variety, fabulous musicians, and slightly different view of Pepper, makes for fascinating listening. The novice may instead want to start with some of his early '50 recordings (which are a whole different animal). Perhaps something like the recently reissued XRCDs of *Art Pepper With The Rhythm Section* and *Art Pepper +11*.

Good places to hear his later style are *The Trip* on Contemporary, *Art Lives* or *New York Album* on Galaxy. You can't go wrong with the 16-CD set, *The Complete Galaxy Recordings*, for that matter. Still, I think this particular set will provide all takers with much listening enjoyment

RoomLens™
ARGENT™
A U D I O

Simply the finest, most transparent and sonically pleasing room treatment available today.

Change your focus.

Argent Audio / Rosinantié
602 Acorn Plaza PO Box 612
Eudora, KS 66025

785.542.3922
email: godasse@lawrence.ixks.com
www.roomlens.com



JAZZ

Louis Armstrong

The Complete Hot Five and Hot Seven Recordings

Columbia Legacy C4K 63527

Frank Driggs

OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS, the classic Armstrong small-combo records that many of us have known since George Avakian produced the first compilation in a four LP set back in the middle 50's, have been reissued and repackaged by Sony and various overseas and American companies. The latest Sony achievement will stand as the definitive one, the last word in packaging, promotion and completeness. Incredibly handsome to the eye — Christian Calabro and Ian Cuttler were the designers — it contains 89 tracks, a complete list of credits, an article by its producer Phil Schaap, and an overview essay by Columbia

professor Robert C. O'Meally as well as a personal reflection by Avakian. On the back of the sleeve, this eloquent and correct assessment appears: "At the banquet table of 20th century creative wonders — Picasso's Cubist period, late-period Yeats, the cinema of Kurosawa, Monet's 'Water Lillies,' The Hot Fives and Sevens have an honored place."

Those of us who love jazz never considered these records as anything but the finest of their time. It is pointless for me to analyze the music; each listener will respond in his or her own way. But here are some I particularly like: "Lonesome

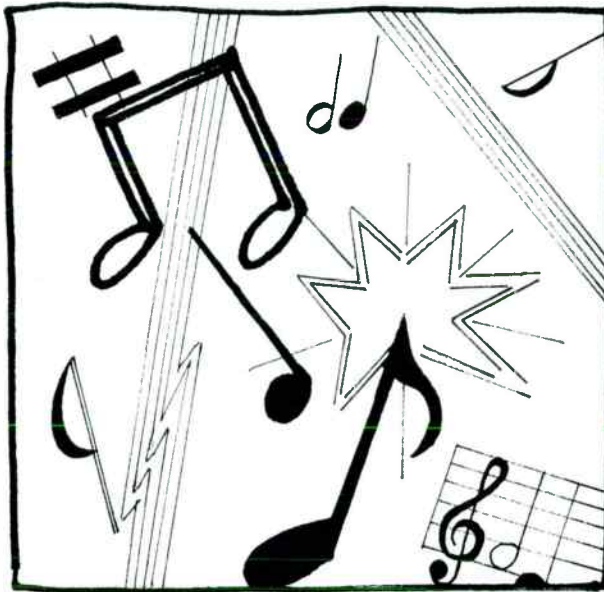
Blues," "Jazz Lips," "Skid-dat-dat," "Big Butter and Egg Man," "Struttin' With Some Barbecue," "Hotter Than That," "Savoy Blues," "Georgia Bo Bo," "Drop That Sack," "Cornet Chop Suey," "Willie The Weeper," "Potato Head Blues," "Wild Man Blues," "Melancholy," "West End Blues," "Save It Pretty Mama," and although "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" and "Mahogany Hall Stomp" are played by larger groups, I add these to my list.

These are the first jazz recordings to feature one artist on a consistent contractual basis and cover the years between 1925 and '29. Among the musicians beside

Armstrong on these discs are Johnny Dodds, Lil Armstrong, Kid Ory, Johnny St. Cyr, Earl Hines, Don Redman, Lonnie Johnson, J.C. Higginbotham, Pops Foster, Paul Barbarin, Jack Teagarden and Zutty Singleton. Several of them make significant contributions.

Originally released on the beautiful Okeh red or black label on 78 rpm, they set the standard for recording quality in the industry at that time. Now they have been remastered with impeccable care by Schaap and the Sony engineers. It is useless to compare the reissues of the past 50 years with this set because the technology of today represents a tremendous advance over what was available to Avakian half a century ago. The current album will surely stand the test of time.

A few reservations: Why are the records dark-toned, rather than a replication of the original and



striking Okeh label? Why does the discography appear in print so small it is virtually impossible for an adult to read? And finally there is an error: Portraits of the players are presented on pages 36 through 39. Don Redman's photo is printed twice; one over his own name and again over Jimmy

take at least a week to ingest it wholly and properly.

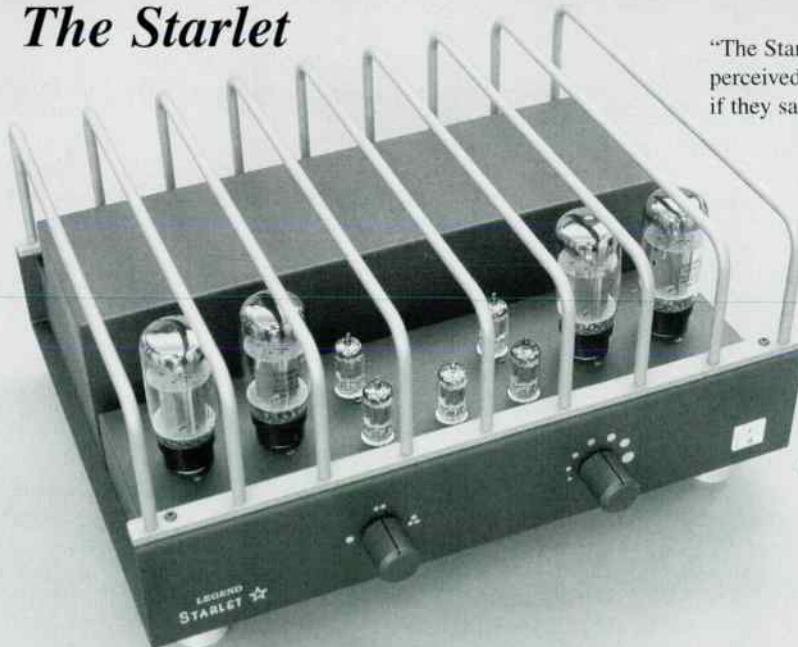
Louis Armstrong was the man who started it all. Every trumpet player, indeed, all jazz instrumentalists have built their careers on the solid, magnificent foundation Armstrong laid down in America in the 1920s.

Noons' name.

But these are minor matters in a huge and overwhelmingly successful undertaking. One of the special pleasures is the inclusion of alternate takes. Even a longtime listener like myself had not heard all of them. One, in particular, the alternate take of "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," gave me chills unlike anything else in my experience of this music.

There is too much music here to take in at one listening. It is best savored a little bit one day, a little bit the next, and probably should

The Starlet



The True Integrated Class 'A'
Triode Amplifier
40 watts x 2

"The Starlet offers so much in the way of perceived value that I wouldn't have balked if they said it cost another \$1,500."

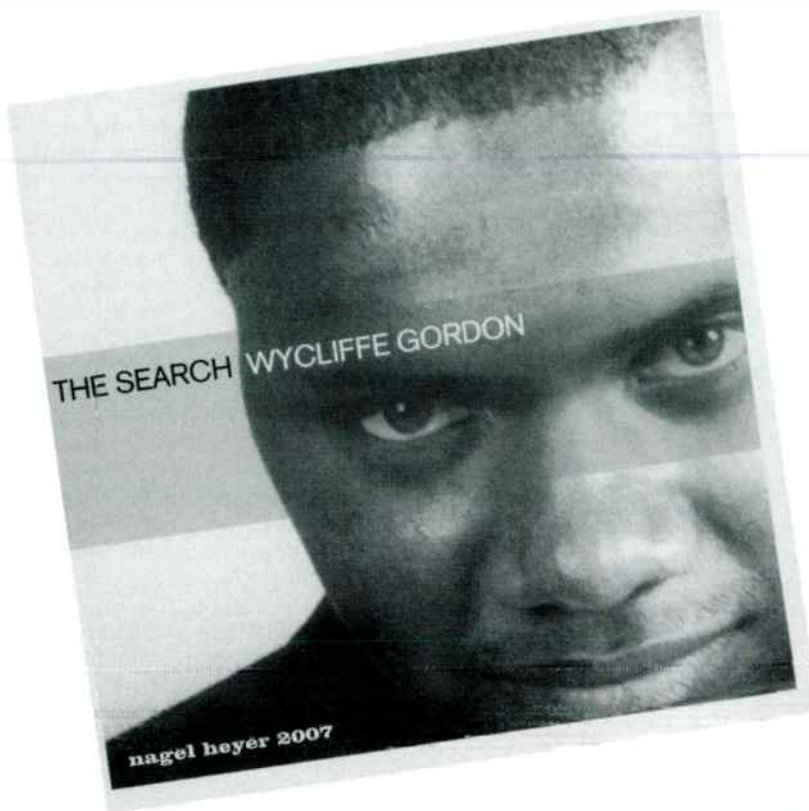
Ken Kessler
Ultimate Audio, Winter 2001

"The Starlet is just about everything one could wish for in a high-quality, relatively affordable, all-triode tube integrated amplifier... she should reward you with performances worthy of a true diva."

Chip Stern
Stereophile, December 2000

Legend Audio Design

Berkeley, California
1.800.783.7360
www.legendaudio.com



Jazz

Wycliffe Gordon *The Search*
Nagel Heyer 2007

AFTER SEEING AN IMPRESSIVE set by Mr. Gordon at the Village Vanguard in the company of a trombone-playing friend of mine, I ran across the CD and bought it for personal use, feeling somewhat trombone-deficient, perhaps being in need of some vitamin T. After a few listens, I feel I gotta hip ya' to this disc.

"Cheeky" starts things off with a soul/funk riff the way those Blue Note guys used to do it. Mmmm, tasty. Gordon can play bop with a Curtis Fuller sound, but he digs those expressive/rude sounds pre-bop (and post-bop) trombonists favor. Nice soloing, here and elsewhere, by pianist extraordinaire Eric Reed. Bebop is our game on "What Is This Thing Called Love," Victor Goines playing exciting Rollins-inspired tenor, and Gordon follows suite with virtuosic and interesting lines (not always the same thing). "He Looked Beyond My Fault" (better known as "Danny Boy" to most) gets loving treatment in an arrangement for trombone quintet, one of the most beautiful sounds you'll

ever hear (and we hear them spread across a nice, wide soundstage). The choir is joined by the rhythm section on "Frantic Flight" which explores blues variations (one section/riff is clean out of the "Beginning Blues Licks" book). The various sections cook, and the solos are exciting. Wycliffe's didgeridoo-from-space starts off "The Search (part I and II)," which segues into a lush, slow, vaguely Eastern groove, with flute versus trombone choir (fine flute by Ted Nash). The sophisticated, Duke-ish swing of "Touch It Lightly" features Marcus Printop's warm and idiomatic trumpet. Gordon's playing is expansive and appropriately lyrical. Reed's intro to "Georgia On My Mind" is out of the church, and Gordon leads the congregation, sliding behind and around the beat in a rousing performance. "Sweet Georgia Brown" is taken as fast as humanly possible, which doesn't faze Gordon in the least. "Blues for Deac'n Cone" lives in that space between the sacred and the profane, offering up blues

as deep as a well. Gordon gets sounds out of his 'bone that are not allowed in mixed company. The church is very much in evidence on "Sign Me Up", with Gordon playing some smooth yet spirited trombone, overdubbing the bottom on tuba (the trombone choir is back here). Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust" is done as a piano/trombone duet, and is as lovely as can be (puts a lump in your throat). Gordon is warm and tender, Reed inventive. Two Monk tunes, "Ba-lue Bolivar Ba-lues" and "Rhythm-a-ning" are appropriate closers. Check out the interplay between Gordon and Goines on the former.

Sonics are fine, with depth, nice instrumental textures, and, when the trombone choir plays, a stage that stretches quite nicely.

Gordon takes the facility of boppers, the advanced overblowing techniques of avant-garde pioneers like Albert Mangelsdorff, and early tailgate sounds, and melds them into a fun and involving whole. Need I say it's recommended?

Yamaha RP-U200 Personal Computer Receiver

Bascom H. King



THE YAMAHA RP-U200 is the top of the line of four external Audio Soundboard Processors in the firm's Cavit (Convergence of Audio/Video Information Technology) line of products. Like the original RP-U100, the new Yamaha RP-U200 Personal Receiver is designed to bring high quality audio to the PC environment but with new expanded five channel and recording capabilities. Primarily designed to operate with a computer and connected with an USB cable, it can also be operated in a stand-alone mode. A supplied remote control works both in the stand-alone and computer-connected modes and is especially handy when the RP-U200 is used

for the sound in a modest-power home-theater system. It should be noted that this marvelously versatile receiver decodes Dolby Digital, Dolby Surround, and DTS surround from the digital output of whatever DVD player you might be using.

Among the features of the RP-U200 are an FM tuner with 40 programmable presets, Yamaha's Near-Field Cinema DSP (Digital Sound Field Processing) technology, Virtual 3D, Dolby Surround, Dolby Digital, and DTS Surround decoding. When connected to a computer, the supplied control application allows for 24-bit / 96-kHz audio playback, recording on the computer hard drive with some of the DSP

effects of the RP-U200, digital seven-band equalization, dynamic range control, as well as the adjustment of various aspects of the sound field.

Designed to be vertically oriented and placed next to a monitor, speaker, or CPU unit in a PC setup, the RP-U200 is an attractive and appealing piece of gear. Located at the top right of the front panel is a vertical array of four push-button selector switches for external PC, Aux1, and Aux2 inputs, and Tuner for the internal tuner. To the left of each of these push-buttons is the identifying nomenclature and an illuminated strip to indicate what is selected. Three of these switches,

PC, Aux1, Tuner, offer multiple selections, and this depends on how many times they are pushed. The PC switch alternates between analog, digital, and USB inputs, Aux1 alternates between analog and digital inputs, while the Tuner switch alternates between the present tuner frequency and the current preset number. Next down is an LCD display screen for showing various settings such as Selected input source, volume, sound-field program, and various other pieces of information. At the bottom of the display area are four pushbuttons arranged in a horizontal row. The left button, labeled DSP, activates the sound-field programs. Next, the button, labeled P-SET, selects alternately between the modes of Frequency Display for the tuner or tuner preset select. The last two are Up and Down keys used to select sound-field programs, preset stations, and tune the FM tuner. Near the bottom is a large volume control knob. At the very bottom of the front panel, to the left, is a headphone jack and the power on/off button to the right.

Connections on the rear panel are arranged in four groups: Speaker outputs, analog I/O (inputs and outputs), digital I/O, and tuner antenna input. PC, Aux1, Aux2 inputs, selected signal output and subwoofer output comprise the analog I/O group. Present in the digital I/O group are the USB connector, PC coax S/PDIF and Toslink optical inputs, Aux2 Toslink optical input, and a Toslink optical output. The PC input selector button toggles between the USB, analog and digital input connectors. If digital is selected and devices are connected to both the S/PDIF and optical

inputs, the optical input takes precedence. The Aux1 input selector button toggles between the analog and optical inputs. Analog and digital outputs feed out what has been selected on these inputs for external recording purposes. The subwoofer output produces the low-frequency effects in the decoded surround sound modes and the bass frequen-

noise signal in each speaker in turn, making it easy to set the speakers for equal level at the listening position. The D-Range window lets one adjust the dynamic range settings. In the Equalizer window, a seven-band peak/dip equalizer permits various response adjustments. Settings can be stored and recalled. A number of presets are available for different types of music also.

To assist in the review of the RP-U200, I had also received five small speakers in the Yamaha NS-U40P Natural Sound Satellite Speaker Package, as well as Yamaha's YST-SW105 subwoofer. This appeared to be a pretty natural combination.

I first setup the RP-U200 and the speakers in my modest video system. The front and center speakers were set up near the ceiling, down about one foot, and the surround speakers were set on top of my resident units in the rear. The subwoofer was placed on top of my Genesis subwoofer near the right-front corner of the room. I quickly found out that the RP-U200 would decode the Dolby Digital surround tracks from the digital output of my DVD player using the Aux1 digital optical input. This was cool! I found that this little system played loud enough for us and it sounded pretty darned good. We enjoyed a number of DVDs and their associated surround sound on this setup. The remote control was very handy to use, allowing easy access to the FM function and various DSP surround modes when not viewing videos.

I next setup the RP-U200 and the speakers with my HP Pavilion 8590C computer in my computer setup. In this arrangement, the RP-U200 is connected to the host computer with a USB cable. The left and right speakers were a little below ear height and deployed about +/- 45 degrees to either side of center with a separation of about 4.5 feet. Where I had the RP-U200 placed was a perfect spot for the right-front speaker. The left-front speaker was placed up on a pedestal upon my desk off to the left of the computer cart where the monitor and keyboard reside. The center speaker was perched atop my monitor. The right-rear was placed on a stool and the left-rear on top of a cabinet. These rear speakers were about +/- 135 degrees back from front-center

The RP-U200 is a terrific little receiver, especially considering its features, sound quality, and price.

cy range in regular stereo or synthesized surround operation.

When the supplied control program is installed on a PC connected to the RP-U200 via a USB cable, control of the RP-U200 is now possible from the PC. This mode of operation enables a number of functions not available in the standalone mode. These are activated by four buttons on the RP-U200 application window and include DSP-Edit, Speaker, D-Range, and Equalizer. Figures 1 through 4 illustrate how the control program windows appear with each of the these four buttons pressed in turn from left to right. DSP-Edit allows setting of effect level, seat position, and room size. An "advanced" button allows for adjusting various reverberation parameters, all different for the various DSP programs selected at the top of the control program window. As can be seen, the Speaker window is for setting up the relative levels of the speakers. A test-tone function is available here which puts a

N O T E S

Yamaha RP-U200 Personal Computer Receiver, \$449.00. Yamaha, 6660 Orangethorpe, Buena Park, CA 90620; vox 714/533-9105; fax 714/228-3343; website www.yamaha.com; e-mail yamaha.com.

Associated Equipment

Yamaha NS-U40P Natural Sound Satellite Speaker Package and Yamaha YST-SW105 subwoofer; HP 8590C computer; 600-MHz P-III, 128 MB RAM 27-GB HDD; Pioneer DVD-414 DVD player; NEC MultiSync XV15+ computer monitor; Sony KV-25XBR video monitor; Genesis Servo 10 Subwoofer



Seat location is one of many options that can be selected in Yamaha's RP-U200.

and at a distance of about 5 feet. The subwoofer was placed on the floor approximately under the left-front speaker.

I was advised by Yamaha that the DVD player application on my HP computer, being a year or two old, was not capable of supporting Dolby Digital or DTS surround sound. WinDVD or Power DVD computer programs were recommended as suitable modern upgrades. I downloaded a trial version of WinDVD to test with. This trial version is limited to five minutes of playback before it stops, with a message "suggesting" you buy the full version. What a pain! Although I was sure that I had the WinDVD and RP-U200 sound properties set correctly for six channel operation, I was not getting the rear channels to produce sound even though the WinDVD player was indicating the DVD playing was in Dolby 5.1 mode. I finally sprang for the working version of WinDVD and, with another call to a knowledgeable person at Yamaha, got the rear channels going. The secret was to have the RP-U200 mode set to Normal instead of Through and that requires either toggling the DSP button on the RP-U200 or clicking Dolby on the computer application window.

The sound of this setup playing back DVD movies with Dolby Surround Sound was quite good with a very good sense of surround

space. Overall frequency balance with the subwoofer was good but the upper midrange sound from the front speakers was a little bright. Rotating these speakers so that their axes crossed somewhat in front of me fixed this. Amount of volume attainable was generally adequate for most of my listening, but the unit did run out of gas when pushed. It's not really a blaster, with just 12 watts per channel. Experimenting with the various DSP sound choices when playing CDs or listening to FM was interesting and entertaining. I found the HALL DSP mode a pleasant enhancement for listening to classical music, although I had to switch it off as soon as an announcer came on as the delayed sound in the rear was most unnatural. Surprisingly to me, though, singing voices seemed OK in this regard. The equalizer function was most handy for attenuating the brightness of some CDs. Just a little bit of bass boost and the same amount of treble cut made a very nice "tilt-down" control.

The Yamaha's RP-U200 is intuitively easy to understand.

I liked the RP-U100 when I reviewed that unit and a feel the same way about this newer RP-U200. I think it sounds surprisingly good. I must give credit to the little Yamaha speakers and subwoofer as I judged the sound of the RP-U200 through them. They are really quite good in general and perfect for the computer setup intended here.

Generally, operating the RP-U200 was reasonably easy and largely intuitively. It does take some concentrated poring over the manual and experimentation to get all the features to work, though, and there are a lot of them. As with the RP-U100, I did have some trouble trying to learn to set up the tuner presets. I finally got it though, and the presets faithfully stayed put over the whole review period.

In conclusion, the RP-U200 is a terrific little receiver, especially considering its sound quality, features, and price. It is a worthy upgrade over the earlier RP-U100. I heartily recommend it to enhance listening pleasure of the computer environment that so many of us spend time in these days.



The receiver's equalization function is fairly standard, but includes presets ranging from rock to classic.



Speaker level controls include overall, center level and delay, back channels, and "effects" or bass channel.



The D-Range control can help keep signals with wide dynamic ranges from overwhelming your ears.

Rosinanté Dulcinea Monitors



CERVANTES' DULCINEA from the *Don Quixote* classic is a fictional — and, within the fiction, fantastical — character named as a reflection of her beauty, refinement, and chastity. Regarding the first two of these, I'd have to say Rosinanté's Dulcinea has been well-christened. Regarding the last, I can attest only to the fact that nothing unseemly happened during our time together.

The Dulcinea monitors are at once a reviewer's blessing and curse. The former, because the minimal coloration they impart to the signal permits more certain assessment of the character of upstream equipment and source material. The latter, because with so little "voice" of their own, there's very little to focus on, niggle over, or proclaim wildly about. That's hell on a reviewer who's got to assemble a few thousand, hopefully meaningful, words in review, but heaven for a true audiophile who'd rather listen to music than equipment. And there unquestionably is a bit of heaven to be found with the Dulcineas.

With its piano-black finish (on all surfaces but the rear) and clean lines, probably most will find the Dulcinea a very attractive speaker. But it's almost certainly speaker system with a Decor Score that will be higher in modern surroundings, where its geometric visage — rectangular face border, circular drivers, tubular stand supports and, on the newest offering, wedged sections of light maple — will be a most elegant complement. The Dulcineas may blend less well among skinny-legged Louis XV tea tables and such, but are unlikely to display a Stealth Mode anywhere because they're each a moderately

sizable 21.5 inches high (before stand mounting) by 20 inches deep by 9.5 inches wide, and weigh in at 80 lbs.

Geometry figures prominently inside the system as well, as research led to development of a controlled inner shape and volume which are more complementary than boxes to the spherical sound pressure waves of acoustic transmissions, and which eliminate parallel wall-induced anomalies. The gently convex front baffle utilizes Rosinanté's proprietary DarkMatter composite material with rigid decoupling attachment, and the cabinet walls comprise double layers of MDF laminated with a proprietary rubber compound to minimize resonance. All this yields enclosures that are the deadiest I've encountered. There's notably little cabinet vibration to be felt during even the deepest, loudest passages, and giving them a hard rap just results in sore knuckles. Binding posts are recessed on the lower rear portion of the cabinet, just below the cabinet's port, and are thoughtfully angled upwards, easing cable fastening. No provision for covers is made. The front baffle is covered with a black, felt-like material (FuzzMatter?), no doubt to minimize reflections and reduce sonic smearing. One listen to Michael Hedges' lightning fast and ever-crisp guitar work on his *Aerial Boundaries* LP (Windham Hill WH-1032) will confirm Rosinanté's success.

The review pair were pre-production units apparently differing from those now available only in a few cosmetic details. These had been broken in prior to their delivery to me, so there was no discernible change in performance during the course of my listening. Ric Cummins, Rosinanté's

designer/owner, said that production units are given 48 hours burn-in at the factory, and that you can expect to put another 100 to 150 hours on them before they stabilize at peak performance.

In what might be considered a blow for equine equal opportunity, the Rosinantés ride atop their matching Sancho stands (just kidding; to my knowledge the stands are unnamed) and achieve a full height of 11.75 hands — that is, 47 inches. Appliance-like adjustable feet (“glides”) are fitted to the base as an integral part of the stand’s design which is intended to isolate floor-borne vibrations. Vertical rise is effected by equal lengths of a 6-inch diameter tube beneath the front of the speaker and a 2½-inch one in the rear, the combined configuration of which is a design intended to control resonance and assure optimal performance.

The drivers — two 5-inch polyglass mid-woofer cones and one 25-mm inverted dome tweeter — are sourced from Focal, modified by Rosinanté, and arranged in the increasingly popular D’Appolito configuration. All internal wiring is silver with a Teflon dielectric, and the hand-wired crossovers sport high-purity foil inductors as well as high-voltage polypropylene caps. The proprietary discrete circuitry in the Rosinanté design is intended to reduce or eliminate microphone-induced distortion included on recordings, and additional filters from Bybee Technologies are purported to insure clarity of sound from a variety of sources. Now, that’s a lot going on between amp and driver — especially for “just give me what’s on the record” disciples — but having no units *without* all this circuitry for comparison, I can’t speak directly to Rosinanté’s assertions. I can say, however, that clarity is indeed one of Dulcinea’s strengths, and I never got a sense of overtones being curtailed or other musical information lost.

A few years ago, instead of replacing a number of inexplicably-damaged, hard-to-get, and expensive panels for our Quads, I reluctantly opted to abandon them in favor of our current Dunlavs. Among numerous resulting differences was a shift from the wonderful, often gossamer-like, imaging of

the ESL-63s to the SC III’s also wonderful, but more tangible projections. The Dulcineas take this a step further, casting images of substantial weight and impact, increasing as toe-in progresses from straight ahead to aimed at the listening position. No disembodied, ethereal

Clarity is one of this speaker’s strengths, and I never had a sense of lost musical information.

voices here; with quality components upstream, the Dulcinea’s are capable of delivering the Full Monty, assuming, of course, such detail is available on the recording.

A good example is Gerry Mulligan’s big, bold, baritone sax on Billy Taylor’s *Dr. T* (GRP GRD-9692) which, through the Rosinantés, comes out sounding ... big and bold. All right! Equally satisfying is Bobby Thomas’ brush work on both cymbals and skins: robust and detailed rather than pale and scratchy. So too with the lovely “Concierto de La Mancha” — er, sorry — “Concierto de Aranjuez” on Jim Hall’s *Live in Tokyo* LP (Paddlewheel GP 3217). The detail is remarkable and the players are vividly rendered, set out for view between the speakers. Not only are the instruments made substantial, but so too the space in which they’re performing (or, at least, the illusion of this space created in the recording and mixing). I’ve long favored Vital CDs for their wonderful depiction of the recording venue. The Rosinantés do full justice to David Manley’s custom-designed studio, rendering the “air” surrounding the players palpable, and the soundstage impressively realistic, if only in the horizontal and vertical dimensions (about which, more later), on such recordings as *Todd* (i.e., Cochran; Vital 001). The same was true for the Cowboy Junkies (*The Trinity Sessions*, RCA 8568-2-R) and Holly Cole (*It Happened One Night*, Metro Blue CDP 7243 8 52699 0 5), among numerous others. The Dulcineas are wonderfully “you are there” speakers and, although my wife and I generally prefer a more

distant perspective, the Dulcinea’s front-row seats proved to be more than acceptable with our Classé electronics.

One of my favorite recordings — indeed, experiences — is listening, eyes closed, to Rickie Lee Jones’ “Comin’ Back to Me” (*Pop Pop*, Geffen GEFD-24426). Through the Rosinantés, every emotion-tinged, whispered nuance is conveyed with extraordinary clarity. Also noteworthy is the true-to-life sound of Willie Nelson’s well-worn Martin — and his well-worn voice — on my favorite of Willie’s releases, *Spirit* (Island 314-

524 242-2), an assemblage of Tex-Mex-flavored offerings presenting Willie supremely at ease. These Rosinantés are no one-trick pony, however, and are adept with less genteel material as well. Son Seals’ “Tough as Nails” (*Nothing But The Truth*, Alligator, ALCD 4822) comes through as precisely that, and Marianne Faithfull’s unbridled anger on “Why D’ya Do It?” (*Broken English & Strange Weather*, Mobile Fidelity UDCD 640) explodes from the Dulcineas, sending crude epithets through the room like hot shrapnel — just, no doubt, as Marianne intended for the “other woman” object of her lyrics.

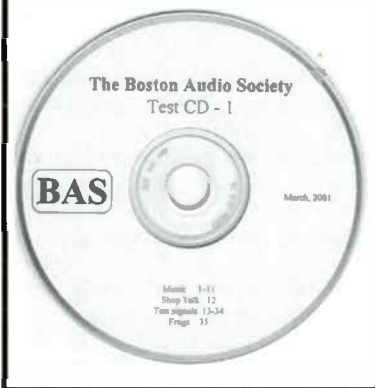
The Dulcineas are spec’ed at 35 Hz to 22 kHz +/-3 dB, and I heard nothing in any of my listening tests to indicate anything to the contrary, so that’s probably why for typical programming in our household — acoustic jazz, folk, vocal pop — the Dulcineas provide a more than satisfactory foundation. Indeed, the reproduction of Christian McBride’s acoustic bass trio on “Splanky” (*Gettin’ To It*, Verve 314 523 989-2) was downright exemplary: deep and solid, with rich harmonics painting clear distinctions among the players. In all, it was the best performance I’ve heard on this difficult track. However, while the Dulcineas are fully capable of delivering musically satisfying bass, those demanding visceral excitation in addition to auditory excitement will likely be happier either elsewhere or with a companion sub-woofer. After all is said and done, physics is still physics.

Also in the “top notch” category is the reproduction of cymbals, delivered by the Dulcineas with all

Boston Audio Society Test CD- 1

"...perhaps the best-ever combination of tones and music for testing speakers, etc."

--Gene Pitts, Editor,
The Audiophile Voice
 Boston Audio Society
 P.O. Box 211, Boston, MA 02126
 (603) 899-5121
 dbsystems@attglobal.net
 www.bostonaudiosociety.org



Changing Your Address? Please place your old label here

Then write in your new
 address here:

Name

.....

Address

.....

.....

City

State

Zipcode

Country

their real-world richness in timbre, dynamics, and subtleties of differing brush/stick strokes, both on audiophile recordings (e.g., Dick Hyman's *From the Age of Swing*, Reference Recordings RR-59CD) and many mainstream releases (e.g., Duke Jordan's *Osaka Concert, Vol. 1*, SteepleChase SCCD 31271). Yet another gem is "The Thrill is Gone" on B.B. King's *Deuces Wild* (MCA MCAD-1171). B.B. has no doubt sung this in duet — or, if counting Lucille, as a trio — dozens of times, but this rendition with Tracy Chapman is special. She's one of the very few to deliver the kind of intensely soulful feeling the lyrics deserve, and the Dulcineas handle this feeling with great care, offering them to the listener untainted and up-close-and-personal.

So what's on the red side of the ledger? Remarkably little, even for a \$6,200 monitor. Remember, you don't even have to buy stands.

Most important for me is that even though our Dunlavys afford us middle-to-rear of hall seating, they somehow also provide greater *involvement* than do the (front row) Dulcineas. With the former, I can almost feel Rickie Lee's warm, moist breath as she whispers "Comin' Back to Me"; with the latter I assuredly hear it all in fine detail, but it doesn't quite elicit the same wistful smile or sense of intimacy. Of less consequence — for me, but perhaps not for you — is that little illusion of depth was achievable with the Dulcineas. Note, however, that many audiophiles consider depth to largely be an artifact of recording or equipment design manipulations and, therefore, undesirable in music reproduction. Regardless, as previously noted, dearth of depth does not mean

absence of ambiance (which the Rosinanté Dulcineas convey in spades), and it's this latter aspect I value more.

Last, of possible importance — certainly to me, but perhaps not you — is the matter of cost. Not whether the Dulcineas are "worth" \$6K+ (I suspect in today's market they may well be), but whether you're willing and able to part with this not-inconsiderable amount for this very considerable degree of performance.

With the Dulcineas rated at 91+ dB SPL sensitivity and a minimum power requirement of 10 wpc, a wide range of amplification alternatives — including a number of single-ended triode designs — become candidate partners. Unfortunately, my listening was limited to high power, solid-state units, so a comprehensive assessment of Dulcinea's proclivities and possibilities awaits the additional consideration of such (frankly, tantalizing) options. No matter the choice, the Dulcineas clearly deserve the very best, and they'll reward you with nary a night of mournful countenance if you so provide them.

In sum, throughout weeks of auditioning, I found it very difficult to listen to Rosinanté's Dulcineas, but I found it very easy — and very pleasurable — to listen *through* them. They do their job in workman-like fashion (albeit highly-paid workmen) — very effectively and without calling attention to themselves. If pipe organ or Japanese drums are the mainstay of your record collection, you may be tilting at windmills in seeking satisfaction from the Dulcineas. For the rest of us, the Dulcinea's all-around excellent performance and wondrous neutrality may be a fantasy made real.

NOTES

Rosinanté Dulcinea Monitors, \$6,200 including stands. Argent Audio Rosinanté, 602 Acorn Plaza, P.O. Box 612, Eudora, KS; 66025; vox 785/542-3922, email godasse@lawrence.ixkx.com; website www.roomlens.com.

Associated Equipment

Immedia turntable and arm, Grado cartridge, Sony CD player, Classé amplification, Dunlavy speakers, cables by Yamamura, Tara, Audiotruth, and Meitner, A/C accessories by Marigo and Monster.

Innersound Eros Electrostatic Speakers



I NEED NEW SPEAKERS. That's how it all started anyway. I have a pair of Magneplanar MG-3As, which are still satisfying musically, but which are also getting a little long in the tooth. So I called Wendell Diller, the reviewer wrangler at Magneplanar. "No, sorry," said Wendell, "we are so back ordered on our MG-3.6Rs that we haven't been able to ship a pair to a reviewer in over a year." I was crestfallen. I really wanted a new pair of 3.6s, and frankly, nothing in the way of cone speakers thrilled me at all — at least none with prices lower than the stickers on new cars, anyway.

No, there just wasn't anything in the four to six kilobuck price range that interested me. Recently, I had been to a "dog-and-pony" show, put on by Gayle Sanders of Martin-Logan, to promote his new Prodigy hybrid electrostatics, and I wasn't particularly impressed. I thought that the electrostatic panels and the cone woofer had little in common with one another, as if I was listening to two different and disparate speaker systems playing together. So, when I saw an ad for Innersound's Eros hybrids, I was interested but somewhat reluctant to call.

However call I did, and spoke with Roger Sanders (no relation to M-L's Gayle), founder and head cheese at Innersound. Yes, he would love to have his amplifierless version of the Eros reviewed, and yes, he would send along a pair post haste.

One morning, a few weeks later, a big 18-wheeler pulled up outside of my door (no mean feat, as I live on a private drive hardly wide enough for a car, much less

a big interstate truck) and disgorged two huge boxes from Georgia. Calling a friend over, we horsed the huge boxes into the house and got them unpacked. Inside was a pair of electrostatic speakers, which looked enough like Martin-Logans to actually be considered kissin' cousins. Closer inspection, however, showed that as much as the M-Ls and Eros looked alike, the resemblance pretty well stoped at the skin.

First of all, the Eros speakers have flat ES diaphragms, while the Martin-Logans all have curved diaphragms, the ability to make good, reliable curved ES diaphragms being what made Martin-Logan famous. Secondly, the 10-inch, front-firing woofer in the Eros is loaded into an eight-foot transmission line, while the M-L offerings are mostly some form of closed box. And lastly, the Eros crosses the woofer over to the electrostatic panel at 440 Hz (A4, the one just above middle C on the piano), while the Martin-Logan hybrids cross-over at a much lower frequency. Initially, such a high crossover point — right in the important and very often-used midrange area — had me very skeptical, but I tried not to make any pre-judgments based upon my own skepticism.

I plugged the speakers into the wall current (to energize the panels) using the supplied IEC cables and connected them up to my trusty VTL Deluxe 140 monoblocks, and let them play softly in the background for the better part of a week before doing any serious listening. When I finally got down to actually listening to the speakers, I was appalled! The bass was tubby and the top was almost nonexistent. The upper-octaves that were there were coarse and distorted sounding. This required a call to Roger Sanders. He told me that I had two problems: One was my amplifiers. Tubes don't like capacitive loads and electrostatic panels are simply *big* capacitors. At the higher frequencies, tube amps simply cannot produce enough current across the load to provide sufficient drive voltage. Thus, the speakers were

being given too little drive at higher frequencies, and even with the amps working full-tilt, they were likely in high-frequency clipping too much of the time. The second problem was that the flat panels of these speakers made them laser-like in their directivity. These speakers had to be listened-to on axis or the highs would go away. Sanders said that he designed them this way on purpose to reduce room interaction. "Think of them as a big pair of electrostatic headphones," he said. As for the bass, Innersound provides five-position switched EQ to help integrate the woofer with the panels, and this integration is room dependent.

"OK, there's work to be done, me lad," I said to myself. The first task was to fix the amplifier problem. I tried a pair of Denon POA6600A "Stasis" Class-A amps that I had on hand, but these amps, which I used successfully on the bass panels of my Maggies for years, sounded very poor driving the Eros speakers full-range (I'm still not sure why).

Then I had an idea. I've a friend who is a recording engineer. In his studio, he has a listening room with a pair of the huge multi-paneled Magneplanar Tympani IV speakers. He drives these speakers with a pair of Hafler "Trans-Nova" professional solid-state amplifiers built by Rockford Corporation. These amps have always impressed me. They are among the best-sounding solid-state amps I had ever heard. I remembered seeing an ad in one of the other U.S. audio magazines for a company named HCM Audio in Southern California. In their ad, they were selling refurbished Hafler Trans-Nova amps for ridiculous prices, so I called them. Yes, they had amps in stock and would send me a pair of Hafler P3000 (150 watts per channel) at \$399.00 each! So I ordered two. When they arrived, I followed the instructions in the manual to bridge each together for 400 watts per channel. This gave me 800 watts to feed these hungry electrostatics. Just as I suspected and hoped would happen, the Haflers made the difference. Now supplied with plenty of clean power, the Eros speakers showed what they could do. And what they could do, was, under the right circumstances, really something.

Bass

The bass on these speakers is really authoritative, with good response well down into the mid-twenties. Even the pipe-organ fanatics among my audio acquaintances were hard pressed to find any fault with the bass extension in my room. The only flaw I found – and this is not a big one – was that the speakers sounded a bit heavy at about 60 Hertz. I could reduce this effect at any given volume with a single click of the bass level control on the back of the speakers, but a small upward turn of the volume control later would bring it back. And, there was really only one position of the bass control that gave the best integration of ES panel and woofer. Try as I might, I was unable to find any control position that got rid of this minor difficulty.

Discussions with the editor and with Roger Saunders didn't produce any definitive explanation as to what was going on here. I thought it might be distortion coming from the long excursion of the voicecoil, while Saunders felt it was probably a room effect. Saunders gave us an anechoic measurement that showed the system's only frequency response wiggles are in the region, so perhaps it's the exemplary smoothness in the rest of the range that makes these small up's and down's noticeable.

Midrange

As would be expected from an electrostatic system, the midrange on these speakers left little to want.

Brass, for example, sounded perfect. I've a number of those highly touted JVC XRCD jazz reissues from the '50s and '60s and one, Coleman Hawkins' *Good Old Broadway* (JVCXR-0035-2 from a 1962 Moodsville recording session), starts off with a very nice chart of "I talk to the Trees." When Hawkins' tenor sax comes in, it's as if he stepped into the room! Never have I heard a speaker disappear so completely. Only Major Holly's bass playing brings one back to earth here with that "one note" effect alluded to above. Piano, too, - was rendered beautifully real with *no hint* of the crossover between the woofer and the ES panels. One would expect piano to show any ill effects of this high crossover very plainly, but there's not a bit of it.

Highs

The high frequencies in this speaker are problematic for me, but not because of any failing of the speaker itself. On the contrary, under the right circumstances, the highs are mostly as good as any I've ever heard. I'd have to say that save for the Maggies' ribbon tweeter, they have no equal. But here's a deliberate design decision that can get in the way for some people. These are the most directional speakers that I have ever heard. They must be aimed *directly* at the (single) listener's ears in order for the soundstage to fully cohere. Even a slight move of the head is enough to kill the effect. The set-up procedure will illustrate my point. The

NOTES

Innersound Eros electrostatic speaker, \$3,995.00. InnerSound, Inc., 1700 Hwy. 16, Whiteburg, GA 30185, phone 770/838-1400, fax 770/838-0111, website www.innersound.net.

Associated Equipment

Pioneer Elite PD-75 CD player; Assemblage D2D-1 sampling-rate converter; Assemblage DAC-2.6 D/A converter; Otari DTR-8S DAT recorder; TASCAM CD-RW700 CD recorder; Otari MX-5050 half-track reel-to-reel analog recorder; Michell Gyrodeck SE Series II turntable; Audioquest PT-8 tonearm; Micro Benz Glider Mk-II phono cartridge; Audio Research SP9 Mk-II preamplifier; two VTL Deluxe 140, two Denon POA6600A "Stasis" Class-A, and two Hafler TransNova P-3000 power amplifiers; Magneplanar MG-3A loudspeakers with Yamaha YST-8W150 subwoofer crossed over at 60 Hz; two runs of Monster M-1 speaker cables, and Monster M-1000 and AudioQuest "Blue" interconnects.

speakers must be toed-in toward the listener so that he can see his head reflected directly in the center of each silvered diaphragm. Like the M-Ls, the Innersound Electrostatics have a large-pore metal screen covering the Mylar diaphragms. The diaphragms are similarly coated with a conductive material only a few atoms thick. This makes them transparent when backlit, and reflective from the front. When seated in *the* chair, the listener must adjust each speaker's angle so that his head can be seen centered in each diaphragm. I used a flashlight held on top of my head with one hand and pointed straight ahead directly between the right and left panels. When the beam was seen exactly in the same center spot on both panels, the speakers were aimed correctly. As long as you do not move your head from that position, these speakers will work their very considerable magic on you starting way-out in the ultrasonic region, all the way down to about 70 Hz.

Imaging and Soundstage.

The Eros speakers image beautifully, with a wide, deep soundstage. Images are pinpoint and do not

wander as long as your head does *not* wander either! Again, the speakers are very "beamy" and this effect becomes more pronounced with frequency. Close your eyes and point to the bell tree in the "Troika" of Prokofiev's "Lieutenant Kije Suite" (Ormandy/Philadelphia Orchestra, Columbia MS 6545). Move your head and the bells recede into the back of the orchestra by a mile.

Conclusion

Coming completely to grips with these speakers as a reviewer is difficult. On the one hand, they do so many important things better than other speakers I have heard, yet they have two problems that were very annoying to me. Sure, I admit the bass tubbiness is a relatively minor thing, and perhaps the powered subwoofer version doesn't suffer from it at all, but I sure wish this aspect wasn't there at all. I'd love to hear that Sanders had found something and fixed it for future production. The beaminess is another kettle of fish, because Sanders did that purposely (and he could have used curved screens, too, since after all, he holds most of the patents on the technology that M-L and others use

for theirs). He believes that room interaction is reduced considerably by use of a flat screen, and in this, he is, of course, correct. But this also makes these speakers a single-person speaker. When one is sitting in the sweet spot, sweet it is. But depending on how far you are off axis, the Eros becomes dull and lifeless with almost no soundstage.

Could I live with these niggles? Did I keep the speakers? Well, yes and no. I live alone, so the beaminess is merely an annoyance, not the big thing it might be if I had to share them with other listeners. The tubby bass I can also live with, because what the Eros speakers do well, they do better than most anything this reviewer has ever heard. Alas, however, personal problems, ones unrelated to the speakers' performance, have so far kept me from buying them outright, and it currently doesn't seem that I will be able to do the deal. But don't let my difficulties keep you from putting these remarkable Innersound transducers on your short list. The Eros systems are a lot of mostly great speaker for the money. As far as I'm concerned, they are a clear choice over M-L's highly touted Prodigy for less than half the cost of that speaker system.



Copulare

Sanibel Sound

presents the finest in European style and elegance

Aloia . Aliante . Audiomeca
AudioCarpet . Audio Tekne
Copulare . Ecosse . Piega

Visit us online to find a dealer near you

www.sanibelsound.com

(800)531-6886

Dealers interested in these products are encouraged to call. Territories are Available.



Piega

Audiomeca



Aloia





Jolida JD202A Integrated Amplifier

Mike Driscoll

SOMEONE, (I think it was Albert Einstein) once said that "everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler." A great many audiophiles these days seem to be taking that advice to heart, as integrated amplifiers have become more and more popular. The attraction is easy to understand; no worrying about matching preamp to amp, no expensive cables needed between the two pieces, and synergy between pre and power stages should be a given. There are also drawbacks to this approach, of course. One cannot try out different preamps, or power amps in a "mix-and-match" fashion, trying to find that last bit of magic. There is also a cost factor, or, at least there should be, since only one chassis and power supply are needed instead of two. As is usual with the "high end," however, this saving is not always passed along to the customer. As a result, many of the new integrateds are priced, if not in the stratosphere, (although some are,) at least high enough that the average non-audiophile music lover would never even

consider their purchase. Some though, like the subject of this review, maintain a price low enough that the non-audiophile could be tempted to listen. And if he (I'm not being sexist, it is usually a he purchasing audio gear.) listens to the Jolida JD202a, he might be tempted to buy. The Jolida is an integrated amplifier, using four EL34 pentodes (two per channel) to develop 40 watts per side, and has been written about, in quite glowing terms, on many of the audio internet sites. It has, over the last couple of years, acquired a sort of cult status among the "mod-kateer" brigade, sort of like the old Dynaco tube gear.

My unit had been used as a demo at Sound Unlimited in Bristol, CT, for an unspecified length of time, and seemed to be fully broken in by the time I received it. When starting up from cold, however, it does require a full half-hour or so to start sounding its best. As the unit has no phono stage, I mustered my venerable B+K Pro10mc Sonata pre-amp, which sports a very good

phono stage, hot-wired through the tape outs, to serve this function. My other equipment includes Mirage M3si loudspeakers, Dynaudio Audience 42 loudspeakers, Cal Audio Delta CD transport, MSB Link DAC, Phillips CDR760 CD recorder, VPI HW19jr turntable, AQ PT6 tonearm, Sumiko Blue Point Special cartridge, and an Apex Digital AD500B DVD player. (That's right, Apex! What do you want from me? I'm cheap!) Also scattered about the listening room are assorted tweaks, and "room tuning devices", both commercial and home made. Interconnects are by Kimber and JPS, Digital interconnect by McCormick, and speaker cable is Discovery 1,2,3, in bi-wire configuration. (I don't have a ribbon chair yet, though, I'm saving up.)

Fresh from the box, after warm-up, the unit sounded extremely nice, with a smooth midrange, and a detailed, but not overly "hot" high end. Bass was just a bit on the muddy side; that is to say, it could have been a bit tighter. After a few weeks of my listening to the amp,

the generic Chinese EL34's were swapped out, in favor of a set of Teslas, which, after a break-in period, improved the bass to a large degree, it was now much tighter, and seemed a bit more extended. Mids and highs also benefited from the tube change, mids now becoming lush, and, dare I say it, more "romantic" (Good lord, I'm starting to sound like J-10! If I begin to talk about caramel colorations, somebody please shoot me!) The balance of my listening for this review was done using the Teslas.

I'll get the bad part out of the way first, as there is so much to say that is good, indeed. After a month or so of use, the source selector control developed a dead spot which required me to jiggle it around a bit in order to get both channels working each time I changed sources. The amp was shipped back to Jolida, the control was changed, and the unit has given no further problems in any way. The service took about two weeks, and they also replaced one of the EL34's, which they said was going bad. (And which I didn't know, or care about, as I had been using the Teslas.) Now on to the good stuff!

On one of my favorite LPs, The Cowboy Junkies *Trinity Sessions*, the atmosphere of the church where the recording was made was palpable through the Jolida, as reflected sounds from the farthest reaches of the church could be heard clearly, as well as could Michael Timmons (at least I think it's Michael,) counting time just before the start of "Misguided Angel." Oh yes, you could hear that infernal air-conditioning duct also. The Grateful Dead's *Reckoning* is another one of those rare rock recordings, which, like *Trinity*, is a recording of very high sound quality. With the JD202a, the positions of the musicians on the stage could be heard precisely, thus adding to the realism of the listening experience for all of us aging deadheads who remember fondly hearing the band perform live. The attack of the strings on Jerry Garcias' acoustic guitar was crisp and lifelike, the all important midrange was wonderful, detailed and musical. (I have a question about this album for all the Deadheads out there. Does anyone know why this album was released

under the title of *Reckoning* as well as *For the Faithful*? If anyone knows, please tell me, I've always wondered about that.)

All that jazz about "tube magic" is for real! I was, at first, a bit concerned that the Jolida wouldn't be

With a relaxed sound and easy use (though being tube-based), this amp makes going high-end easy.

able to drive my 86-db SPL sensitive Mirages to a satisfying level. Using the 4-ohm taps, however (the speakers are 6 ohms nominal), volume levels could be achieved far beyond anything at which I, at least, would ever want to listen. It was possible to get the amp to clip on my favorite "torture test," Saint-Saens' *Organ Symphony*. This was, however, at a far louder volume level than that at which I would ever subject my ears to in normal listening.

Jolida is an American company, which, for cost considerations, manufactures in China. (At this price, you can't have everything!) Fit and finish is excellent, however. In addition to the EL34s, the tube complement consists of two 12ax7s (pre-amp,) and two 12at7s (drivers,) all tubes prominently on display atop the open chassis. The power supply transformer and two output transformers bring up the rear, making the Jolida distinctly back heavy. The chassis is finished in a satin black, and the front of the unit sports a brushed silver faceplate with all the controls on it; power, volume, and source, that's all, folks, this is a Spartan amplifier if ever there was one. There are four inputs, labeled *Tuner, Tape, CD, and AUX*, no balance control, no tape outputs, and no monitor circuit. The audio potentiometer is said to be either an Alps or Panasonic, but which isn't specified in the manual, and all input jacks and speaker connections are gold plated. Never having owned a tube amplifier before, I was concerned about the biasing procedure, but the manual explains this in detail, and it went without a hitch. It could be made a bit easier, however, as you must turn the unit over on its back and access the terminals and potentiometers from

beneath. There are no meters of any sort on the amplifier, so you must borrow or purchase a digital multimeter in order to perform biasing. Radio Shack had one for about \$40. (I needed one anyway.) Once the bias was set, the only time it needed readjustment was after the Tesla tubes were installed; otherwise, it remained steady with no drift. If you have been scared away from tubes by all those stories you may have heard, about how much trouble tubes can be, you need have no worries here.

In reviewing the Dynaudio Audience 42 loudspeakers for TAV, I used the Jolida extensively, and found the pair to be, as written in that review, "a match made in heaven." The fact that the Jolida costs only \$750.00 and the Dynaudios \$700.00, means that one can put together a truly wonderful sounding system for under \$2,000.00, which I think is about the upper limit that non-audiophiles want to spend on an audio system. For this money, they would have a system that would provide far better than mid-fi sound for the long term. It might even serve as a springboard into the wonderful world of audiophilia. Of course, it probably would take a really good salesman to convince most "civilians" to forgo 5.1 home theater for "old-fashioned" stereo, which is a real shame.

Whether playing CDs, LPs, or music DVDs, the little Jolida was far more musically involving than most solid-state components at anywhere near its price range. I found myself listening far into the night, playing disc after disc, LP after LP, with no awareness of the passage of time. Comparing the CD and LP versions of *The Traveling Wilburys, Vol. 1*, it was easy to discern differences between the two formats. Bob Dylan's voice on "Dirty World," for example, had an unpleasant edge to it on the CD, an edge that just wasn't there on the LP version, the LP sounding smoother, cleaner, and just more musical. The LP version of *Muddy Waters, Folk Singer*, revealed an absolutely huge space around and behind Muddy, his voice reverberating off the walls of the studio. It is a real shame that our "average music lover" will probably never get to hear sound reproduction of this quality, convinced as he

is, that the stuff on display at "Circus City" is the best available or is at least as good as he needs.

On some equipment, the newest release by Karl Shiflett and The Big Country Show, *In Full Color*, has a tendency to sound harsh and edgy. I first experienced this phenomenon at The Festival of Sound and Vision in Montreal, last February. It seems that some combinations of equipment make the disc sound very unpleasant. Using either the Mirages or the Dynaudios, I have never experienced this in my listening room with the Jolida as amplification. Whether the CD is actually harsh and the Jolida is "editorializing," or the CD is fine and the fault lies with the other rooms and equipment, I can't say. The JD202a revealed the harshness on the Wilburys CD, as well as allowing the harsh "digititis" of Ry Cooder's infamous *Bop 'Till You Drop* (the first all digitally recorded and mastered CD) to rear its ugly head, so I suspect it is the Jolida that is telling the truth here.

A few months ago, I brought the Jolida to the home of an audio buddy, "Yee-Ha" Wayne. He uses a pair of Reference 3a loudspeakers, an Audible Illusions Modulus3a preamp, and a pair of R.E. Designs monoblock amps. After we replaced the pre-power combo with the JD202a and allowed for a half hour warm-up time, we began to listen. He and I both agreed that the sonic signature of the Jolida was very similar to that of his far more expensive separates. The JD202a was a bit more "laid back," with a more recessed soundstage, slightly "woollier" bass, and a bit less detail, but tonally, there was less difference between them than I would have expected, particularly in the all-important midrange. On most music, I actually preferred the Jolida's more relaxed and recessed presentation, as Wayne's system always seemed to me to be a bit "in your face." (Sorry, guy!)

Don't get me wrong here, the Jolida won't give you that last little bit of presence and detail that only far more sophisticated and expensive amplifiers will. That last "veil" as audio writers are prone to say, won't be lifted, revealing only the original performance, but what do you expect for seven hundred fifty

If you take price into consideration, Jolida's JD202a integrated amp is an incredible bargain.

bucks? A very good solid-state amplifier, one that has recently received excellent reviews in some of the audio journals, also lives in my listening room. This is a fairly high powered (150 watts per channel) yet relatively inexpensive amplifier, which, in concert with a suitable preamp, would still cost more than twice as much as the JD202a. I find myself preferring to listen to the Jolida instead. In comparison, the JD202a's bass is not as tight, deep, or well-controlled as with the solid-state amp, and there are times when, for the sake of dynamics, I would prefer more power than the two EL34s per side in the Jolida can provide. When all is said and done, however, my preference is still for the JD202a. Why? That is a very good question. I am aware that even though tubes produce more even-order harmonics, which are consonant with music, than transistors, most of these are canceled when tubes are used in a push-pull configuration. So if it's not harmonics, what then? Beats me. All I can say here is that the JD202a just sounds amazingly musical.

As mentioned earlier, there are many modifications for this amplifier floating around on the web. Some of these convert the amplifier to triode operation, while dropping the rated power to 20 watts, specify

higher-grade resistors and capacitors, or reduce the amount of feedback used. While any modification would void the maker's one-year warranty, and I cannot personally vouch for the wisdom, or lack thereof, of modifying the unit, if you are so inclined, the possibility is there. Just don't go holding me responsible, OK? I haven't decided yet whether or not I will attempt to modify my unit. Twenty watts may not be enough power to drive my Mirages to an adequate level, and I believe that pentodes don't sound their best when wired as triodes. It is possible, however, that some

resistor and capacitor upgrades could be worthwhile. If I were to offer any suggestions to the manufacturer for changes, adding a tape monitor loop and perhaps preamp out jacks would be nice. These would raise the price a bit, but would be worthwhile additions. A version of this amplifier with a (tube) phono preamp built in might be something to consider also, or if not a built in stage, how about a matching stand-alone, tube-based phono preamp?

When one takes the price into consideration, the JD202a is an incredible bargain. It provides a healthy dose of "tube magic," while being "user friendly" enough for those who may be a bit skittish over the idea of tubes. It is easy to live with, seems extremely reliable, and provides "audiophile quality" sound at a bargain price. It's a great choice for a second system, possibly in a den, rec room, or a vacation cottage. It is also more than suitable in a primary system for audiophiles who may be tired of the equipment race (keeping up with the Skulls?) and the cost and just want to get back to listening to music instead of equipment. This little Jolida is also a great choice for those looking for a basic unit for modification, and also, of course, would be a no-brainer as a recommendation when those non-audiophile friends ask, "What sort of unit can I buy to replace my 20-year-old Sansui receiver? I want something really good, but don't want to spend a lot of money."

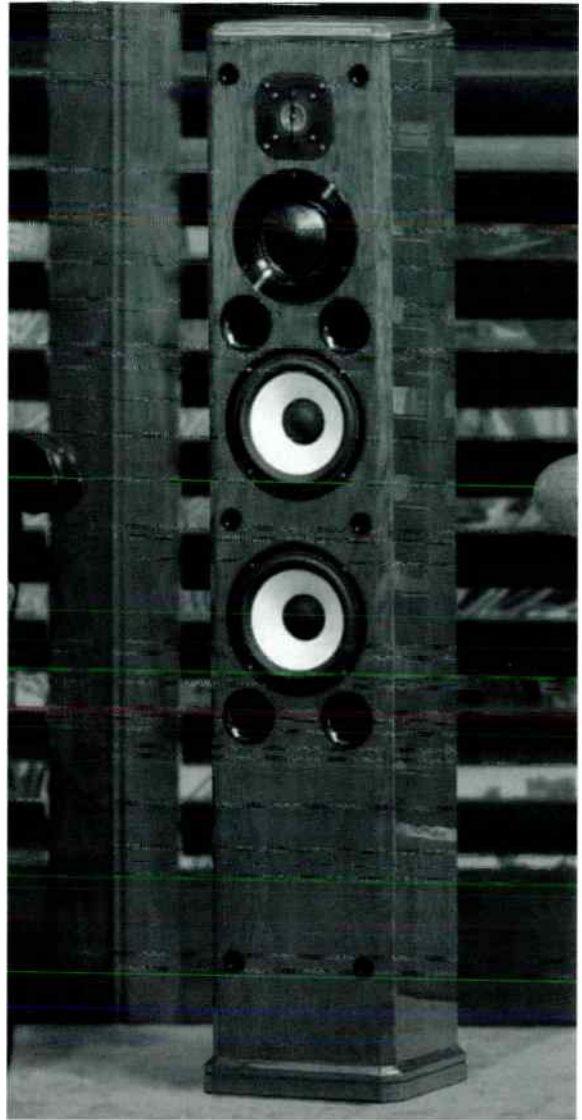
Questions like this are an opportunity, fellow audiophiles! Spread the faith!

N O T E S

Jolida JD202a Integrated Amplifier, \$750.00. Jolida, 10820 Guilford Rd., Annapolis Junction, MD 20701; vox 301/953-2014; fax 301/498-0554, e-mail jolidacorp@msn.com.

Induction Dynamics S1T Tower Speakers

James T. Frane



CAN YOU SAY Induction Dynamics S1T Tower speakers quickly three times? It's a long name, but it specifically differentiates the design from the other speakers in the ID line-up.

The slender S1T towers I received were beautifully finished in highly polished rosewood veneer on all surfaces, including the bottom. That may not have made them sound any better, but it showed a commitment to fine craftsmanship. With other choices of black finish, cherry or maple veneers, as well as custom finishes, the speakers should blend in with a variety of decors.

The front edges of the cabinet were beveled to help limit diffraction effects and this also softened their appearance.

The removable grilles use expanded aluminum frames which are covered by black double-knit cloth. The holes in the frames seemed to do their job of mitigating sound reflections that could be present with a solid frame material. Each grille had six posts that fit into matching sockets located in the front baffle.

The four drivers in each tower are mounted on the front baffle centerline, one above the other. They

were, from top to bottom: a 1-1/8 inch inverted titanium dome tweeter with a phase plug, a 3-inch soft dome midrange and two 6 1/2-inch Kevlar cone woofers. There were four 1 1/2-inch diameter ports with curved tubes extending into the enclosure. The first pair of ports was above the top woofer and the second two below the bottom woofer. All of the enclosure surfaces were solid and I could not feel any vibration when the speakers were in use. The large, gold-plated binding posts accepted banana plugs and up to two gauge wire. They were spaced 1-5/8 inches on center, and so, will

not permit the use of dual banana plugs, which are 3/4 inch center-to-center. This may be important only to those folks who make frequent changes, such as reviewers. These posts were among the heftiest I've encountered. Each 3/4-inch diameter nut had three semi-circular depressions in the circumference for a good grip, making them easy to tighten.

The crossover design (which determines which frequencies are routed to which drivers) is of some note. It is covered by two patents (5,568,560 and 5,937,072) the second of which improves upon the first. The technically minded may enjoy reading these patents (at least the summary sections); they are accessible on the U.S. Patent Office website at www.uspto.gov. The patents describe the interconnection of two inductors and two capacitors to "attenuate frequencies [outside the desired range] at a rate of 30 dB/octave or greater." They reach an attenuation rate of 30 dB/octave in less than half an octave. The crossover enables very precisely limiting the frequencies fed to a driver so that it operates only in the range of frequencies where its performance is best.

The eight-page owners' manual covered the S1 and S1T speakers, and provided instructions for unpacking, care, installation, mating with a subwoofer, and use in two-channel and surround systems. It also makes cable size vs. length recommendations, addresses customer service questions, lists specifications, and spells out terms of the firm's seven-year warranty. Experimenting with location and toe-in to arrive at the best speaker position for a given room was recommended in the manual.

Positioning

I initially located the Towers 9 1/2 feet apart and about 9 feet from the listening position. After moving them around, I settled on 8 1/2 feet apart, 9 feet from the listening position, 5 feet from the nearest side wall, and 4 feet from the wall behind them. Differences were slight, but the latter position gave a more solid center image. Most of the review was done without the subwoofers in use.

With the speakers aimed at my listening position, I played the

Chesky Records' Jazz Sampler Vol. 1 (Chesky JD37). The disc's "Left-Right Imaging Test" voice locations were all in the proper positions (center, midway between center and speaker, at speaker, and beyond speaker, first on the right

The S1T tower speakers allow you to simply become lost in the music, to just sit back and enjoy.

side, then left). There was some diffuseness at the beyond-speaker locations, as there has been with most speakers. On the CD's "Listening Environment Diagnostic Recording" (LEDR), the "Up" sound went straight up just to the insides of the speaker locations. "Over" arched about three feet above the speakers and "Lateral" panned straight across. The depth tests, where a voice and a tambourine move successively farther away from the microphone, were quite credible.

Many of the live performances I've attended over the past couple of years have been classical orchestra. With a good recording, such as Byron Janis with the Moscow Radio Symphony playing Liszt (Mercury / Phillips 432002-2), the Towers put the listener center hall. The three dimensionality of the performance spread beyond the speakers at about eye level and dynamics were portrayed without strain. All of the instrument sections were properly located, and the blending of the orchestra was realistic, as were detail and tone.

Male voices were natural as on Jim Croce's *Life And Times LP* (ABC Records ABCX-769). The Towers reproduced the mid- to high-frequency background detail that is not audible on all speakers. Nat "King" Cole's "Magic Moment" and "Make It Last" from the LP *Thank You, Pretty Baby* (Capitol ST 2759) had great detail, ranging from the wide and deep orchestra, the backup singers, to his extraordinary voice. The title song even had some of the instruments beyond the outside of the speakers. There was no chestiness or other artifacts associated with male voices, even with radio announcers.

Female voices, such as on *The Best Of Julie London* (Rhino CD R270737), sounded very natural, with no emphasis of sibilance. The orchestra spread out behind her, extending slightly beyond the confines of the speakers. Judy Collins' *In My Life* (Elektra/Asylum 74027-2) was captivating and multi-dimensional. Her voice was realistic, set far back on the stage. Instruments were forward to each side, and extended well beyond the outsides of the speakers.

The Towers seemed to be at home with all types of recordings. I enjoyed listening to jazz combos, '50s and '60s rock and roll, big bands, and orchestras. I think the Towers accurately reproduced what the recording engineer intended. Bert Kaempfert's *Blue Midnight LP* (Decca DL 74569) had a wide and deep orchestra and particularly beautiful trumpet tone. The Dave Brubeck Quartet's *Anything Goes LP* (Columbia PC 9402) specifically located the performers and their front to back and lateral relationships. "Like Someone in Love" from *Duo* by Hank Jones and Red Mitchell (Timeless/Musical Heritage 513345Y) had great depth and detail, with accurate tonal balance. The bass was stage left and the piano just to stage right of center. Percussive strikes and string plucks were well defined. The sounds never wandered with frequency.

Conclusion

Part of the difficulty with reviewing really good products, such as these Induction Dynamics S1T Tower speakers, is reminding one's self to analyze the details so as to impart information. It's so easy to just enjoy the music instead — perhaps the best compliment for audio equipment. The depth and width of the presentation add significantly to the listening enjoyment. Dynamics (no pun intended) were handled very well, with no strain and the extended highs had no hint of harshness. I listened for hours at a time without fatigue. Coupled with correct timbre and seamless integration of the drivers and ports, the whole is greater than the sum of these parts. In comparison to my Mach 1 speakers, there were many more similarities than differences. Although both had measurable out-

put down to 25 Hz, the Towers had 2 to 3 dB higher output below 100 Hz and 3 to 5 dB less from 1 to 10 kHz — above that they both gradually sloped downward to 20 kHz. Output was exactly the same at 100 Hz, 1 kHz and within 1 dB at 20 kHz, with the Towers having a slight sensitivity edge. Sound dispersion was similar (they are both slender, front-firing enclosures).

These Induction Dynamics speakers were beautiful to look at (especially with grilles on) and beautiful to listen to. With grilles off, they have a definite high-tech look that is a bit on the busy side with four ports and four drivers (two with yellow cones). The gorgeous veneer continues on the front baffle, so these openings and drivers have a great visual background. I found the sound to be slightly freer and more open with the grilles removed. The sound from drivers and ports blended into a coherent source.

Although the Towers were down only 3 dB at 25 Hz, they benefited slightly from the addition of the

NHT subwoofers, which I found easy to integrate. The music all sounded like it came from the main speakers. Induction Dynamics makes a good performing powered subwoofer (reviewed in Vol. 7, No. 1), which I would expect to blend quite well with the Towers. They were the right height to project an eye-level stage.

The Induction Dynamics Tower speakers are not inexpensive, and they will not be for everyone's pocketbook. They do a superb job of reproducing the nuances and the wide scale presentations of good recordings. They will also let you know when the recording is lacking or whether your room or your equipment may be in need of improvement. Most importantly, one can sit back and become lost in the music. That's what an audio system is all about. If you have the opportunity to hear them, I'd suggest you do so, as they do a superior job of music reproduction. They sound as good as they look, which is very, very good.

NOTES

Induction Dynamics Model 51T three-way tower loudspeaker, \$6,995.00 per pair. Induction Dynamics, 8650 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210; vox 913/663-9770, fax 913/663-9790; e-mail sales@inductiondynamics.com, website, www.inductiondynamics.com. Crossover, exclusive, patented S4X driver-control technology; crossover frequencies (Hz), 700 and 3800 Hz; nominal impedance, 8 ohms; frequency response, 55 Hz to 30 kHz; sensitivity for 1 watt (2.83 volts) at 1 meter, 91 dB SPL; drivers: tweeter, 1-1/8-inch inverted titanium dome with phase control; midrange, 3-inch soft dome; woofer, two 6½-inch Kevlar cones with cast frames and rubber surrounds; enclosure, vented with magnetic shielding; grille, cloth covered, non-reflective perforated aluminum alloy, cloth available in 63 colors; dimensions: 45-1/8 inches high, 8½ inches wide, 8 inches deep; net weight, 53 lb.; warranty: Seven-year factory warranty

My stereo system comprises a Parasound HCA-1000A power amplifier and Bryston BP25 preamp. Other speakers were Mach One model M-Two 2-way supported on a pair of 22-inch tall oak and steel stands. A pair of NHT SW3 subwoofers, placed asymmetrically, (when used — see text) were run in dual mono and separately driven by an NHT SA-3 power amplifier with integral electronic crossover. The M-Twos were run full range, as were the Towers. Interconnect cables were by Mach 1, Gotham, WireWorld, and Monster Cable. Speaker cables were Mach 1 to the NHTs and Kimber 4PR alternated with parallel runs of multiple sets of twisted pair cables to the main speakers (measured frequency response was exactly the same with both sets of cables). Sources were a Sony CDP-XA20ES CD player, a Denon TU-767 tuner, and a Thorens TD320 Mark III turntable with Sumiko Blue Point cartridge.

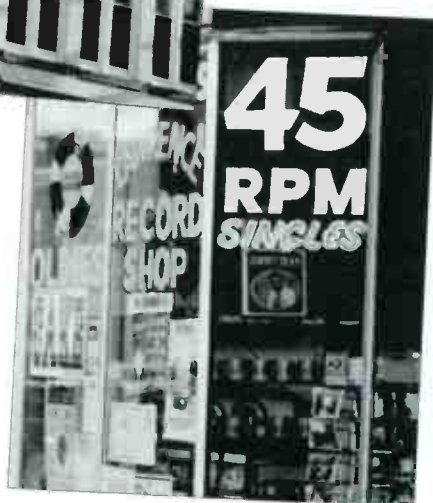
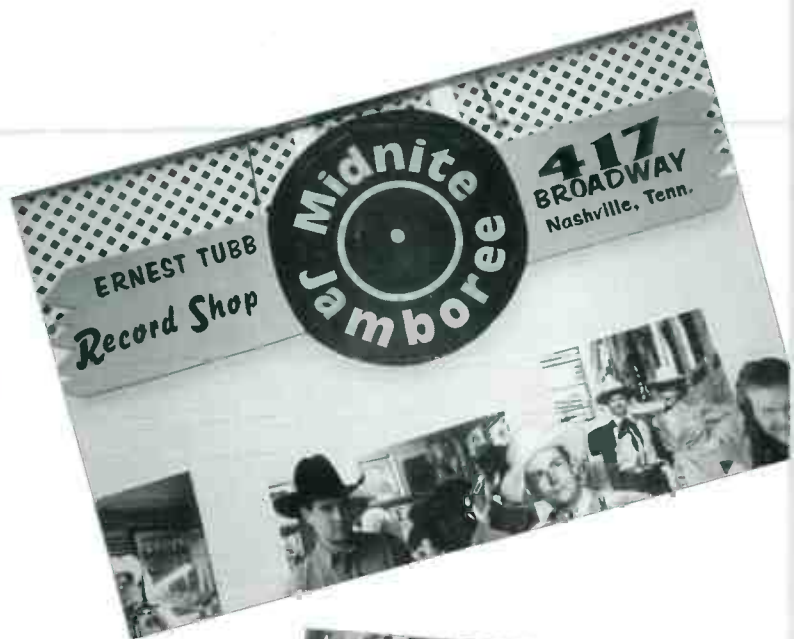
Ad Index

Alpha-Core	Cover III
Argent	45
Art Audio	35
Atma-Sphere	39
AudioStream	1
Boston Audio Society	54
Bryston	25
Buggtussel	4
Dynaudio	5
Hi-Fi Farm	7
Hsu Research	8
Immedia	22
Induction Dynamics	3
Kimber	Cover II
Legend	39
Linn	9
May Audio Marketing	36
NBS	Insert 16-17
Paradigm	1
Parts Express	4
Pass	31
Placette	43
Purist	11
Roksan	35
Sanibel	57
Simaudio	26
Thiel	Cover IV
Totem Acoustic	19
Zu Cable	21

Did You Know?

Len Schneider won \$25 for getting me to laugh at the idea that he considers a concert hall a nuisance which intervenes between instrument and ear.

BACK PAGE



Photos Never Lie!

Music City ...

Downtown Nashville, Tennessee, has long been known by the nickname Music City, U.S.A. Even a casual look at these snapshots will tell you why — of a fading sign on wall, the record store advertised by the sign, a bar that gets a high Decor Score from me, and a record shop, Ernest's Own ... or so it appears.

This month, the winner of the Back Page prize of \$25.00 or a one-year subscription is Arnie Goodman, guru of Blue Storm Music. Check out our review of Scott Holt's Angels in Exile on Blue Storm in this issue. Let us publish your photo and it will earn you \$25.00 or a one-year subscription.

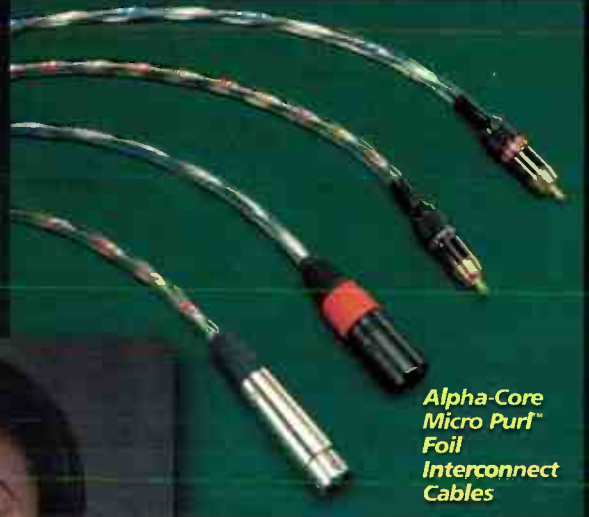
Sorry, we cannot return unused photos unless they are sent with a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Send your pix to: The Editor, The Audiophile Voice, 215 Glenridge Ave., Purgatory Level, Montclair, NJ 07042.

Dawn in Paradise

GOERTZ

**Original
Goertz
Speaker Cable
System**



**Alpha-Core
Micro Purl™
Foil
Interconnect
Cables**

"WOW!!! The Micro Purl AG and Triode Quartz 2 are just plain AWESOME in 110 foot tall, flaming letters!!! I never dreamed interconnects could make as much improvement as (or more so than) a component upgrade. Wow guys... yōū dōñē good!!!"

Charles Stuckey July 20, 2001

Python

Boa AG

**Micro
Purl**

TQ2

"I just installed your Micro Purl interconnects between my CD player and headphone amp, and my system never sounded so good. No coloration or distortion, only an unforced, natural presentation within a three dimensional soundstage. All this from interconnects which cost far less than some of the well known brands I've tried."

Paul Bubny July 6, 2001

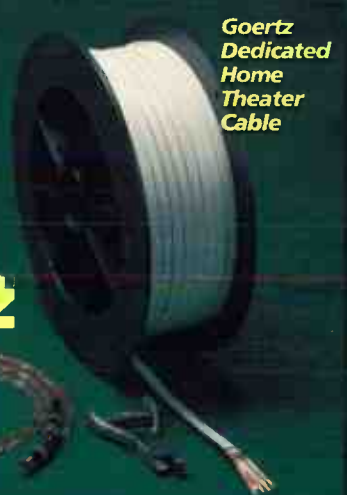
and the newest member of the family...

Alpha-Core BP30

**A true balanced
Symmetrical Power System
by Dick Sequerra**



1000 Watts
8 Outputs
Toroidal, balanced
Isolation transformer
Electrostatic shield



**Goertz
Dedicated
Home
Theater
Cable**

GOERTZ



Alpha-Core, Inc.

915 Pembroke Street • Bridgeport, CT 06608 • 800 836-5920 • (203) 335-6805 • FAX (203) 384-8120 • www.alphacore.com

MADE IN U.S.A. • PATENTED WORLDWIDE • Feb. 28, 1995 U.S. Patent 5,393,933 Goertz Speaker Cable • May 1, 2001 U.S. Patent 6,225,563 Micro Purl, TQ2

World Radio History

“...extraordinary”

—Tom Müller, *The Perfect Vision*,
Issue 33, November/December 2000



The Revolutionary THIEL
PowerPoint™
Surface-Mount
Loudspeaker

***“The single most extraordinary
—the best—home theater product I
have encountered...I have never
encountered a product that so
completely met a need as the
PowerPoints meet the needs of high
performance home-theater.”***

—Tom Müller, *The Perfect Vision*, Issue 33,
November/December 2000

***“...Thiel has created the first on-wall
speaker that produces real stereo
sound with all the depth, imaging,
and soundstaging that stereo can
produce.”***

—Brent Butterworth, *Home Theater*, May 2000

- Extraordinary uniform, full-room coverage due to unique, angled, close-boundary cabinet design.
- Extraordinary imaging, space and depth reproduction due to greatly diminished boundary reflections in combination with THIEL's trademark phase and time coherence.
- Extraordinary clarity and detail provided by innovative, low distortion, state-of-the-art drivers and very high quality electrical components—uses the same tweeter as our flagship model CS7.2.
- Extraordinary dynamics achieved by state-of-the-art drivers and high (89dB/2.8v-m) sensitivity.
- Extraordinarily faithful tonal balance achieved through advanced driver and crossover design.

Editor's Choice Award 2001 Winner!

—*The Perfect Vision*/Awarded by Tom Müller

THIEL

Ultimate Performance Loudspeakers

Contact THIEL for our free 44 page brochure, review reprints, and the name of your nearest THIEL dealer.

THIEL • 1026 Nandino Boulevard, Lexington, Kentucky, 40511 • telephone: 859-254-9427

e-mail: mail@thielaudio.com • web: www.thielaudio.com