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Audio Audio



no. 92 small speakers nov. 2018



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- Jeff Dorgay, Tone Audio

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"Undeniably stellar ... Yes, it does deliver the sort of performance previously delivered only by cost-no-object speakers." - Dennis Burger, Home Theater Review

The Triton Reference is an evolution of everything that we have achieved with the Triton One, but taken to a stunning new level of sonic performance and sophisticated visual design. All the components in the T Ref: including larger, more powerful, active subbass drivers with huge "Focused Field" magnet structures, upperbass/midrange drivers with "Focused Field" magnet structures, and High-Velocity Folded Ribbon tweeter with 50% more rare earth neodymium magnet material, are brand new, and have been specifically developed for use in the Reference. The powerful 1800 watt subwoofer amplifier, with level control to fine tune the bass to your room, and 56-bit DSP control unit are a significant evolution of those in the Triton One and our SuperSubs.

There are a myriad of other significant upgrades and refinements, including: new internal wiring with a specially developed twist, further development of our signature balanced crossover including

film capacitors bridged across the high-pass section on the upperbass/midrange drivers, a unique proprietary mix of long-fiber lamb's wool and Dacron for more effective internal damping, intensive work with a high-resolution accelerometer to determine the most effective implementation of complex internal bracing, a 3/32"-thick steel plate built into the medite base to further stiffen it for increased stability, new stainless steel floor spikes and cups, all of which results in higher resolution of subtle details ... and the list goes on and on.

"The Triton Reference presents a serious challenge to speakers in the multi \$10K range"

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Visually, the Reference offers a strikingly beautiful upgrade to the classic Triton styling, with a gorgeous hand-rubbed piano gloss-black lacquer finished one-piece monocoque cabinet. Sleek, statuesque and refined, the Reference is simply an elegantly gorgeous statement piece that will excite listeners with its dynamic visual presence, as

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In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

Fat Boys - Lie-Z

Two things woefully absent from this years Rocky Mountain Audio Fest: Hip-Hop and cassettes. (though reel to reel had a strong showing)

1. LIE-Z (12" LIE) (5:13) 2. LIE-Z (7" LIE) (4:25) 3. LIE-Z (DUB) (5:13)

1989 PolyGram Records, Inc.

What better way to revisit the days of Yo! MTV Raps than with the Fat Boys on cassette? A great way to start the issue, or any day, for that matter.



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THE NEW 600 SERIES

Bowers & Wilkins

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Ok, so this one's not a small speaker. But those vintage, off white JBL's were just staring at me and I had to take the picture.

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Cover:

Many would say that the tiny BBC monitor, the LS3/5 and LS3/5a were the first compact, high performance speakers.

Designed for mobile recording use, they quickly caught on as an audiophile speaker of choice, and to this day, preferred by music lovers the world over.

Here we have the Graham Audio version, though there are many to choose from!







"Excellent depth and rich tonal characterization of orchestral instruments"

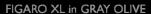
Andrew Quint, The Absolute Sound RMAF 2018

"Unanticipated ability to reveal honest instrumental textures, realistic weight, significant impact, and accurate body."

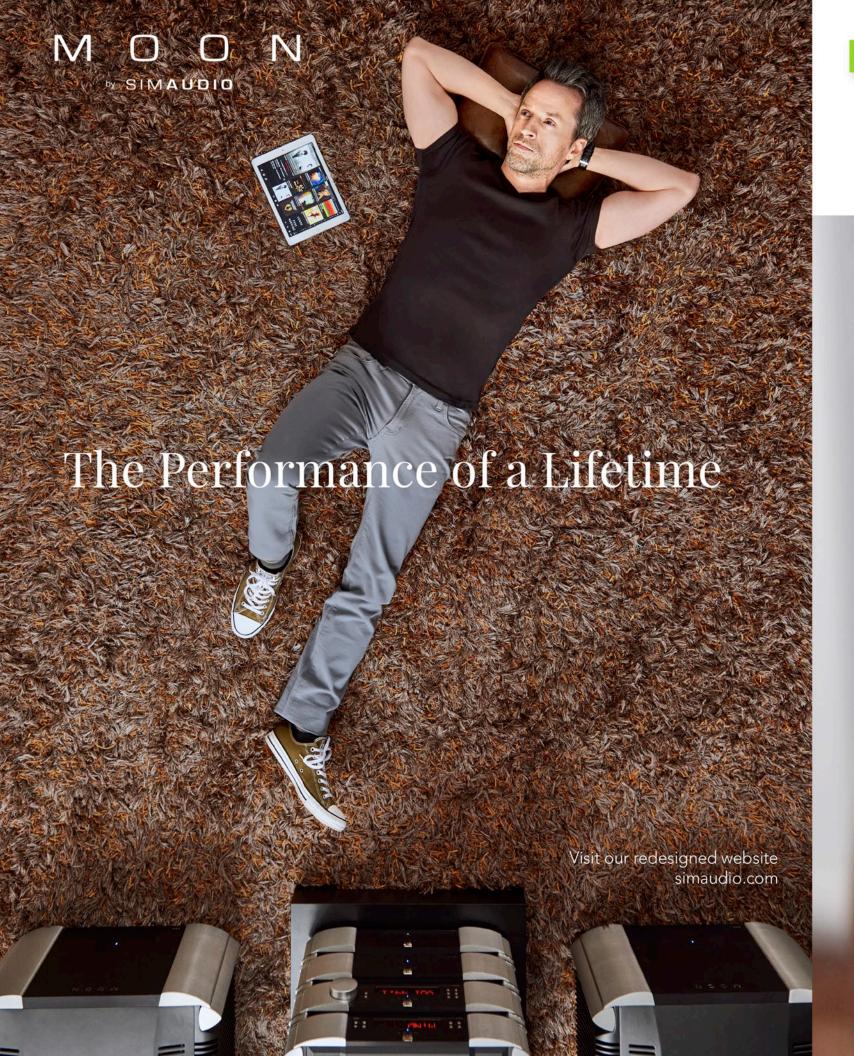
Greg Weaver, EnjoyTheMusic.com RMAF 2018

"Its my take home speaker, I 've never heard anything like this in this show..."

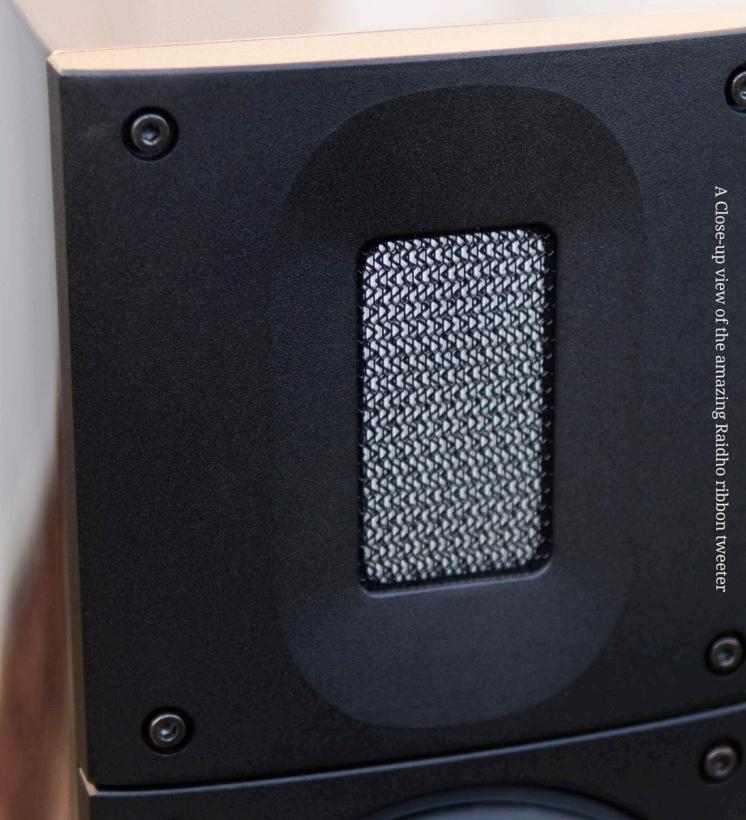
Peter Breuninger Terry Eringi, Avshowrooms, RMAF 2018







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Darryl Wilkinson, Sound & Vision

















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no.92

Publishers Letter

This year's Rocky Mountain Audio Fest was not as packed as in years past, no doubt in part to there being so many hifi shows going on. Back when we launched *TONE* at RMAF in 2005, it was packed to the rafters all three days. Most people couldn't get into CES, so this was the only consumer show in the US.

But with this came an easier vibe than in any of the years past. There was a better mix of new and old attendees, and a few more people bravely stepping out of the "audiophile approved" playlists. "Keith Don't Go" isn't quite dead yet but it did fade dramatically this year.

With the show finely tuned and over the construction maladies plaguing the last two years at the Tech Center Marriot well in the rear view mirror, she's jumping off a cliff again to move the show to a new venue for 2019. Staying in the Mariott franchise, the show will now be a mere 10 minutes from the Denver airport at the new Gaylord Rockies Resort. This certainly will make getting back and forth easier.

Along with an easier vibe amongst the attendees, there also seemed to be a much more relaxed attitude between those of us called upon to report on this wacky industry of ours. As Angela Cardas quipped over a beer with John Darko and I, "why don't you guys all get along better?"

In the spirit of this move towards a bit more détente between us, former *Stereophile* editor, and now publisher of Twittering Machines, (twitteringmachines.com) Michael Lavorgna was zooming around the show taking pictures of manufacturers and fellow industry colleagues with a vintage Polaroid camera. He was kind enough to share the photo he took of me, above. Rafe Arnott, now of *Stereophile* (www.stereophile.com) and I discussed a summer road trip, and Enjoy the Music's (www.enjoythemusic.com) Steve Rochlin was the seminar and party master supreme, hosting all of the seminars as well as the first night gala, picking up the bar tab for everyone.

Considering the strange times that we find ourselves living these days, it was lovely to see everyone just play nice together. Here's to that trend continuing.

As for this issue, we continue with our concept album series, and present an entire issue of compact speakers. And what better speaker to put on the cover than the LS3/5a — the world's first real compact monitor. This time, reimagined by Graham Audio, a fully licensed BBC model. However, if the BBC sound isn't to your liking, we've got some other fun flavors for you to sample.

If you're living in a smaller space, we hope this will present some possibilities to consider.

Thanks again for reading,



Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into

Steve Perry -Traces

Greta Van Fleet - From the Fires

Queen - The Platinum Collection

Queen - Greatest Hits

Atreyu - In Our Wake

Fleetwood Mac - Greatest Hits

Look Now (Deluxe Edition) -Elvis Costello & The Impostors

Journey - Greatest Hits

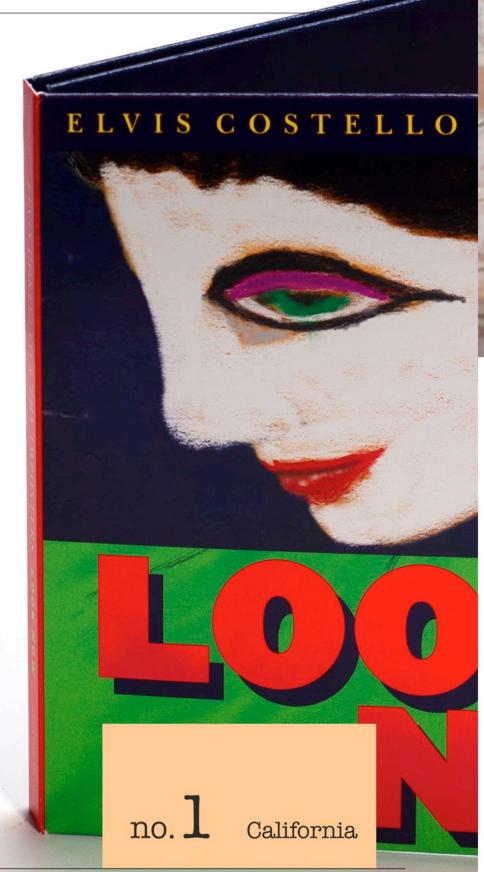
The Eagles - Greatest Hits 1971-1975

CCR - Chronicle: Their 20 Greatest Hits

This issues' playlist begins with some of Pete Thomas' (former drummer for Elvis Costello's Attractions...) favorite albums.

Someone's got a lot of hit tracks on their phone.

And there's a nod to his old band mate as well. (Tidal listeners can stream this in MQA...)





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995

Great sound for less than a G!

By Jeff Dorgay

Kanto YU6 - Start here!

kantoaudio.com \$399.99/pair

A while back, staffer Rob Johnson wrote a glowing review of the Kanto Yumi speakers, which arrived bathed in a yummy shade of bright red.





995
Great sound for less than a G!

By Jeff Dorgay

Cool as these speakers are, the action is on the back panel. Like many other compact powered speakers, The YU6s use a length of speaker cable to get from the left channel, where the power amplifier resides to the passive left speaker. This adds to the simplicity of the system, requiring only one power cord. It also makes it easy to spread the speakers out really far if your room requires it.

We didn't have a Kanto SUB 8 on hand for the review, (\$289.99 pictured below) it made a great showing at RMAF, and we did try the YU6s here with a couple of "other" small powered subs. Thanks to the sub out, integrating the YU6s into a sub/sat system couldn't be easier. And it makes for an even more rocking system.

Digital inputs are limited to optical/Toslink and streaming via Bluetooth. (4.0), and the aux input can be switched between line and MM phono, just in case you get wacky and want to connect a tape deck. Yeah, we did that too.

Even without sub, the YU6s provide room filling sound. Configured like audiophile speakers up on stands yields the best results, but even bookshelf or desktop installation doesn't suck. If you are limited to this, try and use some footers to get the speakers up off the shelf or desk - it will give you better imaging and smoother bass response.

Thanks to 200 watts of peak power, the YU6s not only play loud, they have enough headroom for your favorite music, no matter what the genre.

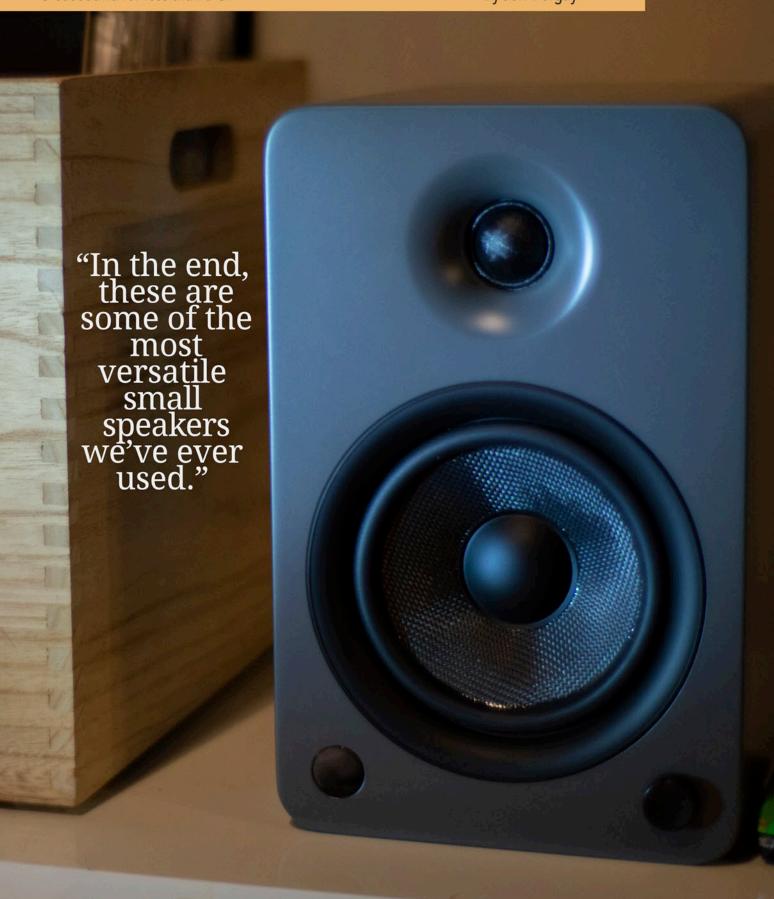
Also available in wood





Great sound for less than a G!

By Jeff Dorgay







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The Journeyman Audiophile Sound for a bit more than a G...







Many of the speakers in Totem's past and current product lineup feature stunningly beautiful wooden cabinets. Their attention to detail makes their speakers a work of art, competing visually with some of the best speakers out there. With the Sky line, however, Totem seeks to make their great speakers more affordable for a larger audience with some compromises like limited finish choices of black ash or mahogany veneer, or the clean white satin of our sample pair.

The Totems come with magneticallyattached fabric grilles to cover the drivers, allowing the owner to choose the aesthetic. While the grilles have minor sonic impact, Totem suggests the best speaker performance without them in place. Count me in as one who enjoys seeing the drivers in action rather than hiding them behind the curtain.

Setup and placement

The Towers rest upon Totem's signature "claw" style feet. Three claws at the bottom of each speaker ensure automatic leveling and even weight distribution. While not included in a package, spikes can thread into the claws should the speakers need better anchoring when placed on uneven surfaces like carpet.

Enjoy the Experience



5477

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The Journeyman Audiophile

Sound for a bit more than a G.

Sky towers measure a petite 6.4 inches (16.2 cm) wide, 33.4 inches (85 cm) tall, and 9.1 inches (23.2 cm) deep. Squeezed into a narrow cabinet façade are specially made 1.3 inch (3.3 cm) soft-dome tweeters, plus 5.75 inch woofers utilizing Totem's copper capped voice coil for ideal sonics. Despite all the goodness within surrounded by a very rigid cabinet assembly, the Sky Towers remain light enough to carry over one's shoulder without breaking a sweat.

Like their smaller sibling, the Sky Towers offer a double set of binding posts to make bi-wiring or bi-amping possible. Totem recommends pairing these eight-ohm speakers with a 30-125 watt amplifier to get the most from their voice. I would suggest leaning toward the higher end of that range. Totem suggests a minimum 70 hour break-in, and 100 isn't the worst idea, but they sound great out of the box, so the time will fly while you adjust to your speakers! Following factory instructions, I started with the towers about a foot from the rear and side walls, facing directly forward without toe-in. However, if the speakers reside more than eight feet apart, some toe-in helps optimize their voice. Following Totem's advice, the review speakers found themselves in the recommended face-forward configuration about seven feet apart. In my case, the best bass response resulted from a placement around two feet from the rear wall, but every listener's space is different. Be sure to do some experimenting on your own too!

Listening

Overall, the Sky Tower voice leans to the warmer side of neutral, but without ever succumbing to an overly-romanticized presentation. The forgiving nature gives the Skys a sonic signature that maps well to classical, jazz, acoustic, and vocally-driven performances without stridency. As with other Totem speakers – like the venerable Model One Signatures – the Sky's mid-range presence is their strength making vocals and cellos beguiling to the ears.

Sky Towers are no one-trick pony, though. While the loudspeakers are small in stature, and by design, have limited low-frequency prowess, bass-heavy music like reggae, dub, and electronica reveal very well. Listening to Under Poets "(Makes Me) Crazy," bass, tambourine, drums, vocals, and a variety of synthesized effects dance around the soundstage with authority, presence, and a high level of palpable detail. Those listeners craving gut-rumbling bass may prefer the addition of a subwoofer. However, the speakers do an admirable job on their own with a taught and impactful musical delivery.

The Skys do an excellent job of imaging too. Vocals and instruments float all around the speakers, rather than being anchored to the speaker bodies. The result is a deep, wide, 3D soundstage I normally equate with more expensive designs. While Totem's flagship speakers reveal even more music, the Sky Towers not only offer a high level of musical enjoyment, they've done an incredible job of balancing all of the design and construction parameters to build a speaker that never feels (or sounds) like a budget speaker. Kudos to the Totem team for bringing this level of performance to a price point accessible to so many music lovers.

Conclusions

At the modest retail price of \$2,250/pair, Totem sets a very high bar for great sound from these petite floorstanders. Build quality, custom drivers, and an aesthetically-pleasing finish create a package which is difficult to beat. The Sky Tower defies expectations at its price point and handily deserve a TONEAudio Exceptional Value award for 2018.



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10 products of the year and most wanted components

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"If you're looking for a major jump in your system's performance, I'd suggest buying a pair of these instead of considering a hardware upgrade. Before you write this advice off to cable delusion, expectation bias, or the recent Mercury retrograde phase, please take note: I have never said this in TONE's 11-year history"

Jeff Dorgay, Tone Audio

"Well, I have just stumbled upon a speaker cable that I'm very tempted to put in a class of its own"

Mono & Stereo





"Tellurium Q have surpassed themselves here. It is often said that all cables colour the sound of a system to some extent, but the Silver Diamonds do it to a lesser extent than any other product I've heard so far."

John Myles, HiFi World

The effect of phase distortion can be likened to smearing a beautiful picture or looking at it through frosted glass. All signal cables do this to some degree and the better you tackle the engineering challenges to combat phase distortion the more natural the sound you get.

















The Journeyman Audiophile Sound for a bit more than a G...





Totem backs their speakers with a five year limited warranty in the unlikely event of a problem. However, Totem's quality controls, solid designs, and years of manufacturing speakers make that scenario unlikely. Those music fans considering loudspeaker options in the Sky Tower's price range should be sure to find a local Totem dealer and listen for themselves. You will be glad you did!

Additional Listening: Jeff Dorgay

While this is supposed to be an issue of "small speakers," the Totems still fit the bill, because they take up less actual floor space than a lot of mini monitors with stands – and a pair of small floorstanders are more stable than monitors on stands.

There's no two ways about it the Sky Towers really rock. If you've ever heard Totem speakers at a show or dealer, you know how much music all of their speakers produce. Not to mention killer bass.

Thanks to a gentle crossover network and an 88db/1-watt sensitivity, you can achieve great sound with a vintage receiver or one of the world's finest amplifiers. While Totem often shows with Boulder and other top amplifiers, I achieved excellent results with a vintage Nakamichi 420 power amplifier as well.

I always tell our readers to fall in love with a pair of speakers and build a system around them. The Totem Sky Towers make such a romance easy. Just buy a pair, they're awesome!

The Totem Sky Tower \$2,250/pair totemacoustics.com

Old School

Respecting HiFi's Past...

by Jeff Dorgay

KEF C60 Speakers

It was the winter of 1984, which ended up being not quite as scary as I thought it would be when I read the famous tome back in high school. I had just sold my Acoustat 3s to Jerold O'Brien's father, and cash was a little tight. My local dealer suggested a pair of new KEF's from their compact performance C series that just arrived. Not only were they the first pair of speakers I'd owned in years that weren't a panel design, they were my first pair of British speakers.

Being used to a big, expansive soundstage, moving the C60s up to a midfield listening position, I was not disssapointed. Though the C60s didn't go as low as the Acoustats they replaced, the additional punchiness and pinpoint imaging was engaging. Hooked up to a Krell KSA-50, they were no slouch in the bass department either.

The C60s served me well for about a year, and back then, fully in the throws of audiophile upgrade anxiety syndrome, that was a pretty long time for me to hang on to a pair of speakers. While I ended up going back to panels, (this time a pair of Acoustat



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Old School

Respecting HiFi's Past...

by Jeff Dorgay

When a used pair popped up in EBay for \$150 at 4a.m., why not jump in the time machine? It's way cheaper than buying vintage BMWs on Bring a Trailer.

Our sample pair arrives with the grilles slightly tattered and a few scuffs in the cabinet, but very well packed. It's always nice when someone takes the time to carefully pack a piece of vintage audio. At first listen, they are a bit more bass shy than I remember. However, I remind myself I've been rocking a pair of REL 212SE's and bass extension issues are long in the past.

However, after a few hours of playing Aphex Twin at a fairly good volume level with the awesome Sugden A21SE integrated (a lovely match, by the way), both bass extension and transparency have made a dramatic turn for the better. This suggests that they have been sitting for some time, and if I were really hard core, I'd consider taking these apart and replacing the capacitors in the crossover. There's a lot of rainy days here in the Pacific Northwest, so you never know.

But these are small British monitors, so there's still not a ton going on under 55hz. Visiting the vintage section of KEF's website confirms that the C60 is indeed -6db at 55hz. http://us.kef.com/explore-kef/kef-museum/1980s/c10-c20-c30-c40-c40d-c42-c60-c80

KEFCSERIES

Thanks to a polypropylene woofer cone with rubber surround, the C60 will not suffer the fate of so many speakers of this era utilizing foam.

We're still waiting for a reply from KEF as to whether the T33 dome tweeter is still available so no house parties till we find out if you can afford to blow a tweeter!

A 4-ohm nominal impedance made them easy to drive with my KSA50, and the current pair seem equally amplifier friendly – turning in a great performance with vintage and reimagined Dynaco Stereo 70 amplifiers.

Should you decide to adopt a pair of these, keep them closer to the walls and ground than you might normally with something else to maximize room gain. Or consider an inexpensive sub to round the presentation out. Running more current through the C60s, they sound even better a week later, but now it's time for these speakers to head to the garage system.

Not too much later on the timeline, KEF would introduce their first Uni-Q speakers, and change their game forever, but if you need a spare system somewhere (and you bought a PS Audio Sprout like I told you to...) the KEF C60s won't steer you wrong. Enjoy!



Playlist: What Our Readers Are Into

Money For Rope - Easy Way Out

Silverchair - Israel's Son

The Breeders - Cannonball

Nick Cave - Red Right Hand

Royal Blood - Little Monster

Midnight Oil - Read About it

Truckfighters - Gweedo Weedo

The Angels - Am I Ever **Gonna See Your Face Again**

The Church - Almost With You

The Cult - Fire Woman

Cold Chisel - Merry Go Round



Alan Crouch is a pal and TONE reader for some time now. Having moved from Portland, OR to Australia, he's been paying close attention to the music down there.

He sent this list the other day, saying "here's 11 you might hear at cool rock & roll bars down here."





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The reviews are in. This is our Masterpiece

martinlogan.com/truth

"Yes, I've drunk the Kool-Aid for years. But even though I'm pre-primed to like electrostatic-panel speakers, I'd never found a one-stop solution I could live with. Now that a MartinLogan active subwoofer endowed with ARC-2 has been successfully mated to an XStat panel, anyone serious about big, full, accurate sound reproduction can start here. Unconditionally recommended."

Renaissance ESL 15A

Jon Iverson, Stereophile

"...the best bass response I've ever heard in my room in the areas of overall smoothness of response and of clarity, definition, and pitch differentiation."

Impression ESL 11A Paul Seydor, The Absolute Sound

"It's a powerful, dynamic, musical fun maker with the usual Martin Logan characteristics of good imagery and great detail... and terrific integration between cones and panel. Factor in the benefit of subtle DSP room compensation and this electrostatic hybrid design comes extremely highly recommended!"

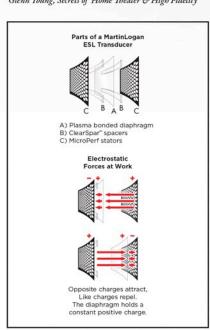
Impression ESL 11A Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi+

"MartinLogan has hit a home run... This speaker improves upon the traditional MartinLogan strong points of transparency and detail and adds a much improved bass section to create a well-rounded, greatsounding speaker."

Expression ESL 13A Brian Kahn, HomeTheaterReview.com

"...a world-class speaker. It is revealing, accurate and has the huge soundstage one expects of a dipole radiator."

Impression ESL 11A Glenn Young, Secrets of Home Theater & High Fidelity









TONE Playlists are sponsored by:



Raidho

D1.1 \$24,995/pr

raidho.dk

 $T_{
m he\ Raidho\ D1.1}$ is an incredible small monitor. At first glance, sitting next to my \$6,000/pair X-1 reference monitors, you might think "what's the big deal?" Yet seconds into the first track, their magic hits you.

Not only do these speakers create a massive, room filling soundfield, program material not requiring room shaking, ultra extended bass response, one is easily fooled into thinking they listening to much larger speakers.

And with good reason, the D1.1 uses the same ribbon tweeter featured in their top system, along with a Raidho diamond driver for a mid/woofer.

The 50hz low point will be adequate in modest rooms, but a larger room will require bass augmentation to reproduce the full musical range. When used in that context, even the small D1.1 provides a majestic presentation.

The Raidho D1.1 \$24,995/pair www.raidho.dk



H FINE

In celebration of 40 years in the pursuit of high-performance in audio, conrad-johnson is pleased to present our new limited production ART150 (stereo 150 Watts/channel) and ART300 (mono 300 Watts) amplifiers, each a virtual window on the emotional experience of live music right in your home.

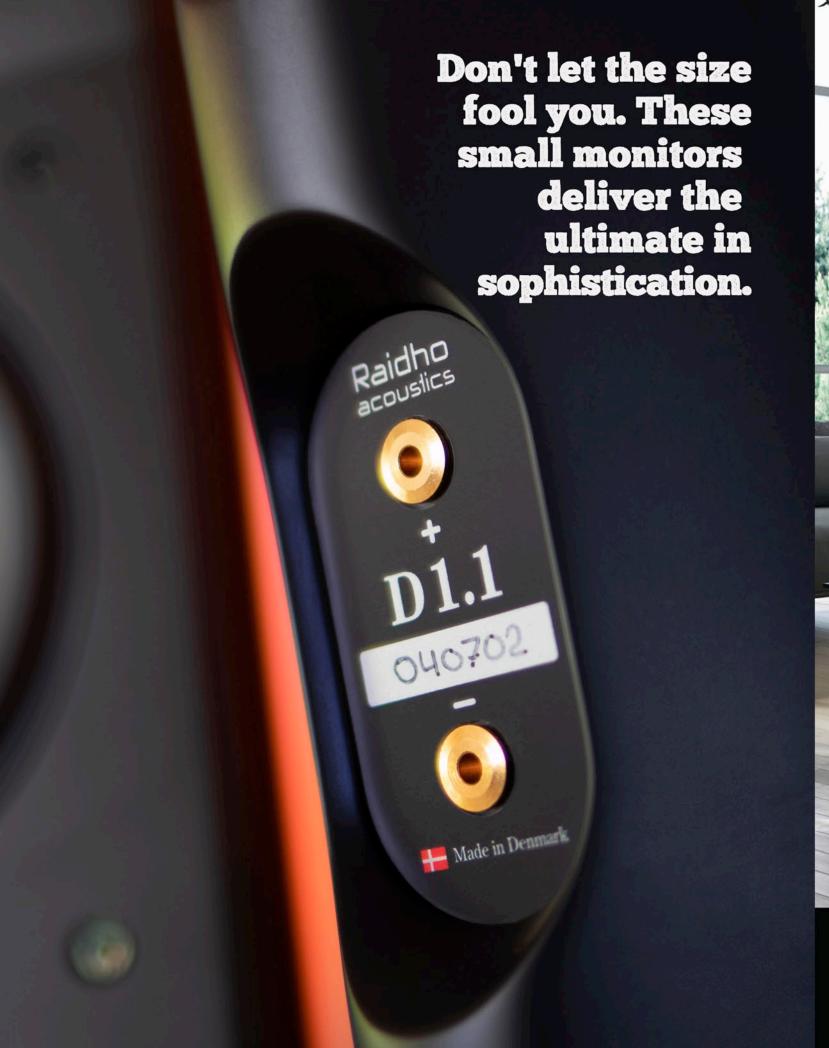


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Raidho D1.1

The Good:

The same amazing tweeter as the \$300k Raidho flagship speaker Flawless cabinetry Perfect blend of ribbon tweeter and woofer.

Not so much:

Need a sub to achieve full range performance At the high end of the price scale

The Verdict:

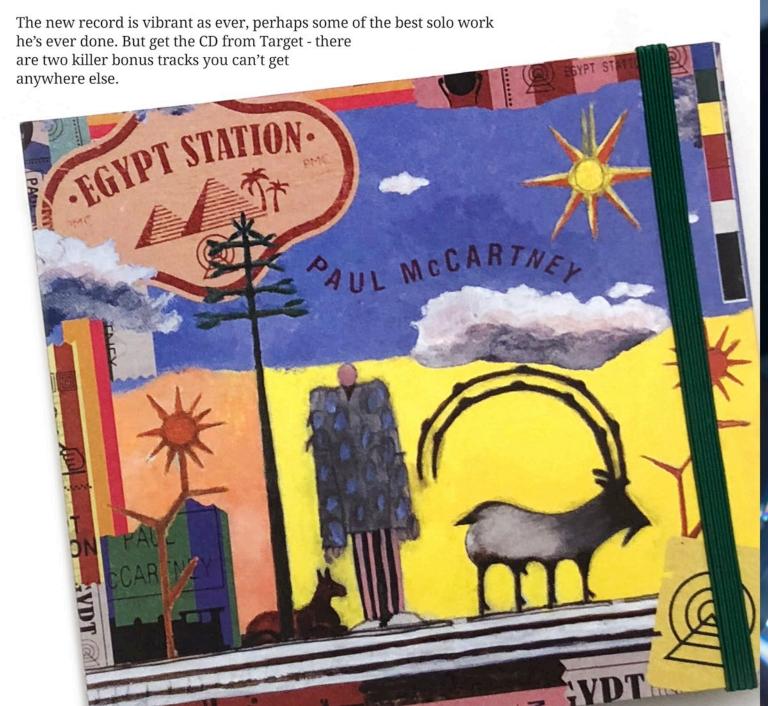
Incredibly high quality at an equally high price.

In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

Egypt Station - Paul McCartney

For those of you thinking "What else could Paul McCartney have to say?" The answer is - plenty. Sir Paul hasn't been sitting around, resting on past triumphs and a recent interview in GQ shows him to be as active as ever. He remarks, "I've not had the luxury of lounging. Probably not a good idea."





Paradigm Persona B

\$7,500 paradigm.com





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Jim Hannon, VP/Group Publisher & Senior Writer, The Absolute Sound

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Paradigm has been on a hot streak with their new Persona line of speakers. The top of the range Persona 9B was our speaker of the year last year, and these \$35k/pair floor standing speakers with active woofers and Anthem Room Correction offer serious competition to a lot of \$100k/pair speakers we've heard. And in a lot of cases, the Persona 9Bs offer more performance.

The Persona B is the smallest model in the lineup, and at just \$7,500/pair offer all of the same characteristics as the big floor models. The only real difference is that they are slightly less efficient, and don't go down as deeply in the bass region. Perfect for those with small rooms, or preferring a sat/sub combination.

Should you be in the latter category, Paradigm has a matching subwoofer, or if you are building a complete multichannel system, the Bs make great rear channel speakers too.

No matter, the Persona Bs share the same beryllium tweeter with the rest of the range, and feature a purpose built 7-inch mid/woofer, rather than just taking the midrange driver used in the other systems.

The sound is big, open, and dynamic. With both drivers being beryllium, their is no difference in transient attack between woofer and tweeter. The Persona Bs are incredibly fast - with the speed of a great ribbon driver, yet without the issues that can crop up when mating said ribbon with a woofer using traditional materials.

A sensitivity rating of 92db/1 watt means you won't need a ton of amplifier power to drive the Persona B to realistic volume levels. And you won't need to limit your amplifier choices either - these speakers work incredibly well with tube or solid state electronics.

Because of their neutral, highly revealing character, you can fine tune the ultimate sound with your choice of amplifier. Those waning every last drop of resolution may prefer going solid state, while combining theresolution the Persona Bs offer with a tube amplifier, especially one on the warmer side of things is positively intoxicating.

The best thing about the Persona B, is that you can mix it up how ever you'd like to.





MEDITERRANEO

THE ITALIAN TURNTABLE

Our journey started 25 years ago by designing our very first turntable driven by our love for analogue music and a real passion for vinyl.

Such passion defines all our creations and particularly turntables, stimulating us to design with great care and attention every single detail in order to realise the most fascinating sources of music.

Mediterraneo is the pinnacle of Gold Note: a creation that redefines the traditional design of the turntable through innovative shapes, technical solutions and quality materials in order to merge tradition and technology and achieve the best musical experience.

Mediterraneo combines the greatest attention to technical perfection with pure beauty.

Manufactured by our local craftsmen, the Mediterraneo is fully hand-made: designed with a 60mm curved plinth made of aged Italian Walnut chosen for its exceptional elasticity, strength and high-density, then coupled with a 20mm board made of polished acrylic and finally reinforced with a 3mm stainless steel board for extra rigidity.

Every detail of Mediterraneo enhances its musicality: a refined technical innovation achieved through elegant and smooth lines.







www.goldnote.it





Paradigm Persona B



The Good:

Same tweeter as the flagship Persona 9B
High sensitivity
Easy to drive
Multiple color options
Easy to integrate into all-Persona
HT system

Not so much:

No nits to pick

The Verdict:

Paradigm's Persona B sets the standard in compact, high performance monitors.

A steal at this price







How can a BMW enthusiast not love a pair of speakers available in the factory "M" color scheme?

But seriously, if you'd ratherhave something more traditional, the staff at hORNS offers black, white, red, and any other color that moves your imagination.

They also offer a leather covered model that looks incredibly sleek.

The key to satisfying sound with the small hORNS is to get the right room and don't be afraid to audition a number of amplifiers to get the perfect setup.

These speakers only have a low sensitivity rating, 84db/1-watt, so a little bit of extra muscle won't hurt. And as you try and integrate them in your room, pay careful attention to the rear-firing woofer that can be turned down, (or even off completely) to help get just the right amount of LF balance in your listening room.

Should you be placing the hORNS in a large room, consider a sub-woofer for reinforcement and placing your speakers fairly far into the room. You'll swearyou are listening to massive floor standers!

Full review very soon....







hORNS Atmosphere

The Good:

Numerous customization options Straightforward setup Easy to drive with tubes or solid state Very dynamic for a small speaker

Not so much:

Somewhat low efficiency, requires moderate to high amplifier power

The horn tweeter makes nearfield listening tough

The Verdict:

A great speaker for the right room

In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

Studio Tan - Frank Zappa

Though originally produced as the last couple of albums to fulfill contract obligations to Warner/Reprise, Studio Tan came off as Zappa-esque fluff to the faithful. Years later, this is still a fun spin. The vinyl version dedicates the entire first side to the pre "Office Space" anthem, "The Aventures of Gregary Peccary." Side Two's "Let me Take You to The Beach," has become a road trip staple. You bring the weenies...



Where Have all the Good Stereos Gone?



We know. Sorting through the jungle that is pre-owned hi-fi gear can be tough. Myriad Internet forums and online shopping sites just don't offer the expertise required to make sound decisions.

That's where Echo Audio comes in. We have more than 20 years of retail experience in selling hi-fi equipment the way it should be sold: In a brick-and-mortar environment that provides you with personalized attention.

While we will certainly ship any of our gently used classics directly to your door, we invite you to stop by our shop in beautiful downtown Portland, Oregon to browse our inventory in person. Thanks to an in-house service department, we not only service everything we sell, but every piece of used gear is thoroughly checked before being put on display. Consider our white-gloves treatment your guarantee against potential problems.

So, when you are looking for high-quality, lightly used hi-fi gear, look no further than Echo Audio. Be sure to check out our Web site for current products and new arrivals.



www.echohifi.com 888.248.echo

Welcome to MINE:

We're not just crazy about music and hi-fi here at TONE. While we can put many labels on our ethos, claiming to be music lovers, audiophiles, or perhaps even qualityphiles, that doesn't even cover it. Having me so many of our readers from all over the globe, as we are well into our 13th year, I'd say our readers are playful and inquisitive to say the least.

You've told us you like automobiles, motorcycles, fine art, bicycles, toys, cameras... Well, you get the picture. Lumping this all under a banner labeled "Style" seems too limiting. Let's face it, we're all a little selfish when it comes to our stuff.

So, let's call it what it is - MINE! And we'll be sharing more of our favorite stuff as we go.

Dolce & Gabbana Sunglasses

\$1,240 dolcegabanna.com

With the holidays almost upon us, these crystal covered shades might be the perfect gift for your favorite female freind or Elton John tribute band star. Per the D&G website, these one size fits all sunglasses do offer "adjustable nosepads to guarantee optimal comfort."

We know a few people who might really love these. You probably do too.





Easy Peasy Lemon Squeezy

Control your entire audio environment with whatever's handy.

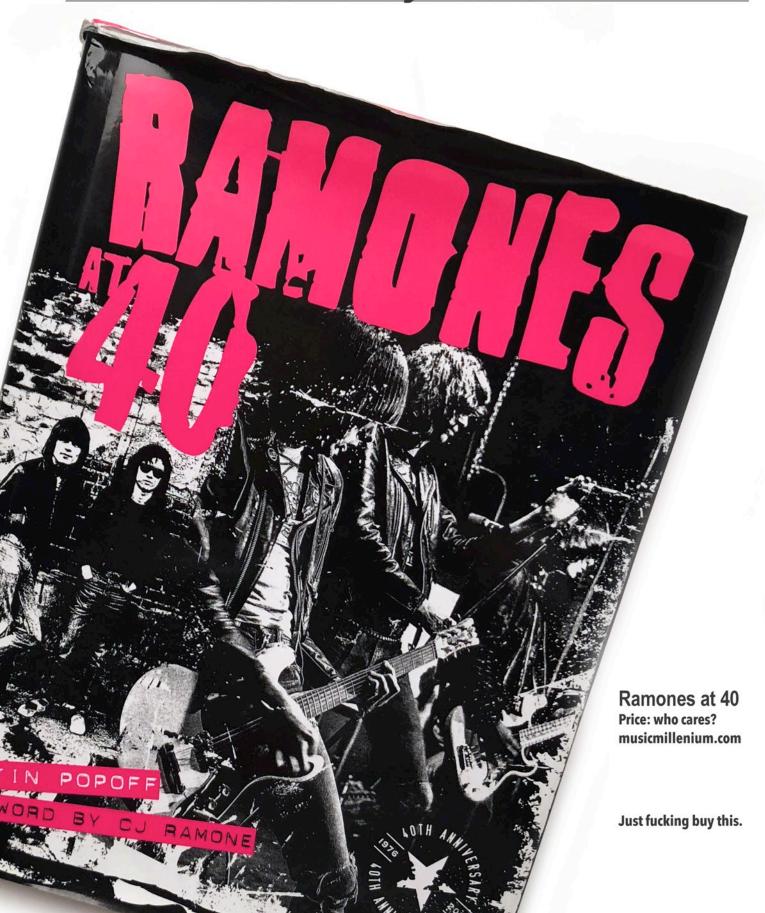


It all makes sense when you hear **Linn DSM**.





MINE: it should be yours







PrimaLuna HP The World's Finest Tube Integrated \$4399

NAIM Preamp/Poweramp Bundle We bought them all to get you this price! \$5990, \$2249

VPI Classic 4 Package

\$1000 Periphery Ring & 12" 3D Tonearm - \$11700, \$5999



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Electra 1038 Be Launched at \$12,450. One of our bestsellers. While supplies last. \$6999



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909-931-9686 upscaleaudio.com

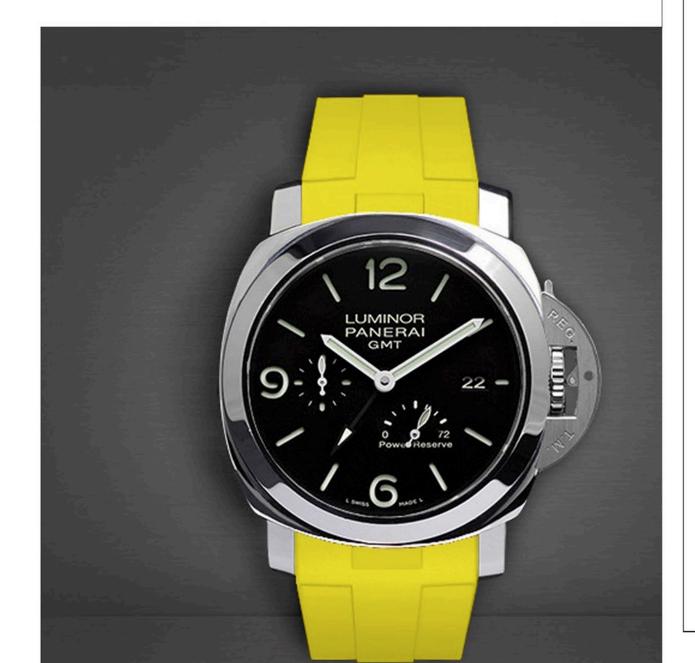
Rubber B Watch Straps

About \$300 ea. (style dependent) rubberb.com

You've probably figured out that in addition to music, hifi, cars and other fun items, we're kind of watch geeks too.

For many, the standard leather or metal band that comes with their luxury watch is just fine. But we submit to make a bolder statement with your Rolex, Patek, or Panerai (shown here) a bright, colored, vulcanized rubber strap is pretty out of the box.

Those wanting to pursue a more understated approach can choose from one of their black bands or other offerings. These bands are all Swiss made, with top quality clasps and a fit that you would expect to go with your timepiece.



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A25M Integrated Amplifier





I50 "Swing" Integrated Amplifier

AVP-01 PreAmplifier





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Timex & Peanuts
The 38mm Charlie Brown Watch

\$65 timex.com

Seriously, who doesn't want one of these?

And you might even get more looks with good old Charlie Brown on your wrist that whatever \$30,000 lump you're wearing now.

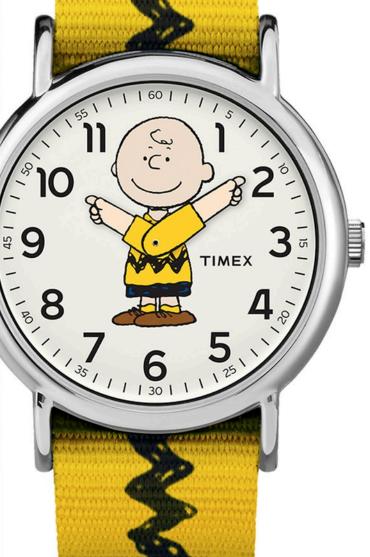
At least you'll get a few smiles, and in the end, isn't that the most important part of carving out your own personal style?

Check out the rest of the Peanuts collection right here.

A Classic Reborn.

Visibly unchanged, yet beneath the dignified beauty of its classic curvilinear cabinet, our best-selling reference subwoofer has been remade, performance expanded in every way. More power, yet greater control, clarity and superior dynamics. Evolved, artful in its appearance and savage in its output.

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MINE: it should be yours

Get the shine you paid for... Angelwax ceramic

\$35.99 and up... angelwaxwestcoast.com

With so many premium loudspeakers finished with automotive coatings, it's important to keep them looking their best. Granted, your speakers aren't being exposed to direct sun and the elements like your car is, but it still makes a difference to shine them up once

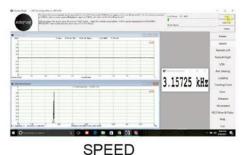
We've been using ceramic based Angelwax on a few of our cars with excellent luck. It keeps a deep, rich shine on our orange Focal's too!

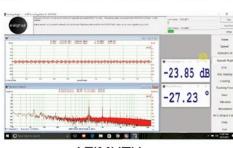
Grab a couple of microfibers, and a tin of







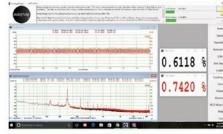




WOW & FLUTTER

AZIMUTH





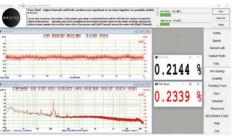


2.85 (± dB) 1.49 (± dB)

VTF



RESONANCE



LOADING & GAIN

VIBRATION

ANTI-SKATING









Segway Ninebot miniPro Go Kart Kit

(requires, S.Pro, not included) ninebot.com/gokart

Who needs this?

Your kid, for sure, but we're guessing this could be a ton of adult fun as well. Though limited to a top speed of about 15mph, this little fun machine does get up to 15mph in like, 2 seconds and pulls .7g - that's more than the average minivan.

The kit looks easy to build and could make for some great kid/parent bonding time. Again, plan on buying two, so you've got someone to race against.

Here's to Segway for what has to be the coolest toy of the year, but we hope they come up with an adult version that does about 40 mph.





The Classic SB VINTAGE DESIGN MEETS MODERN TECHNOLOGY



We have turbocharged our EISA Award-winning "the Classic" to bring you this upgraded package - The Classic SB.

It includes key new features:

- •Electronic speedcontrol
- •Sumiko Blue Point No.2 cartridge
- •Top grade Clamp It
- ·Leather It mat



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For more information, visit www.pro-jectusa.com



Apple iPhone Xs Price \$999 and up.... apple.com

As our mobile devices become more and more a compact laptop, Apple again pushes the envelope with the new Xs phones, offering a bigger, edge to edge screen, more computer horsepower, and of course a better camera.

Unfortunately, these phones are now carrying a laptop pricetag as well. We always remain intrigued (and the camera is incredible) but not all of you are going to want to jump off the cliff for \$55/month.



support@soundorg.com (972) 234-0182 soundorg.com



MINE: it should be yours

The C64 Mini

\$65 amazon.com

Vintage gamers, rejoice. Following in the trend of last year's original Nintendo mini reboot, we now have the C64 mini. It plays all the games you remember the C64 capable, and thanks to an HDMI port, you can watch 8-bit graphics in full glory on your 4k TV. Ironic, isn't it?

Unlike the original, this model is a game machine only. there are no ports for a floppy disc and it doesn't run basic. They keyboard is strictly for looks, as the entire box is about twice the size of a smartphone!



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VINE: it should be yours

Hi Fi Insider's Mike Liang always has his finger on the pulse of what's new and cool in the world of personal audio, and he gave us a tip on this new stand, originally intended for Sony phones.

If you want one, you can only buy from Japan. Please click here to be taken directly to the site.

This is a great stand to display your favorite phones.

headphones and photo by Mike Liang, hifiinsider.com

MINE: it should be yours

Room Tunes: Kiss those unwanted reflections goodbye

about \$475/set michaelgreenaudio.net

Back in the early 90s, Michael Green started the "tuning revolution" showing audio enthusiasts the way to clean up the unwanted reflections in their listening rooms, unlocking a more immersive experience.

The master is back (actually he never went away) and in light of all the crazy expensive room treatment products, the original is still fantastic. We'll have a more in-depth, tech-y report on our website soon, but if you'd like to experiment with getting more performance from your system, his starter package, which includes four of the corner tunes you see here, and some other panels to help damp corner reflections, is an excellent place to start.

This is by far one of the most cost effective udpdates you will ever make to your listening environment.

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Blue Bubbly? Blumond from Saraceni

About \$20/bottle saraceniwines.com

As you can well imagine, the color caught our eye on this one. Anything for \$20 a bottle and an outrageous color like this can't be any good.

Or can it?

MINE: it should be yours



MINE: it should be yours



Me Undies Plaid Onesie

\$70 meundies.com/product/onesie

Onesies and plaid collide at Me Undies and they've done a cracking job.

Just click on the "adventurous" button and you'll see three different patterns along with snowmen and polar bears.

Who wants red or black now?

But seriously, if you aren't the adventurous type, comfort still awaits you.





100% Rubber



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Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into



FORQ -Viridiana

John Scofield -Combo Theme

John Escreet -Test Run

Justin Brown Nyeusi -Jupiter's Giant Red Spot

Marcus Strickland Twilife -Drive

Noah Preminger - Halfway to Harford

Maria Grand -TI: Isis

Pat Metheny Group - So May it Secretly Begin

John Coltrane - Soul Eyes

Gary Burton - Duke Ellington's Sound of Love

Ken Micallef writes for Stereophile, DownBeat and has an outstanding FB page called Jazz Vinyl Lovers.

Here's some recent jazz tracks that he's been enjoying. Stop by his FB page, if you'd like some great tunes

no. 3 New York

ew York



Take Your Whisky Home!

 ${f T}$ he ad ran something like this...

"Invest in a new distillery in the Isle of Arran. Your £450 payment will result in 12 cases of blended whisky and as a holder of a Founders Bond. You will also receive a personal tour of the distillery." Now this seemed a good investment, as £450 converted to around \$5 a bottle at that time.

Invest in a distillery in Arran? Arran, the fabled island that used to have over 50 legal and illegal distilleries in it? Rumors abounded about the quality of the whisky produced there, but as the last distillery closed in the 1800s, no one really knew for sure. As a whisky lover, I was hooked and promptly sent in my money.

The Isle of Arran Distillery is situated about half a mile from the Kilbranan Sound, which faces the Mull of Kintyre, whose main town, Cambelltown, is the home of Springbank Distillery (really good whisky). To get to Arran, I took the ferry from Ardrossan, which is an hour west of Glasgow. Gliding (on a calm day) over the Firth of Clyde to Brodick on the east coast of Arran, you are exposed to some of the most spectacular views in Scotland. To the north is the island of Bute and to the south lies Ailsa Craig, an uninhabited island that is famous for its blue granite, used to make curling stones. Looking west, you can clearly see "The Sleeping Warrior"—a mountain range, in relief that looks

similar to a resting human body. The drive to the village of Lochranza is short and takes you through some picturesque Scottish villages.

The distillery is most impressive. It is a cluster of white buildings with pagodas on top, that serve as ventilators, designed to stop spontaneous combustion of the grain by allowing air to pass through the grain. As grain is no longer stored in large piles, I wonder if the pagodas are just used as a decoration, or of they are essential to the aging process. Nevertheless, they are pretty and add an enigmatic feel to the presentation.

At the time of my visit the distillery had not yet produced their first bottling, so I couldn't sample my investment. Yet the tour was very interesting. It was the first time I had ever visited a new distillery and the place positively gleamed. The tour guide made a big fuss about the water on the island. In the lore, the water in Arran is the reason their whiskies tasted so good. I did taste it and found it clear and sweet, but unremarkable for Scottish water.

This was a long-term investment. It took them a couple of years to build the place, and after the distillation started, it still took many more years to produce the spirit. From time to time I would receive updates on production.





SCULPTURE A



LE PHONO SE

Working strictly as a class A single ended device with no feedback, our phonostage uses only solid state components (no op-amps) with the shortest signal path circuit possible.





Tailor built for your cartridge with carefully selected and matched high end components, it works with any MC cartridge from 0.1mV (74dB of gain) up to 2.5mV.

Le Phono SE, a solid-state design without the usual issues of tube electronics.

anamightysound.com

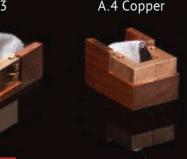




A.4 Silver







made by Ana Mighty Sound

A.3 & A.4 SCULPTURE A PHONO CARTRIDGES

Already awarded by French press with a « Remarquable » award, the A.3 and A.4 phono cartridges display a minimum tracking of 90 micron @300Hz lateral that will allow you to get the full definition of your records. For this we have developed a specific damper and use only boron cantilevers with dedicated geometry diamond tips.

With outputs from 0.1mV to 0.3mV with either silver or copper coils and impedances between 3 to 40 ohms.

It is the perfect companion of our Le Phono Single Ended phonostage and others.

With a compliance of 12 @100hz and three bodies, mixing impregnated wood with pure brass, copper, silver or gold, we are able to fine tune the weight and fine tune the sound of your cartridge to match perfectly the mechanics of your tonearm.

The A.3 is a fixed characteristic design, the A.4 is a tailor made cartridge up to your requests.









retip

Our insights on cartridge "repairs" What if each cartridge was restored as unique artefact? We do not believe that glueing a cantilever and diamond tip is enough. Aging has an effect on your cartridge as well as usage wear, dust, hygrometry and UV.

Cartridge service : your cartridge does not sound as good as you remember? The damper might have been tampered with, the azimuth of your diamond tip is starting to be off or maybe the piano wire is getting loose?

We can check it out and get back the original parameters without altering the parts of your cartridge.

Fine-repair: we are able to completely rebuild Neumann DST (or Lumière), Clément cartridges and most MC cartridges available. Open coils ? Stiff damper ? Broken cantilever? We know how to deal with these issues and will do our best to get your cartridge as close to its original status, even though we can certainly alter your cartridge up to your requests.





Enjoy the Experience



54777

Pass Laboratories 13395 New Airport Rd. Ste G., Auburn, CA 95602 (530) 878-5350 - www.passlabs.com

Take Your Whisky Home!



"Spirit aging well in casks."

"Unique flavor profiles in Arran Malt."

"First tastings most promising."

Many years later, my whisky was ready for collection. I could pick up the 12 cases of blended or, as a substitution, 5 cases of single malt. I chose the latter. Now came the arduous task of bringing it into the U.S. My first idea was to just ship them but as a frequent flyer, I knew just how sticky U.S. customs can be if you bring in more than one or two bottles. So what to do? I contacted a friend in Edinburgh who worked for the Scotch Whisky Distillers Association. He suggested I call his friend in Washington who had something to do with alcohol.

Said friend in Washington turned out to be very knowledgeable, and after the usual pleasantries he told me that without a liquor license it is illegal to bring in that quantity of whisky. Even if I offered to pay the duty, it was still illegal, as I did not have the license and customs would suspect that I wanted to resell the bottles. After that we talked about our mutual friend in Scotland, about our favorite whiskies and how the laws were really hangovers from prohibition muddled by individual state laws. When we had finished, I asked him what he did in Washington.

"Me? I'm the head of the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms). President Bill Clinton appointed me."



In Praise of The Party Turntable

by Jeff Dorgay

Last time, (in issue 90) I tried to convince you of the merits of a vintage Dual table to make it easy for guests to interact with vinyl. Some readers loved it, while others were aghast at the idea of putting records on a *changer*.

Personally, I think it's easier at a party, and perhaps everywhere in life to make things painless for friends and guests, especially if you want them to embrace a new concept (or revisit an old one.)

Plug and play sensibility is always an awesome thing, whether for a primary or secondary turntable, and Rega's new P1 Plus treats you right, with a built-in phono preamplifier. All you need to do is plug it into an aux or other high level input.

Whether you have a pair of powered speakers, or a vintage reciever, this is as easy as it gets.

Thanks to said line-level output, our test P1 Plus had no trouble driving a pair of 20 foot Cardas Crosslink cables from across the room to a Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin Air at a recent home get together.

Guests were not only impressed with the minimalistic style (a Rega hallmark), but the ease of use that the P1 Plus offers.

Moving it back into the TONE studio, connected to a proper integrated and set of speakers, this combo delivers fantastic sound quality. It is a perfect match for the beginning vinyl enthusiast, and again, having the built in phono stage offers higher performance at a lower cost, knowing it is optimized to the Rega cartridge. And at \$595, it's tough to beat.

For more in-depth analysis, click here to visit the TONE website.



VPI Founder Harry Weisfeld seeks cost-no-object performance for his own listening.

"I use the **KISEKI Purple Heart N.S.** in my personal system on my Avenger Reference and have no urge to change cartridges. It sweeps you out of your seat and into the concert hall with power, grace, and air. I cannot recommend a cartridge higher than to say I use it when I just want to enjoy music."



Can't Get it Out of my Head...

by Emily Duff

"S wingin' Doors & Whiskey River...." is the opening line from the song "I Just Lived a Country Song" from the brand new record WILD! WILD! by Robbie Fulks & Linda Gail Lewis

(Bloodshot Records). An opener like that is a fish hook in my mouth with the worm working its way right through my waxy ear. The red vinyl is a beacon of hope and the cover art gets me shakin' all over.

Seriously, everything about this record screams WILD! WILD! And I never want to remove it from my turntable. My love affair with Robbie Fulks started in the 90's with "She Took A lot of Pills and Died," "The Buck Stops Here" and "The Scrapple Song." In 2000 he put out

Let's Kill Saturday Night (Geffen) and I was sure he was the greatest songwriter I'd ever heard. This collaboration with Linda Gail Lewis, sister of Jerry Lee Lewis, and a piano player to rival the Killah

himself, is a brand new breath of life into my iron-lung of love for all things Robbie. Linda's voice and delivery reminds me a little of Loretta's but shines all on it's own two vocal chords. From Jazz to Jesus, these two deliver some of the finest classics you will add to your collection this year.

Because I wrote and recorded a gospel record this year, I spent some with Jesus, musically that is. From Jesus I went to the next logical destination, LOVE & KINDNESS and Civil Rights. The record that got itself permanently wedged inside my skull is **Mavis Staples**'

We'll Never Turn Back (Anti-Records 2007), Produced by Ry Cooder. You could stop right there and not need another reason to listen to this masterpiece every single day of your life. Mavis Staples & Ry Cooder. BAM! "Down in Mississippi" will not leave my head. It plays on a loop over and over again, which sometimes gets annoying since I'm a songwriter and need to work





REFERENCE 160 M VACUUM TUBE POWER AMPLIFIER







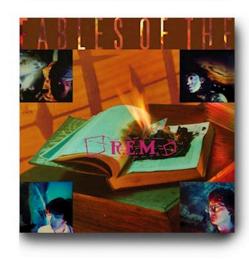
SOUND HAS NEVER BEEN SO TRANSPARENT

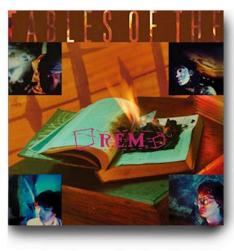
After two years in development, the all new REF160M is now shipping. It features switchable Ultralinear/Triode operation, proprietary auto-bias, output tube monitoring and protection, an innovative transparent power meter, and legendary Audio Research sound.

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audioresearch.com







on my own stuff. But that's okay, it's not just a great song. It's a mantra. It's a history lesson. It's a reminder. It's a wake up call and it's very needed right now. The entire album is. Get it. Let it penetrate your being and become part of your personal soundtrack to a higher consciousness and FREEDOM FOR ALL.

Malcolm Holcombe's new record, Come Hell or High Water (Proper) is getting heavy play this month for

me. The songs are sparse and exquisitely written with Malcolm's voice and guitar ripping my heart out every chance he gets (and laughing, I'm sure). The storytelling is at the top of the mountain right here. Special guest appearances by Iris DeMent & Greg Brown on vocals takes the tunes into the clouds. 13 tracks produced by Marco Giovino & Jared Tyler, who also serve the songs as multi-instrumentalists here, frame Malcolm's songs perfectly, painting sonic landscapes that invite you into Malcolm's world within each musical narrative. And what a Twin Peaks world it can be. If you have the chance to see Malcolm live, don't miss it!

16 Tracks of Classics from Muscle Shoals, reinterpreted by popular artists of today. That sounds like a cool concept, right? Well Heck Yes! "Muscle Shoals: Small Town, Big Sound" is the brainchild of FAME's Rodney Hall, son of FAME founder and Producer, Rick Hall who passed away in January this year. "Brown Sugar" by Steven Tyler & Nuno Betancourt was the first song released as a single and HOLY SMOKES! When you are blown away by every single note of a song, the overall sound of the recording and the new take on the arrangement right down to the astounding back-up vocals by the one and only Shoals Sisters, you know that you have a winner on your hands. The songs are all classics, that's a given, but the artists, producers, engineers (recording, mix and mastering) have really put their individual stamp on these tunes. Old friends dressed up in new clothes ready to take you there AGAIN! I hate tributes but this is Pure GOLD and I am playing the heck out of it. You should be too!

1985 was a significant year for me. I was a sophomore in College at SUNY Purchase, I was going to see a lot of live music as well as writing a lot of music and I started feeling gravity's pull again. It was also the year that

REM's Fables of the Reconstruction came out and reminded me how I could draw on all the various musical influences of my almost 19 years on the planet to create something that was uniquely bold and ME with a beat that the kids would want to dance to. Country, Rock, Pop, Psychedelic, Singer-Songwriter.....this record lit me up like a Christmas tree and lately I have been returning to the grooves that threw me to the ground and made me look up. 11 tracks of pure heaven for me. Go back in time, get your hair bigger than it should be and put that tonearm down on a sound that still sends chills up my back.....dude.

50 BRANDS

8 DEMO ROOMS

1 LOCATION











"I remember nothing!" Steve Martin declared, almost happily, as we prepared for an on-camera chat about our past encounters.

We were at Wente Vineyards in Livermore, California, where his show with Martin Short, "An Evening You Will Forget for the Rest of Your Life," was making a stop. The show was sold out, with tickets ranging from about \$100 to \$409, for front row seats including dinner from the winery's restaurant.

I thought back to the Boarding House, a Troubadourlike nightclub in San Francisco where I first saw Steve, in 1972. He was opening for his pals, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and tickets were under \$10, including a four-course dinner. Steve didn't remember.

But there was no pressure. This time, the conversation would be more about me and us than about him.

A documentary is being produced about my life and career, from Chinatown to Rolling Stone, and Steve was high on producer Suzanne Joe Kai's "get" list. I thought it was Suzanne who was high. I'd last seen Steve 37 years ago, in 1981, when we'd met for cover stories for Parade and Rolling Stone, the latter featuring a memorable cover shot by Annie Leibovitz.

He'd become a superstar back then and has maintained his status. I'd become...almost famous.

When Suzanne heard that he was heading to Northern California, she contacted one of his people, and, amazingly, Steve said "Yes."

And now, on a comfortably warm day in Livermore, a 90-minute ride from San Francisco, here we were, getting outfitted with lapel microphones. To help jog his memory, Suzanne showed him a video, from her phone, from the dressing room at the Boarding House, where we were taping a segment for the syndicated TV show, "Evening Magazine," in 1976. I asked, "Do comedians have groupies?" It was, of course, a set-up.

"Not really," he said, faking thoughtfulness. "You get a funny breed of women. I'm not into that onenight thing. I think a person should get to know someone, even be in love with them before you use and degrade them."







Steve chuckled. "That's an old joke," he said. He did a lot of wild and crazy things back then, with props ranging from balloon hats to a cheat sheet of gags and bits, placed on a stool by his side.

He remembered that.

"I kept that through my whole (stand-up) career, I had that little piece of paper. I still have a few of them, soaked through with sweat. It was a crutch; a comfort."

Catching him in '72, I loved it all, and invited him onto my Sunday show on KSAN, where he did sight gags. "It's good to be here," he'd say, performing a bit he'd done onstage. He stood up and walked a few steps away. "Actually, it's good to be HERE," he said, and then, retreating to a rack of transmitter equipment, corrected himself again, shouting, "You know, Ben, it's really great to be HERE!"

A few years later, wearing a white suit, complimenting the arrow through his head, playing the banjo and portraying a smug jerk, he was a big star; returning to the Boarding House as a headliner. It was 1975 and, off stage, he wasn't smug at all.

"I said, my only request is, please, don't have a rock band open for me. It's gotta be mellow, 'cause I find it's too hard to do comedy after a loud rock band. I'm sitting backstage and the opening act is called Free Beer, and I hear the loudest thing I've ever heard, and then I saw smoke, steam smoke coming out. It was uncomfortable for me."

He did not remember a 1977 appearance he made on a CBS TV special for Rolling Stone's tenth anniversary, in which he barged into editor Jann Wenner's office and asked to be put on the cover of the magazine.



130 Watts RMS • AMT Tweeter • 5.25" Aluminum Concave Cone • Class D Amp • Bluetooth with Qualcomm aptX HD RCA Line • RCA Phono • USB DAC • Optical TOSLINK • Sub-out • USB Charge • Headphone Jack







Jann, in a booming bass voice, kept turning him down, I burst in to get Jann's OK on my story on Kiss. After some major groveling, Steve got his cover, and Jann swiveled his chair, revealing that he'd been portrayed by Donny Osmond.

Next came appearances with Johnny Carson and on Saturday Night Live; the Beatles-level shows at ballparks and stadiums, books (beginning with "Cruel Shoes") and movies (beginning with "The Jerk.")

He moved on to more challenging roles, including the drama, "Pennies from Heaven," in 1980. That's when we met for *Parade* and *Rolling Stone*. And that was it for us. Nada, except that, around 1994, I published a memoirs, *The Rice Room*, and Steve agreed to contribute a blurb.

"The Rice Room is a poignant examination of Ben's life. I couldn't put it down...in fact, I'm still holding it."

During our chat, Steve read it aloud on camera, then added: "That came from a blurb I read by someone else, a classic blurb—'Once I put it down, I couldn't pick it up!"

Still, the fact that he took time to send an endorsement was huge, and it shouldn't have been such a surprise that he'd consent now to help out on my documentary. "My pleasure," he said. "You were an important part of my career."

As we neared the end of our time, Steve agreed to sign a few issues of our cover story, for Suzanne to use in fundraising for the project, and I asked him to do an intro of one of his songs for Moonalice Radio, the station I program for the jam band. Steve, a highly regarded banjo player with several CDs, and often performs with the Steep Canyon Rangers, a bluegrass ensemble whose tour bus is parked inside the winery. Steve, who's quiet in conversation, thought for a second, then revved up his voice: "Hi, this is Steve Martin, and this is 'Office Supplies,' a song of mine on the Ben Fong-Torres show, on Moonalice Radio.

And after he plays 'Office Supplies' I'm going to explain why it's called 'Office Supplies.'" After the song—an instrumental from last year's The Long-Awaited Album—ends, Steve returns. "The reason it's called 'Office Supplies," he intones, "is because at the end of the song, if you're not thinking of office supplies, I haven't done my job."

Suzanne asked if we could hug, as she had built a segment of me embracing Quincy Jones, Carlos Santana, Annie Leibovitz, Cameron Crowe and others. We did, and I thanked him for doing this. "I really appreciate everything you've done," he said.



You already own the music. You might as well hear all of it.

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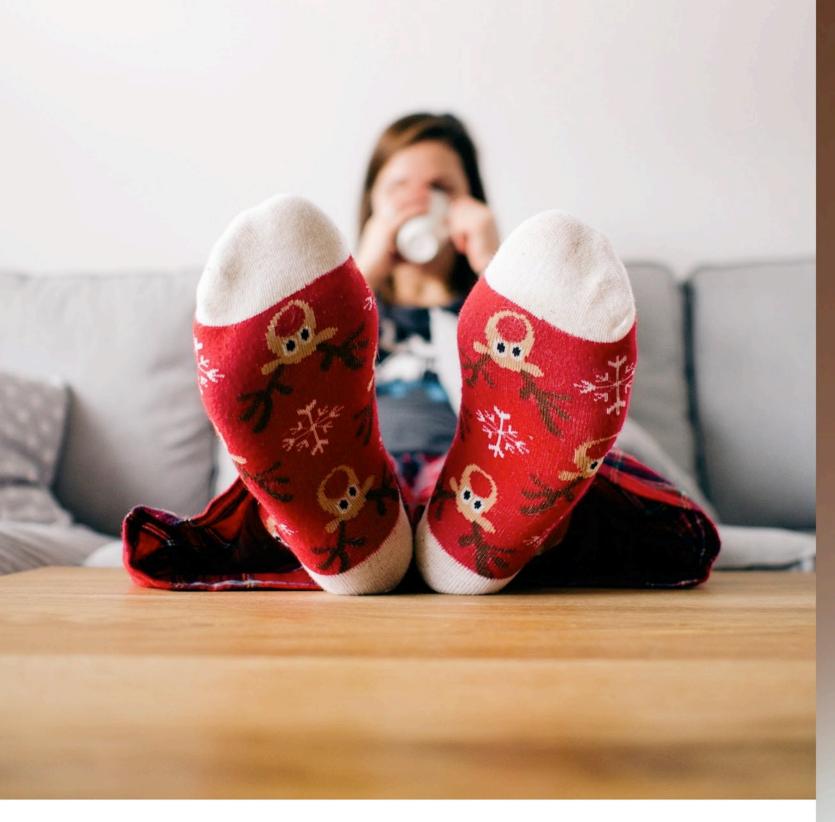
Correction:
It was everything we did.
But I was happy.
He did remember.

support@soundorg.com (972) 234-0182 soundorg.com









If this isn't what your system sees, You're doing it wrong...



Few speakers have the awarness, sheer respect, and ubiquitous recognition than the LS3/5a. No matter how far along you are in the audiophile game, chances are high that you not only know what this mighty little speaker is about, they've probably heard at least one or more different variations on the theme.

With so many variations, the natural urge to argue about which one is superior begs to happen with a certain segment of audio enthusiasts. We can't stop that.

But just like with classic car ownership, you may actually prefer the original (we don't, we think this version is superior - but that's neither here nor there), but we can all agree, the original can't be driven as hard or repaired as easily (perhaps not at all) as a new model should something bad happen.

With that in mind, we submit the Graham version you see here. Made under strict BBC license, it is truer to form than any of the other contenders, and just to make the debate more interesting, they also produce the much rarer LS3/5.

Now you've got way more to argue about, agonize over, or just enjoy.

We've got a full review of this version, as well as a comparison to the Graham LS3/5 almost complete, so please stay tuned!



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The one that started the revolution...

We could argue forever about which version of the LS3/5a is the one you should own. Some audio aficionados own multiple pairs from multiple generations, with some pretty major variations on the theme. As we mentioned in our prior review of the Graham LS3/5, this version is well made, sounds fantastic and even if you own one or more vintage pairs, these would make an excellent daily driver. You can't really crank up the volume on a vintage pair, as tweeters are too hard to come by. Just relax and enjoy a pair of these!

Full review and comparison to the Graham LS3/5 underway.

CHARTWELL



Essential Elements.

The Element range is the starting point in our product line-up. But we view it as essential to getting a great performance from your kit.

It seems the world's hifi press agree. We've won a lot of awards for Element, including What HiFi's 'Best Analogue Interconnect' for the last 3 years.

We apply as much innovation and effort to the Element Series as our top of the range Asimi.

The 'Integra' low mass RCA connector was originally developed for the Element cable and the principles applied throughout our range.

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Element cables are available for hi-fi, personal audio, digital & video use.















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Graham **LS3/5a**

The Good:

True to the original, but better An incredible piece of speaker history Phenominal build quality and attention to detail More robust than the originals

Not so much:

The obvious limitations of a small speaker

The Verdict:

The classic BBC monitor, produced for 2018. Every audiophile should have this experience

In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

Are You Gonna Go My Way? - Lenny Kravitz

This pivotal rock record, along with four other early titles in the Lenny Kravitz catalog have just been remastered to 2LP sets by Virgin/UMe and they sound fantastic. It's always lovely when revisiting the past is better than when you were there the first time.









Rel subwoofers have been our personal reference for some time, with last year's Product of the Year going to the 212SE. The Carbon LTD you see hear is somewhat of a factory hotrod, if you will. Principal John Hunter on a recent visit was describing the concept as "making something special, just because you can." Hardly thinking of a mass market manufacturer. But the Carbon LTDtakes the level of quality you've come to expect to an entirely new level with this model. Their signature gloss black finish is evenblacker and deeper than ever before (Nigel Tufnel would be impressed), which the finish on the feet, handles and badge has to be experienced to be believed.

And thanks to the blending of a carbon coned woofer from their flagship and a passive radiator from the 212SE, the performance is beyondd what you would expect even REL to produce from an enclosure this size. We promise a full review shortly, but restassured, the Carbon LTD is fantastic in every way. And yes, we have a pair here for review.



Just touch it. Better yet, don't. Something this gorgeous shouldn't have fingerprints on it.







The Good:

Raises the fit and finish level beyond anything done in a subwoofer

Hot rodded with the best parts from the REL parts bin

Way more LF output than you would expect from a compact sub

Not so much:

Zero

The Verdict:

It's the Porsche Cayman GT4 of subwoofers









Amphion Helium 510

\$1,130/pair amphion.com

, Uniti

ATOM — COMPACT HIGH-END ALL-IN-ONE

40-watt integrated amplifier and high-resolution music streaming capabilities with stunning high-fidelity sound.







naim

"[...] a level of sonic sophistication that so many of the Atom's competitors lack [...] the Atom is a killer choice!"

Home theater Review



























Analog Outpu



A Wonderful Surprise

We usually expect high quality from Denmark and Finland when it comes to speakers.

Maybe it's just the calming quiet over there that allows Finnish designers to hear more.

Amphion's room was making great sound at this year's Rocky Mountain Audio Fest, so it was very kind of Amphion USA's Trevor Fedele to send us a pair for review straight away.

This tiny two way works well as a stand mounted speaker, yet Amphion offers a set of wall mount brackets for those that use these as rear channels, or would like to elevate an entire set for theater use. A matching center is available as well as the Helium 520 floor standers to complete the package.

The European audience tends to prefer the all white look. While we share their design sensiblities, the Amphion speakers are also available with colored grilles as well as a wood finish option. (We still love the all white look...)

A clean sound accompanies the clean look of the Helium 510s. Their rated sensitivity is only 86db/1 watt, but they have proven easy to drive with modest solid state and tube amplification.

We have a full review on the TONE 2.0 website, and the initial response is excellent. Please click here.

We look forward to hearing more from Amphion.



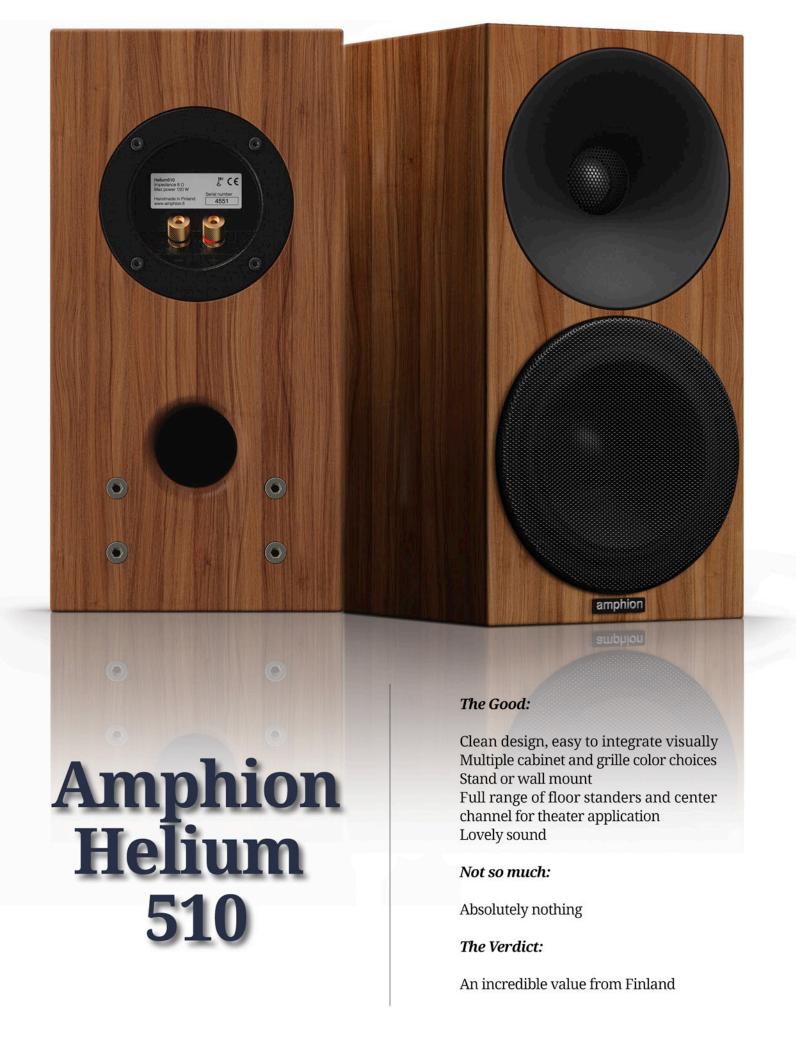
"I can't think of a better digital disc player than the PS Audio DirectStream Memory Player and DAC. If I had more than two thumbs to raise I would offer them, it's that good. The only remaining choice is whether you want silver or black."

---Jeff Dorgay, TONE Audio









www.psaudio.com 720.406.8946 Boulder, Colorado

Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into

Van Halen -Right Now

Surface of the Moon -Del Amitri

Kiko and the Lavender Moon - Los Lobos

My Science Fiction Twin -Elvis Costello

Murder Was the Case -Snoop Dogg

Ya Shoulda Killed Me Last Year-ICE-T

Gentleman- Afghan Whigs

You're With Stupid Now -Aimee Mann

Goodnight Song - Tears for Fears

If I Only Knew - Tom Jones



NPR recently asks the question, "was 1993 the best year for music ever?"

Maybe, maybe not, but there were a lot of records that I still enjoy that were released in the 90s, often mistaken for "80s records." Here's a few fav tracks.

no.4 Washington







Neat's smallest model in the Iota line is still a worthy performer.

Thanks to their highly resolving ribbon tweeter and high quality internals, the Iota delivers a huge soundstage.

On a desktop, listening nearfield, you may not even need a subwoofer, and thanks to the lovely colors offered, they are an excellent choice for a compact, surround system.

Rob Johnson spent some quality time with the Iotas, and you can read about it right here.



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"The L-509X is one of the most intimate-sounding, dynamic, texturally nuanced, truthful purveyors of music of my experience." Ken Micallef

uxman L-509x- Stereophile, May 2018



"A bang up to date design, in both engineering and sound... simply special"

Luxman L-509x- Hi-Fi News, January 2018

www.luxman-global.com



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MartinLogan Motion 4i

\$249.95 each

martinlogan.com

The team at MartinLogan began expanding their product line a few years ago to include, of all things, box speakers. But not just any box speakers.

Using a ribbon design that they call their "folded motion" tweeter, their compact motion series delivers a level of transparency that you'd expect from the engineering team that makes some of the worlds finest ESL speakers.

You can read our full review here.





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wellroundedsound.com

This incredibly versatile pair of small, ported monitors from Acoustique Quality, paint a sonic picture that defies their small footprint.

They have a lovely finish to match, making them as attractive visually as sonically.

Read Marc Marcantonios's review here...



"...these things sound just as elegant as they look.
Or is it, they look just as elegant as they sound?
Either way, the results are genuinely impressive."
High Def Digest



Beneath its timeless aesthetic and familiar curves, the new Aida has been completely overhauled. Years of tireless research and refinement have yielded a pristine electroacoustic engineering project featuring all-new drivers, crossovers and internal structuring. A dramatic improvement upon the speaker once called "as close to perfection as I have ever experienced."



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sonusfaber.com



Klipsch
The Sixes
\$799/pair

klipsch.com

The Sixes channel pure heritage, 1960s Klipsch, right down to the logo, but That's where the resemblance ends. Not only are these desktop horn speakers powered, they are wireless and feature a streaming DAC built in, with an analog input for a turntable too. And they really rock.

Could these be the ultimate office speakers?

Read the full review here.

Devialet **Gold Phantom**

\$2,990

devialet.com



Staffer Greg Petan liked the Devialet Gold Phantom so much he not only

bought two of them, he packed one on a plane to share with friends in California

The sound and vision of Scandinavia





Prisma provides multi-room/multi-zone connectivity and control for playback of stored and streamed media, wired or wireless, all managed from a mobile device through a dedicated system control app.

In addition to Bluetooth®, AirPlay, and Spotify Connect, Prisma features Chromecast built-in, a unique streaming portal allowing effortless direct connection to hundreds of streaming applications, including Roon, TIDAL, Qobuz, Deezer, Google Play Music, and TuneIn radio, for the best possible performance and user experience.

Initially available in the new 115 Prisma integrated amplifier, 135 Prisma integrated amplifier, and CD35 Prisma CD player - with more to come.

▶ For more on all our new Primare models go to primare.net











mofidistribution.com

Jern 14DS \$4,995/pair

jernspeakers.com



Don't let the cute, compact shape fool you. These are serious loudspeakers. With an enclosure of cast iron, don't even try the audiophile "knuckle rap" test, you might end up in the emergency room!

Designed to work with a subwoofer, the 14DS rolls off around 60hz, allowing it to have more dynamic range when used with a great sub. The dense rubber donut under the speaker allows for precise placement adjustments, making for a speaker that is easily tuned to perfection.

A full review is almost complete, but the short story is fantastic!



Playlist: What Our Readers Are Into

Stevie Ray Vaughn - Tin Pan Alley

Boz Scaggs - Heart of Mine

Brian McKnight - Whenever You Call

Chickenfoot - Learning to Fall

David Nail - Heavy

Joe Bonamassa - Redemption

Kenny Wayne Shepard -Blue on Black

Sam Shepard - Writings on the Wall

Vayden - Karma is a Professional Wrestler

Ted Nugent - Live it Up



Friend and reader Tony Coury III from Scottsdale, Arizona and our publisher go way back before TONE.

A guitarist in his spare time, Coury is a rock and roller to the core.



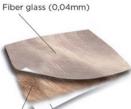
THE KANTA FAMILY IS GROWING





66 If you want more than a taste of the real high-end, this is the place to start ">9

KANTA N°2 - HIFI CHOICE



Flax (0,4mm)

Flax fibre core sandwiched between two thin layers of glass fibre. These cones satisfy all the essential criteria of

"F" cones are constructed of a very high quality

a high-performance diaphragm: high internal damping for a very neutral and natural sound, light weight for exceptional speed and dynamics, and high rigidity for a tight and controlled

Flax cones are designed and manufactured in France to Focal's exacting standards, and are also used in Car Audio, Pro Audio, Home Speakers and Custom Integration products.



With Kanta, the treble register is reproduced by a new pure Beryllium tweeter. This IAL3 tweeter combines the IAL (Infinite Acoustic Loading) and IHL (Infinite Horn Loading) tweeters features, both of which help with the absorption of waves, thus lowering the tweeter frequency.

To this day, only one material permits a joining of these parameters: Beryllium. For domes with identical masses. Beryllium is seven times more rigid than Titanium or Aluminum. This results in a sound wave three times faster than Titanium and two and a half times faster than Aluminum.

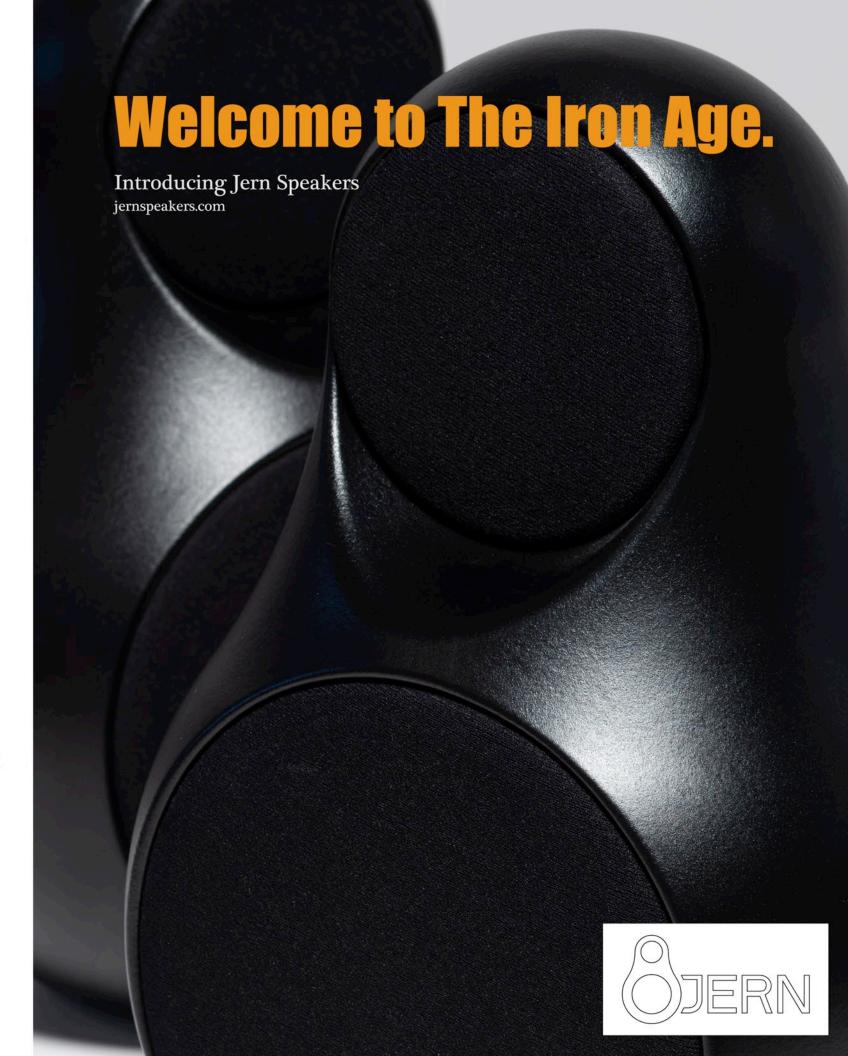


socket and their best internal wire, this power strip will increase the amout of plugs at your disposal, while doing no harm to the power from

your AC line. Review to follow.

Reviews in our immediate future...





Reviews in our immediate future...



REF 160M Power Amplifiers

\$25,000/pair audioresearch.com

Incorporating everything they've learned over the past four decades, the latest monoblocks from ARC, feature an even higher level of resolution than past models, with increased musicality. And, the transparent front panel that doubles as an output meter is beyond cool.

Luxman M-900u

\$14,995 luxman.com

Just like the Luxman turntable we recently reviewed, (and purchased) the M-900u amplifier is a visual and aural tour-de-force, producing 150wpc into 8 ohms, doubling into 4 ohms and can even deliver 1200 wpc into 1 ohm loads for short periods. The first 12 watts are produced in full class-A mode, so you can take advantage of even more sweetness at normal listening levels.

We have a full review of this and its companion preamplifier very soon.



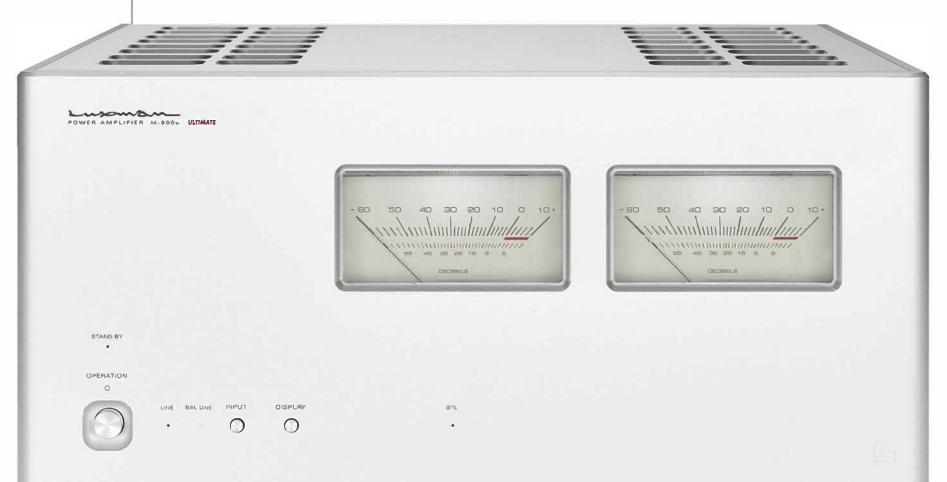
Nagra Classic Preamp

\$17,600 (VFS base \$2,300 addl.) nagraaudio.com

While much attention has been paid to the NAGRA's new HD components and it is well deserved, their single box Classic components are very enticing.

Taking full advantage of the design and engineering expertise at Nagra, combined with the same highly skilled workforce assembling the HD line, the Classic components are within the reach of a wider range of music lovers.

We have a full system review in the works.



Reviews in our immediate future...



Quad Z-4

\$4,999/pair quad-hifi.co.uk (Factory) MoFielectronics.com (US Distribution)

When the manufacturer of one of the world's finest ESL speakers, builds a box speaker, it's time to take notice, and it makes perfect sense that Quad would build a more traditional speaker with a ribbon tweeter.

And these are lovely.

Formula xHD

- Proprietary Optologic DAC
- Pure FPGA-based R2R Ladder
- Fully-floating (isolating) D/A converter system
- Hybrid USB xCore 200 (dual core) in Bit Perfect up to 768 kHz PCM and DSD 256
- Filterless Non-oversampling digital architecture



Unconventional DNA









La Voce \$3 dac

La Scala Optologic dac

Formula xHD dac

La Diva cd transport

aqua acoustic quality

aquahifi.com

Reviews in our immediate future...







Dynaco ST-70

\$2,999 dynaco.com

After an auspicious debut at the Munich hifi show over a year ago, the world's greatest selling tube amplifier is back, this time as a fully built unit only.

The new ST-70 is designed by Dan Fraser, an engineer with tremendous tube circuit experience. Along with the obvious updates (solid state rectification, greater power supply reserve, etc) Fraser actually went back to David Hafler's original designs to find a 4x triode driver circuit from Hafler himself to eliminate the need for the original 7199 tube that is no longer available.

Initial listening proves that Fraser has created yet another masterpiece bearing the name ST-70.



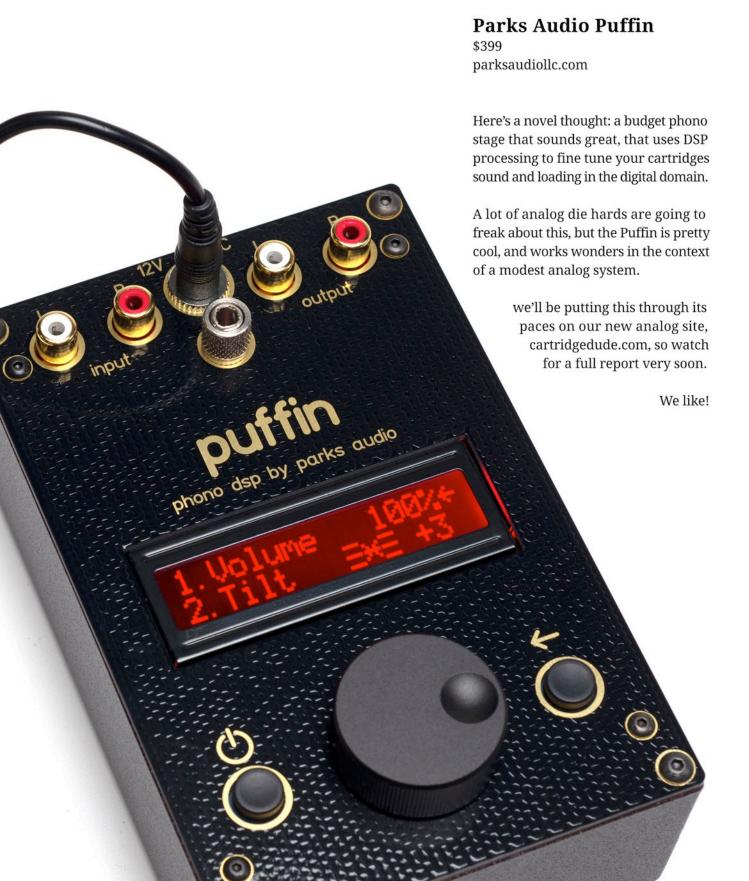
Zodiac

The sky's no longer the limit





Reviews in our immediate future...





Clarity by Design

Transparent Uncolored Accurate.

This is what made the sound of the original British Broadcasting Corporation monitors legendary. Graham Audio has made it their mission to continue this legacy, and to bring the Chartwell LS3/5 and LS3/5A, the Chartwell LS6, the LS5/8 and LS5/9 to a broader global audience.

Drawn from many years of BBC research, and through the engineering genius of Derek Hughes, these speakers have been recreated using state of the art materials and technology under license from the BBC. A new addition to this series is the Chartwell Sub 3, a bespoke compact, passive sub-woofer designed to be used in conjunction with the LS3/5 monitors.

Graham Audio are also proud to announce the VOTU, their flagship 1000 watts per channel, high-end monitor for large studios and listening rooms. Effortless dynamics and vast detail come as standard.

...hear the difference



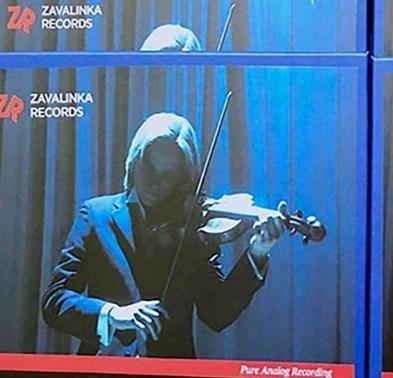
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Let There Be Sound, L.L.C. named Exclusive USA Distributor for Zavalinka Records Master Tapes from Moscow, Russia

To reserve your copy of their first title: "Astor Piazzolla / Henryk Wieniawski" contact Oz @ (954) 465-5040 or vinylrules@aol.com

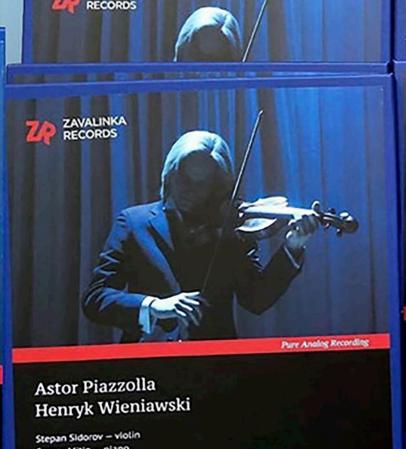


stor Piazzolla

rgey Mitin - plano

lenryk Wieniawski

Recording Engineer: Nikolai Kazantsev ZAVALINKA RECORDS Live Recording – Feb, 24th 2018 (Moscow, Russia) 2 Tracks, 15 IPS, CCIR ZAVALINKA RECORDS ZAVALINKA RECORDS ZAVALINKA RECORDS ZAVALINKA RECORDS



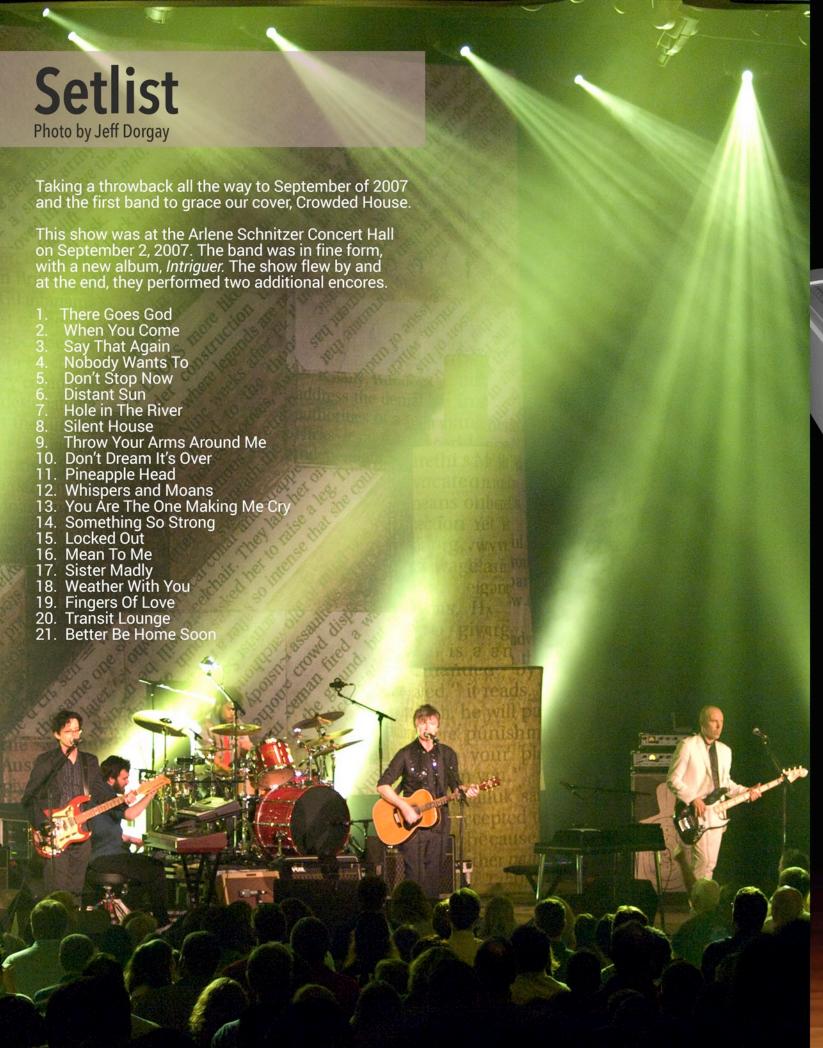


Pure Analog Recording

Astor Piazzolla Henryk Wieniawski

Stepan Sidorov - violin

Sergey Mitin - plano





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Dealers That Mean Business:

You've read all the reviews, you've argued with the internet pundits,

and you're ready to write a check. Now what? If you're a slightly used customer that likes to shop for the best bargain you can find on Audiogon, this article is not for you. And, controversial though it might sound, I'm not against Audiogon. If you want a gently pre-owned preamp, love music, and just don't want to buy new, I get that – as long as you know what you're getting into. Audiogon can be a great place to buy pre owned gear if you know exactly what you want - and don't expect ANY service. But someone has to buy it new, so you can buy it used – remember that!

If you are the customer that likes to buy new, loves the feel (and the smell) of taking it out of the box for the first time, knowing no one else has touched it, I get that too. Personally, I'm about 50/50 on this experience, as I am with cars. Ask anyone who's bought a preamp or a used car from me, it's usually pretty pampered.

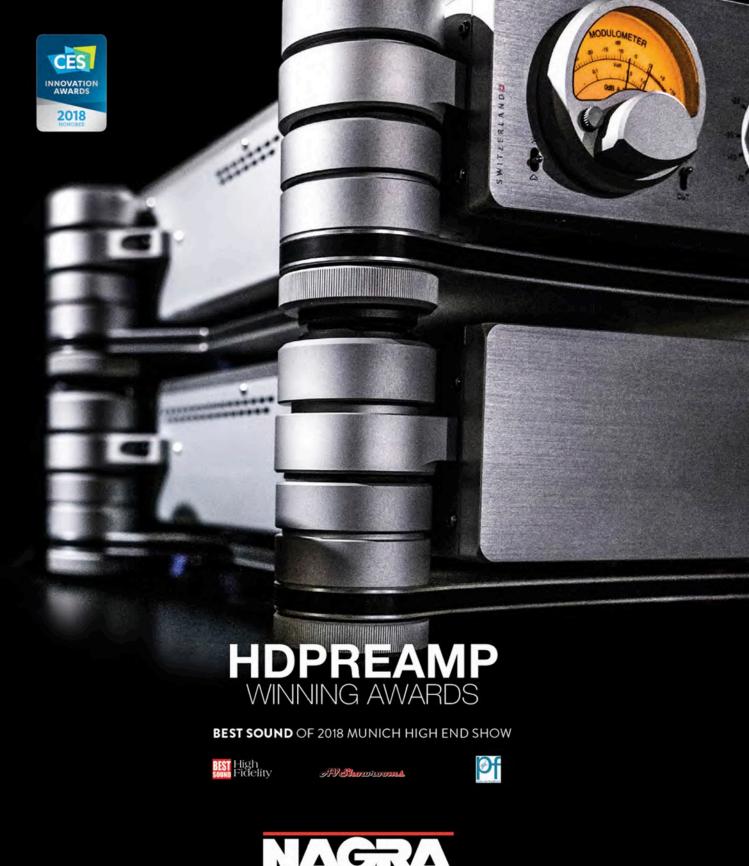
However, if you are going to spring for new gear, you need a good dealer. Someone who understands you, your music and most of all your perspective. You need someone to help you find the right components that will work together as a system, help you set it up in some cases, and offer support when things don't work out as planned. There's no substitute for experience, and a great dealer knows their products, and knows what will work best for you.

Nearly every audio system that has failed to achieve the greatness expected of it can be traced back to poor component choice (system and/or room) synergy and poor component setup. I've been to hifi shows, homes, and dealers all over the world – hearing sound good, bad, and somewhere inbetween. It always boils down to these two factors if something isn't truly broken, and it rarely is.

The solution is easy. Find a great dealer. While there isn't a hifi shop on every corner like there was back in the 70s, there are still some truly great dealers out there that will help you put together a stunning music system, regardless of your budget. And I'm on a mission to find as many of them as I can for you.

I'm starting with the folks I know, in this new section of the magazine. Most of the establishments in this list are running full page ads in the magazine – and there is a caveat. I will not accept advertising in this magazine from a dealer unless I've been to their place, seen the shop and have talked to a cross section of their customers to know they provide superior service. In most cases, these are hifi shops that I, or someone on the staff has purchased gear from as well.

These are not just people wanting to buy space in TONEAudio. Every one of these dealers carry my personal endorsement, and I hope that will help you on your journey. As we go forward, look for the "TONEAudio Approved Dealer" sticker on your favorite establishment. Know a great dealer, that you've had superior service from? Let me know, I would like to pay them a visit and add them to the list.





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US dealers: The Audio Salon, Santa Monica CA | Audio Salon, Miami FL | David Lewis Audio, Philadelphia PA | EarsNova, New York NY David Michael Audio, Detroit MI | Don Better Audio, Cleveland OH | Goodwin's High End, Boston MA | JS Audio, Washington DC Musical Artisans, Chicago IL | Music Lovers, San Francisco CA | Ne Plus Ultra, Austin TX | Arizona Hi-Fi, Phoenix AZ Canada dealers: Audio Eden, Toronto ON | Element Acoustics, Vancouver BC | Filtronique, Montreal QC

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414.221.0200



Portland, Oregon - Echo Audio

www.echohifi.com 1015 SW Washington Street Portland, Oregon 97205 888.248.3246



Marietta, Georgia - The Audio Company

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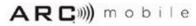
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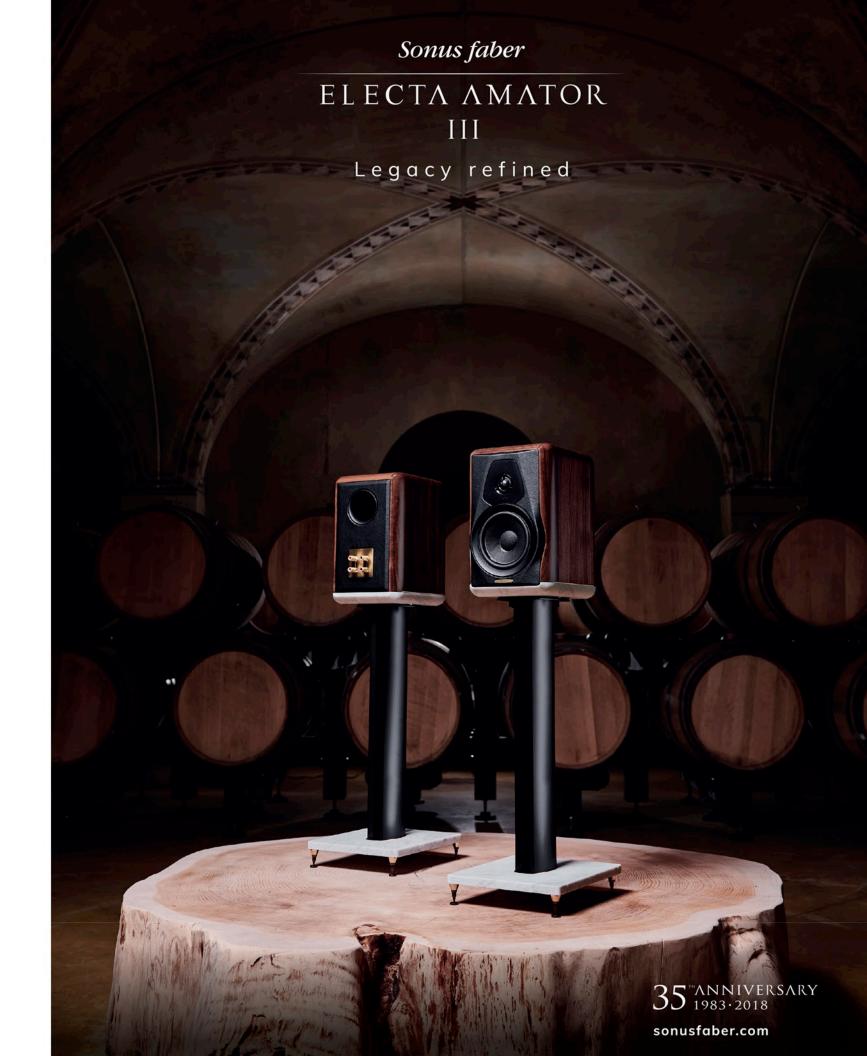


In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

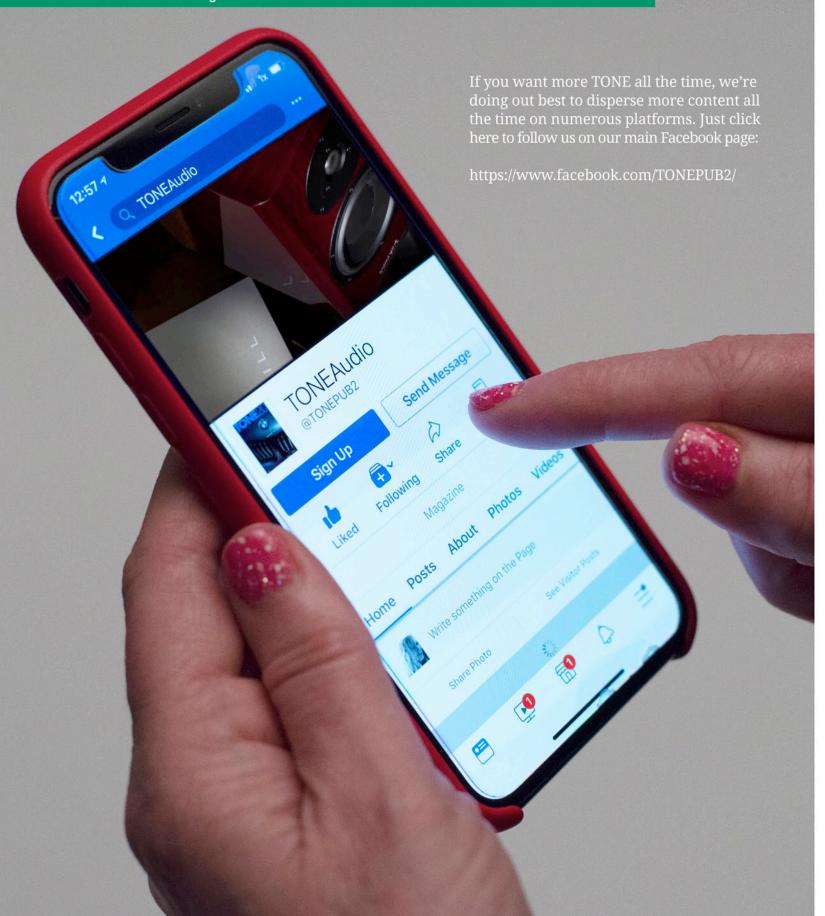
Cut to The Bone - Molly Hatchet





Socially Speaking

TONEAudio's Online hangouts





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"PrimaLuna's DiaLogue Premium HP is an integrated amplifier whose sound quality approaches that of pairings of reference Class A preamps and power amps. PrimaLuna has another winner"

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Last Word

Our parting thought to ponder.

One of the first powered minis: The ADS 2002

Decades before Audio Engine speakers or KEF powered LS-50s, we had the A/D/S 2002s. They featured a pair of 40 watt, class A/B amplifiers in each cabinet, with active crossovers and an external power supply.

Designed to be paired with a Nakamichi 300 or 350 portable cassette deck, the combination was indeed formidable, and thanks to some heavy duty mounting brackets, could be mounted in your car or boat.

TONE contributor Todd Sageser had a pair in his VW Scirocco, with an external crossover, amp and subwoofer. The result for the early 80s was breathtaking.



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Soundstage! June 2017

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Cubed Series technology is available in 10 different amplifiers ranging from the B135³ integrated at 135 watts per channel, the venerable 4B³ at 300 watts by two channels, to the incredible 28B³ 1000 watt mono block.

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For the first time, Bryston brings Cubed Series to the front end. Our new BP-17³ Preamplifier features the Salomie Circuit from input to output reproducing higher resolution than ever before.

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Get The Gear: Where to find what you've seen in this issue.

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