

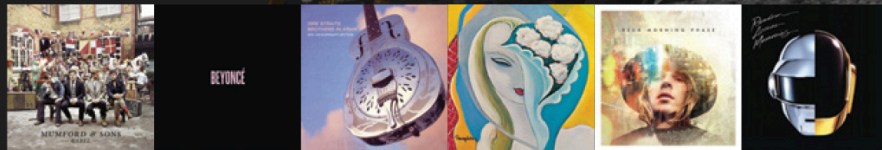
Only A Few Engineers Become Legends

In the world of music production, there are a select group of recording engineers who have strived throughout their career to deliver the highest quality listening experience possible.

Known as "the mastering engineer's engineer", Bob Ludwig has been recognized universally for his incredible talent and his passion for the latest in technology.

And with nearly a dozen GRAMMYs® (and counting), his award-winning work has impacted virtually every music genre, including such iconic recordings as Babel, Beyoncé (surround mix), Brothers In Arms, The Layla Sessions, Morning Phase and Random Access Memories.

dCS is proud to honor Bob Ludwig as the first recipient of our dCS Legends Award.



no.100

December 2019

Introducing the New

Triton One.R

from GoldenEar Technology®



“Everything that earned the Triton Reference Tone’s Product-of-the-Year-Award, in a gorgeous, super sounding, more compact and even more affordable package!”

“...an important debut...the speakers certainly bring Triton Ref bonafides to a lower cost segment, with glowing hand-rubbed piano-black lacquer cosmetics and impressive internals.”

—Neil Gader, *The Absolute Sound*

GoldenEar Technology is pleased to announce the introduction of the new Triton One.R. This extraordinary new reference quality loudspeaker is a smaller, less expensive follow up to the Triton Reference. The T Ref has been compared with speakers selling for over ten times its surprisingly affordable cost. It has had a remarkable response from both music and hifi enthusiasts as well as press and reviewers from around the world, who have bestowed upon it innumerable Speaker-of-the-Year and Product-of-the-Year awards. Now the T One.R is here for your ultimate delight. Al Griffin raved, “The powerful sense of atmosphere that the One.R speakers conveyed conjure up memories of my time with the Triton Reference.”

“...a pair of Triton One.Rs really kick the width of the soundstage into overdrive, spreading the wall of voices far beyond their physical placement in the room, with undeniably enhanced clarity and articulation.”

—Dennis Burger, *HomeTheaterReview.com*

We developed new drivers for the T Ref, which incorporate advanced technologies for better sound, and brought these advancements into the Triton One.R. The new Reference Folded Ribbon Tweeter, with 50% more neodymium, is silky smooth and ultra high resolution. The new Focused-Field magnet structures deliver better control and higher efficiency. The new internal wiring, with a special critically perfect twist, provides better coupling and more coherent blending of the drivers. The new wiring topology further improves clarity and definition. And the very special film caps in the crossover make faster transient response a reality. The list goes on and on: long fiber lambs wool, accelerometer optimized bracing, special internal damping pads.... Everything contributes to T One.R’s remarkable ability to recreate a huge soundstage and deep three-dimensional image. And the voicing, which our engineers labored so long and hard over, makes the T One.R a proud follow up to the Triton Reference.

The 1600 watt built-in powered subwoofers can be musically delicate or simply rock your world!

There are three newly designed racetrack shaped active subwoofer drivers on the front of the cabinet, which have special polymer impregnated nomex cones, in order to minimize cone breakup when strongly driven. Huge magnet structures are utilized in order to better control cone movement and improve transient response. There are four quadratic planar infrasonic radiators. They extend the low frequency response and are inertially balanced (two on each side) in order to minimize cabinet movement, resulting in clearer, more detailed sound. Combined with the 1600 watt sub amp and advanced 56 bit DSP, the built in powered bass section is superior to most stand-alone subwoofers, and of course, you will have two subs, one in each speaker. Al Griffin raved about, “...intense and gut-punching slam...I didn’t once feel a need for additional subwoofers.”

“If I could pull a Spinal Tap and push the Triton One.Rs Value rating past our usual maximum, I’d do it in a heartbeat.”

—Al Griffin, *Sound & Vision*

The gorgeous cabinet is painstakingly finished in hand-rubbed piano black lacquer. Its signature narrow profile looks incredible, helps it to disappear visually, and delivers important imaging advantages. It presents itself as an exquisite, sleek, ultra-high-performance lifestyle loudspeaker that delivers tremendous value and sound quality comparable to speakers selling for many times its cost. And unlike most speakers that are only good for two channel listening, or home theater, the Triton One.R, like all GoldenEar speakers, is engineered to excel at both.



Triton One.R
\$3299.⁹⁹ each

GoldenEar Technology®
“We Make High End Affordable”™

www.goldenear.com

PO Box 141, Stevenson, MD 21153 (410) 998-9134

Like us on Facebook!
facebook.com/goldenear

Follow us on Twitter!
twitter.com/goldeneartech

Call us or check our website for your nearest dealer

In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

JBL

L100
CLASSIC

JBL, Northridge, CA USA

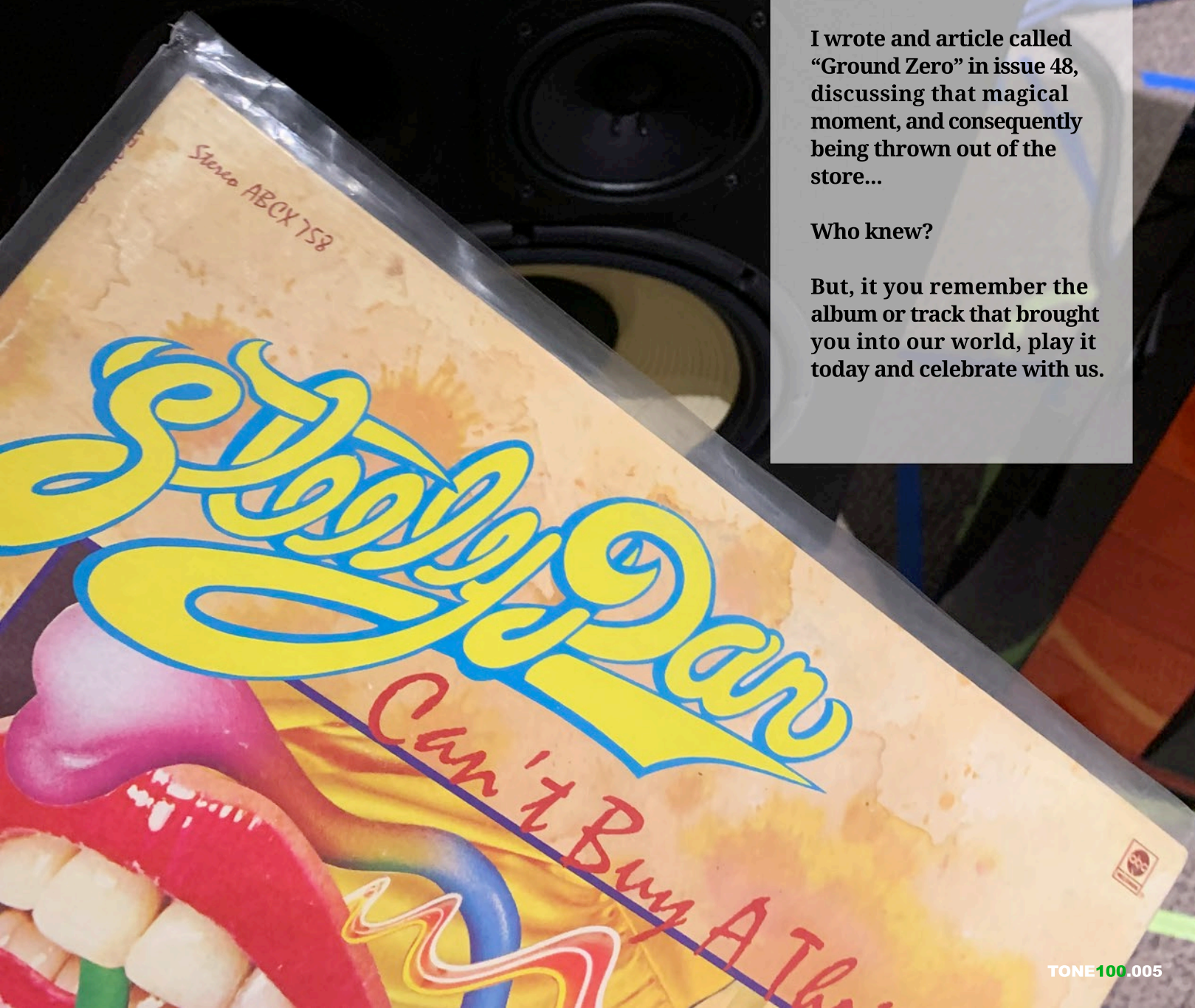
What's the first record you experienced on a great hifi system?

Do you remember?

I wrote an article called "Ground Zero" in issue 48, discussing that magical moment, and consequently being thrown out of the store...

Who knew?

But, if you remember the album or track that brought you into our world, play it today and celebrate with us.



TONE100.005

Sonus faber

ELECTA AMATOR

III

Legacy refined



35th ANNIVERSARY
1983 · 2018

sonusfaber.com



Sigma 170 i Integrated Amplifier

Valve Amplification Company www.vac-amps.com

©2018 Valve Amplification Company, Inc. VAC power amplifiers are protected by US Patent 8,749,310. International patents pending.



T O N E

Staff

Photography and Design - *Man & Machine*

Publisher - *Jeff Dorgay*

Music Editor - *Jaan Uhelszki*

Audio Historian - *Ken Kessler*

Senior Contributor - *Rob Johnson*

Analog Master - *Richard Mak*

Administration - *Pamela Dorgay*

Research - *Earle Blanton, Ken Mercereau, Scott Tetzlaff*

Musicologist - *Tom Caselli*



Contributing Writers

Juan Cavillo

Emily Duff

Anne Farnsworth

Ben Fong-Torres

Roy Hall

Michael Laurance

Andre Marc

Monique Meadows

Eric Neff

Jerold O'Brien

Jessica Sieracki

Shanon Swetlishnoff



Questions and Comments: thetoneplayhouse@gmail.com

Advertising Inquiries: pr@tonepublications.com

©2018 TONEAudio Magazine, HA! and The Audiophile Apartment

All Rights Reserved

www.tonepublications.com

20 yrs of HiFi for
 the Love of Music..

20th Anniversary!

One of the Biggest
 Independent HiFi Audio collections
 in the Country, featuring over 20
 manufacturers from All over the World!

Please check our website &
 social media for further info



focal



antipodes



technics



dynaudio



yg acoustics



warwick acoustics



gryphon



raidho



audiovector



moon by simaudio



chord



triangle



h.r.s.



nordost



innuos



bel canto



woo audio

- abyss
- audeze
- audio physic
- audiovector
- dali
- davone
- dynaudio
- elac
- focal
- gallo
- gamut
- grado
- hifiman
- jl audio
- kef
- mrspeakers
- psb
- raidho/scansonic
- rel acoustics
- triangle
- warwick acoustics
- wharfedale
- wilson benesch
- yg acoustics

- anthem
- antipodes
- arcam
- astell & kern
- atoll
- audioquest
- bel canto
- bluesound
- cardas
- chord electronics
- clearaudio
- crystal cable
- deqx
- devialet
- dr. feickert
- e.a.t.
- funk firm
- gryphon
- h.r.s.
- ifi
- innuos
- integra
- lyngdorf audio
- lyra
- marantz
- margules
- mcintosh
- moon by simaudio
- nad
- naim audio
- nordost
- octave
- ortofon
- pear audio
- primaluna
- pro-ject
- ps audio
- quad
- quadraspire
- rega
- shinola
- sme
- sonos
- soundsmith
- stillpoints
- technics
- unison research
- woo audio

what's inside:

visit our websites: tonepublications.com cartridgedude.com mybwhabit.com



73

Cover Story

The JBL L-100 Classic

Why do we like these speakers so damn much? Read on.



23

Old School

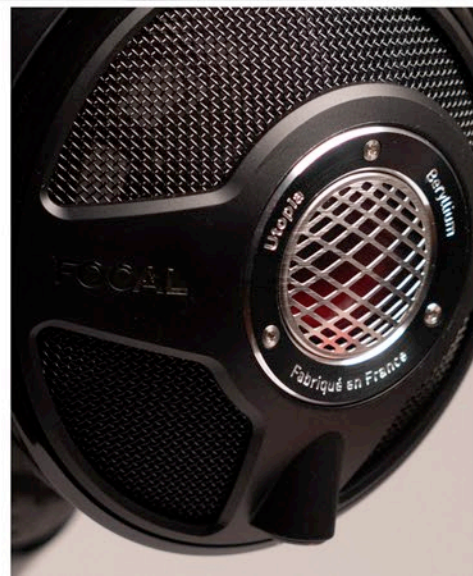
Juan Cavillo finds a nice **Marantz** receiver and brings it back to its former glory.



41

Headphone Art

Focal takes us on a journey to the center of our mind with their Utopia phones. Wow!



21 (and on...)

Playlists

Our readers, staff, and industry friends **share** what they are listening to with you.

Sponsored By Qobuz

29

Audiophile Apartment

We take the **Pathos Logos Mk. II** integrated for a test drive. Viva la difference! This Italian hybrid is a masterpiece of sound and style

35

Shanon Says

Our favorite Canadian investigates the benefit of clean power from **TORUS** and comes away impressed.

TONE is published 8 times yearly in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. And except for that one print issue, we've been online only, Saving the trees since 2005.

83

Awards

It's that time again, and this year we have something special.

49

MINE: It Should be Yours

You can't live on music and hifi alone, so here are some things to spice up your existence.

70

Swill

Enough hifi, let's have a beer! Sponsored by Cardas Audio

173

Dealers That Mean Business

TONE's list of approved dealers. These are the folks you can trust your hard earned dollars with.

189

Get The Gear

Links to the gear (and our advertisers) in this issue.

195

Last Word

Homage to the lattes consumed to make this issue possible



63

Can't Get it Out of my Head

Our Publisher steps in for a vacationing Emily Duff to listen to Matthew Sweet on vinyl and Frank Zappa on CD

27...

Time Warp

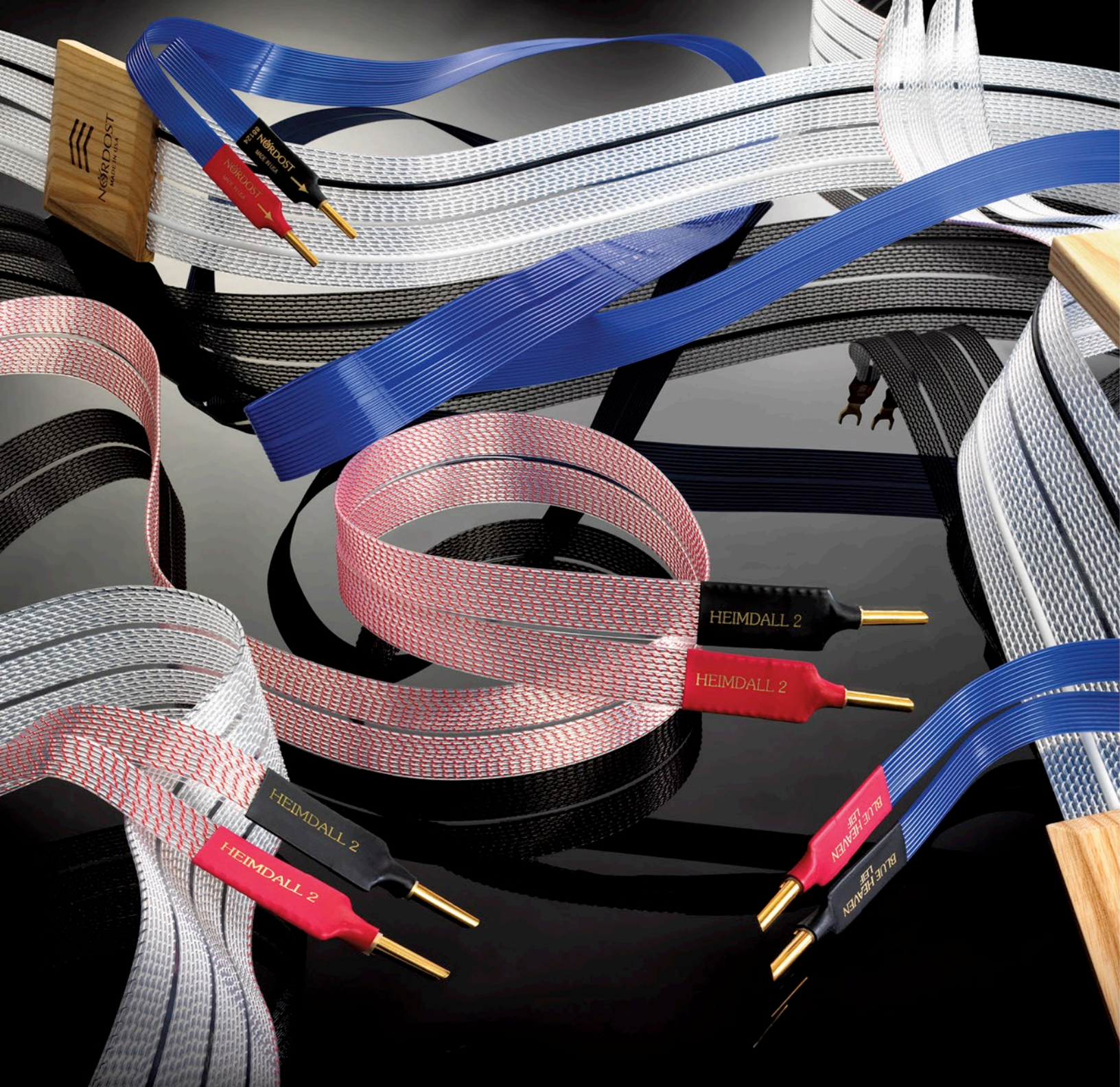
A few random snippets from TONE's memory bank.

151

Future Tense

Products in for **review** and on our near horizon.





THE ULTIMATE UPGRADE

NÖRDOST
MAKING THE CONNECTION

new arrivals...

Sean Zloch joins our team to help fine tune all of the digital images that go into the magazine. His help will be greatly appreciated, as we plan on being even busier in the new year.





Time Warp

Assorted Bits of our history...



"no matter what I listened to, I couldn't imagine the sound being much better"
Soundstage! June 2017

Technology

Bryston's new patented Salomie Circuit is a revolutionary new way to reduce distortion and noise unveiling never before heard details only hinted at by other equipment. The input stage operates at distortion of less than 0.001 percent!

Power

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.

Control

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.

I've been to the Rega factory a few times now, and it's always fascinating to see what Roy Gandy and his crew are up to.

Rega's factory is a model of efficiency, yet they still manage to keep it light, with the offices in the rear of the building, and a foosball table front and center when you walk in.

BRYSTON

677 Neal Drive, Peterborough, ON K9J 6X7 Canada
705-742-5325 | www.bryston.com



photo by Pam Dorgay

TONE100.014



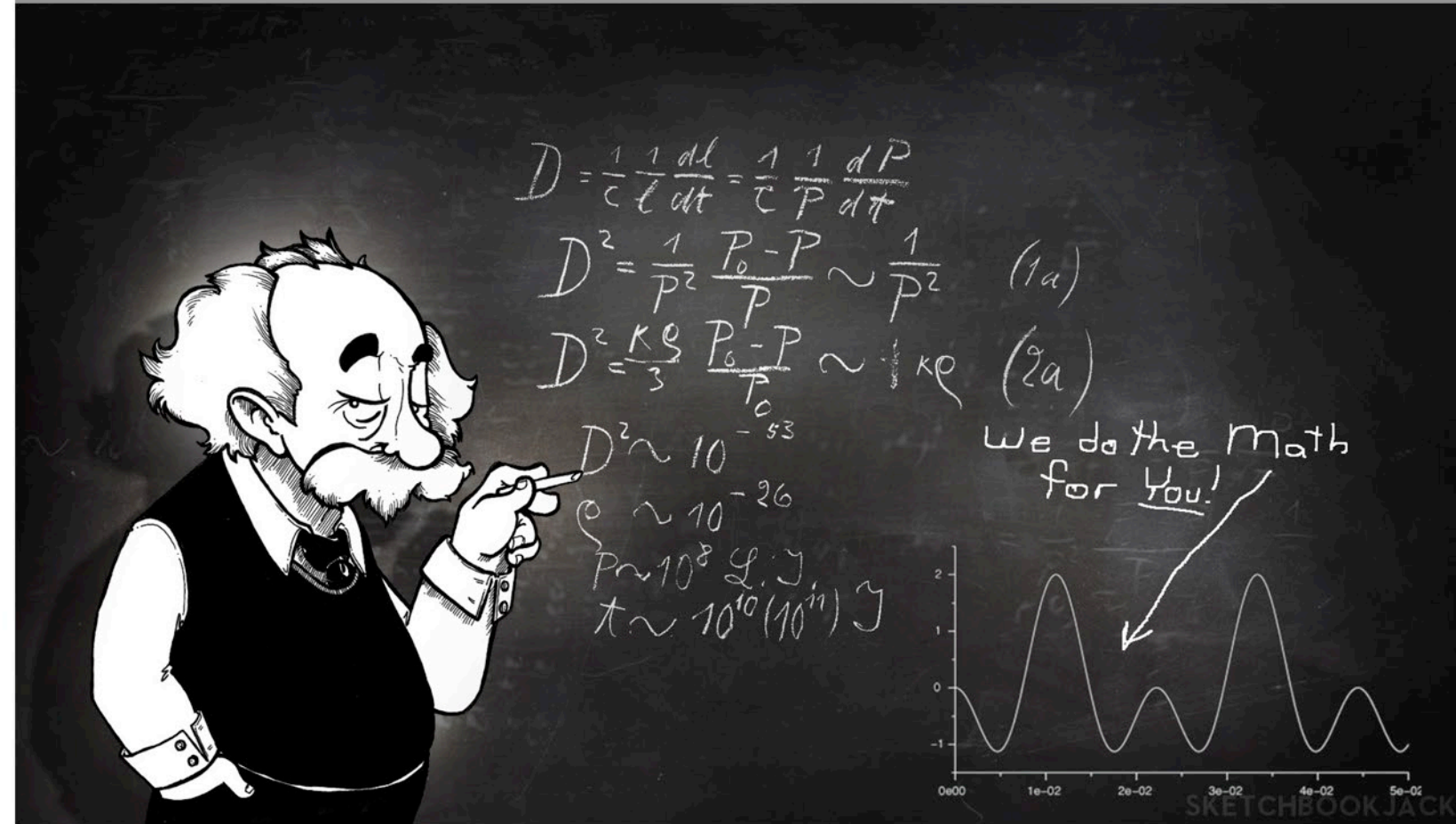
Cover Shot:

Considering how long I've owned a pair of JBL L-100's, what could be more fitting for the cover of issue 100 than a close up of that classic foam grille? JBL knocked it out of the park with the reproduction, and it brings back a lot of great memories.

Staffer Jessica Sieracki has my original pair, passing the baton to the new Classic 100s.

A big thanks to Steve Rowell at Audio Classics for getting me a pair!

Listening to music is supposed to be fun...
 Math is sometimes hard. And not very fun...
We do the math for you!




EXO GAL

EXO GAL, LLC 4657 Aspen Ridge Circle, Eagan, MN, 55122, USA
 Exogal.com sales@exogal.com 651-964-0698

Einstein Chalkboard image used under license from Sketchbook Jack, <https://sketchbookjack.wordpress.com>



Paradigm

PERSONA®

**“FOR ALL THEIR VISUAL BEAUTY...
THE PERSONA SYSTEM DID THAT
MYSTIFYINGLY MAGICAL ACT—ONE
THAT ALL GREATEST SPEAKERS
ASPIRE TO—OF DISAPPEARING
COMPLETELY FROM PERCEPTION
AND LEAVING BEHIND ONLY THE
MUSIC OR MOVIE SOUNDTRACK.”**

Darryl Wilkinson, *Sound & Vision*



Persona 9H



Visit paradigm.com to find a dealer near you and schedule a demonstration of the new Persona.



no.100

P u b l i s h e r s L e t t e r

Wow, issue 100.

We finally made it. Hey, the original *Star Trek* series only made it 79 episodes, so I feel pretty good about that. Despite an initial positive reaction at the 2005 Rocky Mountain Audio Fest, I clearly recall being across the room from *Stereophile's* John Atkinson at January's CES when I heard him mention us – and it wasn't kind. He said: "Well, it's a nice little *newsletter* they've produced, but we'll talk when they've done 100 issues." Nothing like a little motivation, ha!

It's been fun, exciting, challenging, and many other things. Reflecting back on 100 issues, the best part of this journey is the people I've met and the relationships we've built. *TONE* has taken me all over the world in search of music and hifi, and I've enjoyed every minute of it.

Though it may seem like not that much has changed in audio – we still have huge speakers, racks full of amplifiers, and speaker cables that look like garden hoses, how we listen to music is entirely different. Back in 2003, during the initial brainstorming for *TONE*, the iPod was still very limited in functionality and sound quality. The iPhone was still four years down the road. High-res audio was limited to SACD and DVD-a, neither of which had gained much traction.

Today we still have a minor format war with 24/192 PCM, DSD, and the format everyone loves to hate – MQA. Clearly, no one has learned a lesson here. Computer audio was in its infancy, and streaming files was a pain, but it would all go mainstream when the Sooloos system hit the scene. Like all tech at the beginning of its arc, it was big and expensive, but it was fast, and the first solution that was easy to use. The competition was eclipsed, and it remains so with the advent of Roon. It's no coincidence that this is brought to us by the same team of innovators that created the Sooloos system.

Perhaps not quite as sexy to some as the computer goodies, analog continues to be healthy, with performance improved at all price points, from entry to mega level. Who would have ever thought we'd have \$60,000 phono stages and \$15,000 cartridges in 2020? (but no flying cars)

The winner in all this is you, the consumer. With Amazon and Apple entering the high-resolution streaming game along with trailblazers Tidal and Qobuz, there's more music than ever at our fingertips. Even if you are a diehard vinyl enthusiast, streaming is an excellent way to vet your ultimate vinyl purchases. At \$40-\$125 per, that's not a bad thing.

Audio may seem the same as it ever was to the outside world, but we've seen quite a bit of change, and it's all been exciting. As for the next 15 years, I hope that you've learned as much from us as we have from you. I wouldn't have guessed I'd be here today, flipping through the pages of *The Absolute Sound* and *Stereophile* all those years ago. Thank you for following us.

Playlist: What Our Readers Are Into



Boz Scaggs -
Loan Me a Dime

George Michael -
Hard Day

Joni Mitchell -
Hissing of Summer Lawns

Fiona Apple -
Valentine

Slayer -
South of Heaven

David Bowie -
Blackstar

Spoon -
The Ghost of you Lingers

Cecile McLorin Salvant -
Wild Women Don't Have
the Blues

Woody Herman -
Road Father

Chicago Transit Authority-
Introduction

We asked our readers on Facebook to list some tracks they never get tired of. We got a pretty wide range of selections, so here's part one.

We'll list some more at the end of the issue.

no. 1 The World

Tone Playlists are sponsored by

qobuz



70 YEARS IN THE MAKING MC2152 70TH ANNIVERSARY VACUUM TUBE AMPLIFIER



A striking new design to celebrate our seven decades of handcrafting the best audio equipment the world has ever heard.

McIntosh[®]
LEGENDARY PERFORMANCE[®]

mcintoshlabs.com

Old School

Respecting HiFi's Past...

Words and photos by Juan Calvillo

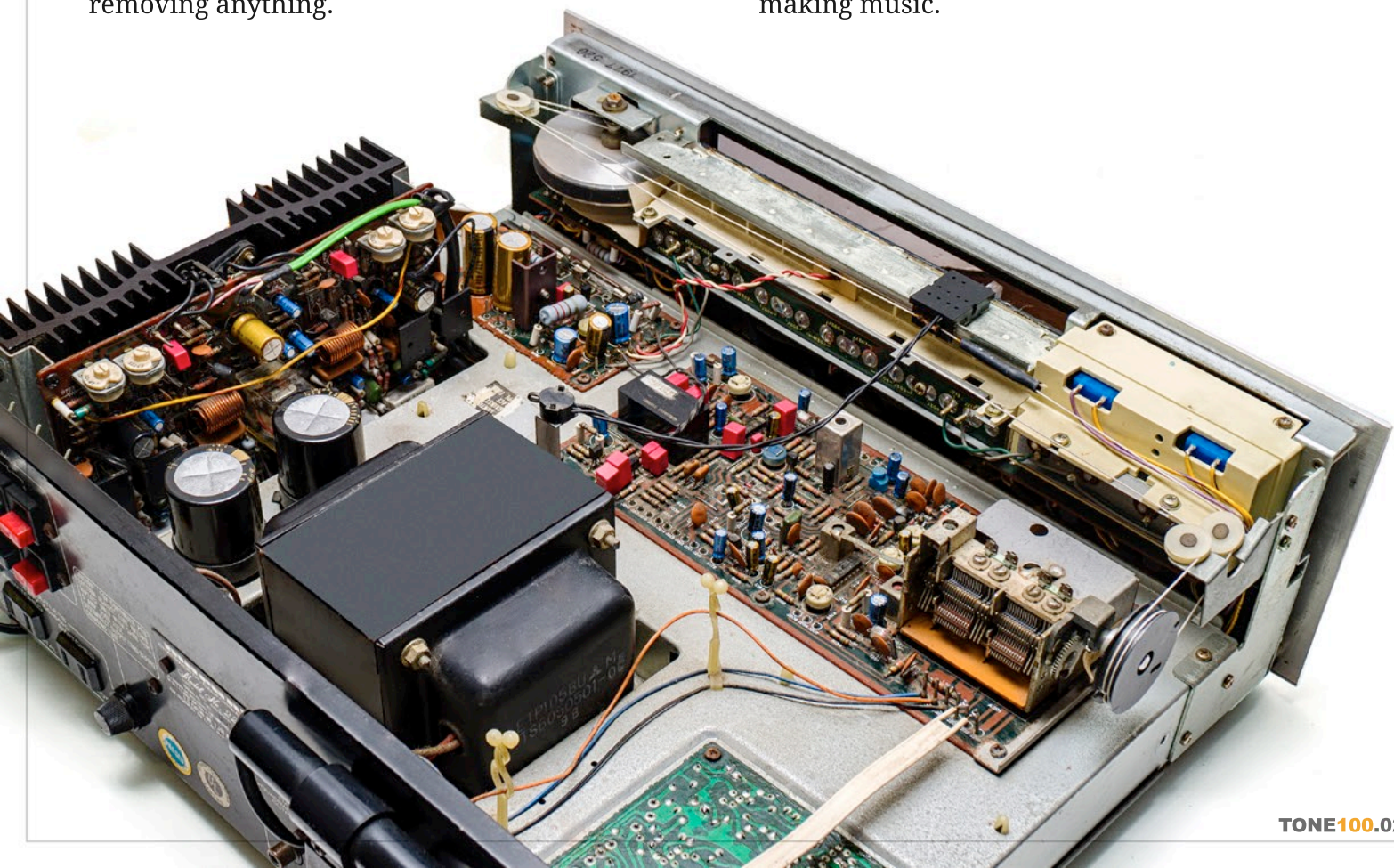
The Marantz 2252

It was a beautiful fall day for a 150-mile drive to the Washington coast. A great looking, Marantz receiver at a bargain price was waiting for me in South Bend. My long-haired German Shepherd Tallulah and I made the drive, getting to the store around noon. The vintage Marantz was on the counter playing when I walked in. It sounded as good as it looked. I handed over the cash, walking to the car with a very clean Marantz 2252. A blackout-faced, model made for one year, 1977, then replaced with the 2252B silver faced model.

Returning home I realized it was playing when I arrived because the power switch is funky. Sometimes yes, sometimes no, power-up, and a scratchy volume control, so I popped the lid to do a thorough cleaning. The 2252s insides are nicely laid out and the pots can be easily sprayed without removing anything.

After a once-over with DeOxit, working the pots a few times fully throughout their range I moved on to the function switch, but made the novice mistake and sprayed some in the power switch. Bad idea. It arced and died completely on the next power up, causing a quick Dim Bulb Tester (DBT) shutdown.

What to do when you kill the new Marantz you are dying to listen to on a Friday evening and can't get a new power switch, right now? Frankenstein it; pull the dead switch and see if you can re-animate it. A reference photo was taken to document how the 4 wires were connected, and out came the power switch. After some cleaning and part flipping, the power switch was reassembled, the slider and catch greased, soldered in and mounted. A DBT power-up followed, with crossed fingers. Eureka, the switch felt smooth, the relay clicked and the 2252 was making music.



TONE100.021



"Tellurium Q's Ultra Black II's can be seen as one of the best loudspeaker cables on the market at their price"

- Jon Myles, HiFi World

"The differences were stunning.....What I can state is that the Ultra Black II cables are currently the best I have heard in my system."

- Ian Ringstead, Hifipig.com

"Tellurium Q Ultra Black II is a remarkably coherent and "well-timed" cable"

- Jason Kennedy, HiFi +

"I have yet to hear a speaker cable which delivers timing like this one."

- Chris Kelly, The Ear

Tellurium Q®



Winner of the Queens Award for Enterprise

telluriumq.com +44 (0) 1458 251 997

Old School

Respecting HiFi's Past...

Words and Photos by Juan Calvillo

The tuner is noticeably more sensitive than that on my 2230B, and though the signal-strength meter doesn't show much strength, the Marantz sucks in the stations, sounding fantastic. After a cursory cleaning of the tarnished RCA inputs on the back, the AUX and Phono functions are tested and sound as nice as the tuner. Later the inputs were buffed with Dremel tool powered Q-tips infused with metal polish. A new set of feet and a power switch are on order too, but in the name of science, replacing the power switch will be delayed to see how long this doctored part will go.

After a couple of weeks of listening I notice the 2252 really enhances the performance from my EPI 100Ws, and "poor man's Thorens", a Phillips GA 212 Electronic. It sounds so good, I decide to keep it and recap it. Over a few more weeks, the Power, Tone, Phono, FM and Amp boards are completely recapped. All went smoothly until the final phase, new filter caps and a recapped Amp board. Afterward, the unit was dark and the bulb on the Dim Bulb Tester stayed bright. No success just yet.

Stumped after hours of looking for bad solder joints, at polarity and values of the capacitors replaced on the Amp board, for loose wires, any cause of the problem, I went to bed exhausted. Only to wake up at 2 A.M. thinking,

Did I get the filter caps right?

I pulled out photos a buddy on Audiokarma sent, taken as he recapped the same receiver. One look at the filter cap photo and I thanked the gods there hadn't be a Chernobyl type catastrophe when I'd tested the receiver. One cap needed to be spun 180 degrees and re-soldered!

This is the receiver I'll be keeping regardless of what else I happen upon. The 2252 has plenty of power at 50 watts per side, features classic Marantz styling, and is now completely recapped.

It's ready for the next 40 years.



The Evolution of Perfection

PrimaLuna EVO

13 NEW MODELS



EVO 100 TUBE DAC - \$2999

Introducing SuperTubeClock™
The hi-fi world's first tube-based data clock

"...a blockbuster component and musical triumph..."

— Robert H. Levi, Positive Feedback

Becoming a tube expert is easy
Visit primaluna-usa.com or our YouTube channel



EVO 400 Preamplifier w/
transformer-coupled balanced in/out
\$4499

primaluna-usa.com 909.310.8540

PrimaLuna®
Music Illuminated™

Time Warp

Assorted Bits of our history...

When some audio magazine from the year 2085 sends a terminator back in time to stop TONE from happening, they're gonna take this guy on the right out. Sorry dude.

Hats off to my old friend Jonathan Spelt, from Ultra Fidelis in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The fellow that sold me my first "real" hifi system and entertained all my pesky questions for many years to follow. For now, we're still both here!



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

Contact The Sound Organisation
today for your closest retailer.



regal

ProAc
perfectly natural

Quadraspire

THE
CHORD
COMPANY

BRYSTON

kii
Face the Music

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

The
sund
Organisation

The Audiophile Apartment

Sound for Smaller Spaces

Walking a Different Path: The Pathos Logos Mk.II Integrated Amplifier

\$4,995
upscaleaudio.com

Many audio enthusiasts have a preference for tubes, while others have more of a desire for solid-state. Both have their reasons, and usually, both are equally passionate about the reasons why they want what they want. And then there are the few rebels that want a bit of each - nothing wrong with that. No doubt, you've met someone with a system using a hybrid approach, more often than not, a vacuum tube preamplifier driving a solid-state amplifier to get that extra bit of tube-y warmth, yet that additional punch that solid-state delivers. Not a bad way to go at all, but it always requires careful auditioning and matching to the rest of your system to get the right balance.

For many of our space-restricted friends, or just those of you that don't want a massive rack of audio gear in your listening room, an integrated is often your salvation. Bam. Pathos gives you everything. How often does that happen?

The pair of 6922 tubes in the preamplifier section sound damn good right out of the box, but with numerous variations on this classic tube, you can fine-tune away on this one. Fortunately, the guy that imports Pathos is the best tube guy on Earth - no other than Upscale Audio's Kevin Deal. But I'll let you all argue amongst yourselves.

Mr. Deal informs me that my review sample has arrived with nearly 500 hours on the clock, so I can get right to work. The Logos Mk. II has a pair of big, 22,000uf filter capacitors per channel in the power supply, so per Deal, "just leave it powered up for 30 days and listen as the magic appears."

Great from power-up

Beginning the evaluation with Miles Davis Sketches of Spain and the lovely JBL L-100 Classic speakers, it's easy to get pulled in to this combination. As someone who used to sport the hybrid combination in the past, there's a definite signature here, and it's great. The 110 watts per channel that the Logos MkII delivers has extra grip that neither the PrimaLuna HP integrated (with KT150s) or the Line Magnetic LM-805 have. All three amplifiers are right around the \$4,995 price point, and all are different.

The Audiophile Apartment

Sound for Smaller Spaces



The Line Magnetic is definitely the most romantic but has the least amount of bass control. The PrimaLuna is as good as it gets for tubes, with more grip than the LM, but less midrange magic. Part of this will depend on your personal preference, but if you want nearly all the magic that full tube design provides, but want more bass drive without having to replace power tubes on a regular (and at a higher cost) basis, the Logos Mk.II might be your perfect choice. And I say this with no disrespect to the PrimaLuna or the Line Magnetic. I actually own both of these amps.

Made in Vicenza, Italy, the Logos Mk. II is beautiful to behold. Actually, everything they make is. This amp is almost too beautiful to tuck in an equipment rack. From the curved front panel, exposing the two preamp tubes, to the cooler than cool heat sinks, extruded with the Pathos name in them, I suggest showing this amplifier off. Like maybe on a beautiful Roman column with a couple of spotlights on it?

Back to the sound

Gorgeous as this amplifier is, the sound still wins the day. The Mosfet output stage is a perfect match for the tube input stage, and the oversized, dual-mono power supply design gives this amplifier the current reserve to drive even difficult speakers. They powered my Tympani IVs with ease, and a set of Acoustat 2+2 ESLs equally well.

Mating the Logos Mk.II with everything from a pair of KEF LS-50s up to the Focal Stella Utopia Ems, proves a breeze. The higher quality your main speakers are, and the more bass extension they have, the more you can truly see what this amplifier is capable of, both in terms of resolution and control. The LS-50s, Falcon LS3/5as and Wharfedale Linton all make an excellent match. Great choices for those in a small to medium-sized space.

Selfishly speaking, the Logos Mk.II is an especially good amplifier to power the JBL L-100 classics with the grip of the output stage balances the slightly warm bass character of these speakers incredibly well, giving the JBLs even more cred.

Moving the amplifier to the living room, with a pair of Focal Kanta no.3s, also proves excellent. Tracking through several acoustic and solo pieces, settling on a long playlist of Lloyd Cole tracks clearly shows off this amplifier's ability to produce a broad, three-dimensional soundfield.

Enjoy the Experience



PASS

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

The Audiophile Apartment

Sound for Smaller Spaces



Graham
Phantom Elite &
Phantom III Tonearms

\$6,999.99 - \$12,99.99



Nordost
Blue Heaven
Power Cord

\$219.99



Integrity HiFi
Tru-Sweep Anti-Static
Dust Cleaner/Sweeper
Record Cleaner

\$259.99



VPI
HW-40 40th
Anniversary Turntable

\$14,999.99



Clearaudio
Jubilee Panzerholz
MM Cartridge

\$899.99



Audioquest
Tornado High-Current
AC Power Cord (6ft.)

\$1,299.95



IsoAcoustics
ISO-PUCK Mini
Equipment Isolators

\$99.99 (Set of 8)



Sieveking Sound
Omega
Headphone Stands

\$179.99



Audioquest
DragonFly Cobalt USB
DAC + Preamp + HP Amp

\$299.95



Sumiko
Blue Point Special
Evo III MC Cartridge

\$548.99



Nitty Gritty
Record Cleaner
Model 2.0 (Solid Oak)

\$544.99



VPI
HW-16.5
Record Cleaner

\$699.99 (Packages Available)



Epos Acoustics
K5 Bookshelf
Speakers (Black)

\$494.99 (Pair)



Final Audio Design
E5000 Earphones

\$278.99



Audio Technica
AT-ART7 Dual
Moving Coil Cartridge

\$1089.99

Cole's "Music in a Foreign Language" floats easily between the speakers, capturing every bit of tonal inflection he offers up. The Crash Test Dummies "Superman's Song" gives up more of the same. Trying to stay in the current day, tracking through the Billie Elish album is equally satisfying.

This is an amplifier that has just enough emotion to be engaging, yet not too much of a sonic signature that it appears overly colored. Again, all tube lovers will gravitate towards that anyway. The Logos Mk.II merely adds a bit more tonal saturation than the similarly priced competition that is all solid-state.

Beautiful and functional

With four single-ended RCA inputs and two XLR inputs, you aren't going to run out of inputs. There is also an optional internal DAC board, so perhaps we can get Mr. Deal to send that by for a listen and follow up. More than likely, you have a DAC that you're already more than happy with. If not, the internal DAC is an excellent option for those where space is at a premium, and functionality trumps all.

Those wanting more nuts and bolts can read the full specs here at the Upscale website.

A main power switch at the rear puts the unit in standby; depressing the top of the two small, round buttons powers it up. The bottom button cycles you through the inputs, and what looks like a volume control actually does not turn in a full circle. It's highly damped movement adjusts the sound level up or down by a slight jog to the right or left. A red LED display in the center shows the level. The Logos Mk.II is a rare product that is as much fun to look at as it is to use.

The Logos Mk.II does it all - dynamics, speed, control, and delicacy. All in a package that is stunningly executed. Our review sample arrived in the silver and black version, clean design to be sure, but when I think of Pathos, I always think of the wood inlays. It just seems to go with the warmth of the design. But hey, different strokes. If you've got a pair of Eames lounge chairs, go for the wood. A couple of Barcelona chairs or a black leather couch might suit the black better.

And wait till you see the remote. There's just something so inviting about Italian style.

www.upscaleaudio.com



WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US:

- Friendly and Helpful Customer Service
- Expert Packaging and Quick Delivery
- Great Selection of High End Equipment
- Over 10k Unique Records In-Stock



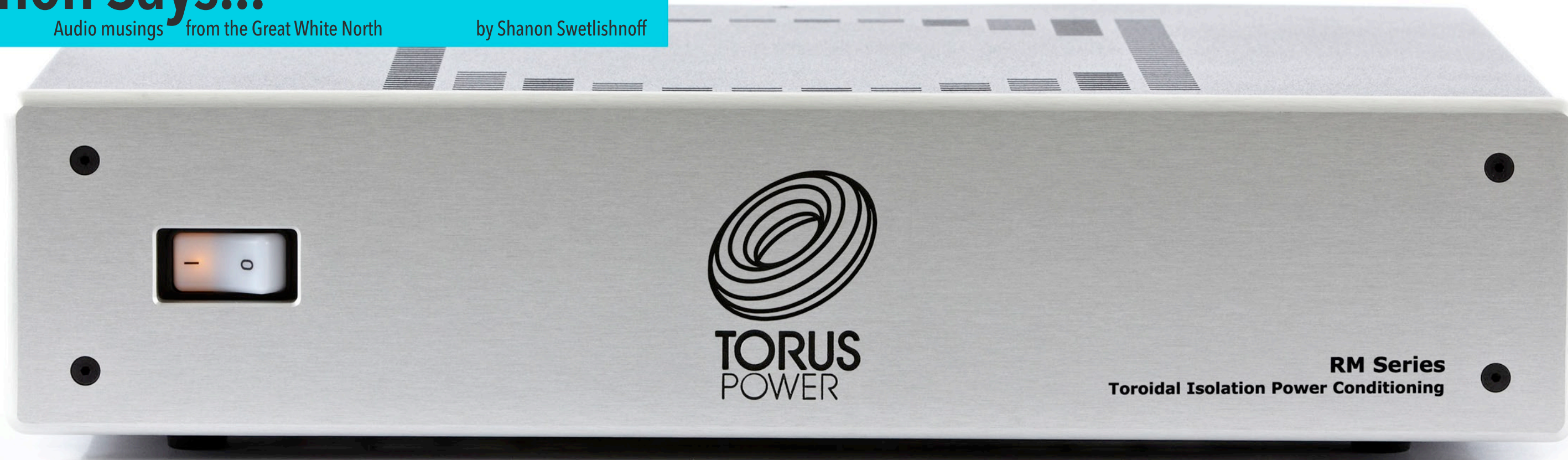
KirmussAudio
KA-RC-1 Ultrasonic
Restoration System
\$875.00



Shanon Says...

Audio musings from the Great White North

by Shanon Swetlishnoff



Torus RM15 \$2,300

www.toruspower.com

One of the most important factors in keeping your gear performing at its best is the power it gets fed. We all know the “garbage in, garbage out” philosophy, so providing your system with clean, balanced consistent power, is essential for optimal sound quality. When it comes to toroidal power isolation transformers, this Canadian company from Toronto, Ontario has been doing it right since 1983. You may not have heard of Plitron Manufacturing, but perhaps you’ve heard of Torus, the subsidiary that concentrates on making isolation transformers for your home. You should hear what a Torus power conditioner can do for audio.

Plitron excels in research, design, development and manufacturing toroidal based products for audio, AV, and medical applications with over 400 off the shelf pieces. They also offer

customized products to suit a customer's specific needs. Torus Power models in the RM series remain unparalleled for performance, protection, and value, ranging from 5 Amp to 100 Amp. The goal here is to introduce you to the Torus RM15, a Balanced Power Isolation Unit (PIU) power transformer offering 120 V output with high power capability, isolation, surge suppression, and noise reduction. The RM15 is reasonably priced under \$3,000 Canadian (\$2,300 USD), offering tremendous value for the price asked.

When choosing a power supply, consideration should be given to the advantages of toroidal power as compared to EI transformers. The toroidal design virtually eliminates mechanical hum, running cool and silent as a result of the lack of an air gap in the grain-orientated silicon steel windings. This advantage reduces acoustic noise 8:1 over EI. What this means for the discerning listener is the elimination of floor noise or any background interference that takes away from recordings ultimate dynamics.

Toroidal transformers have 1/10th the magnetic field as their EI counterparts, reducing interference to sensitive electronics nearby. And toroidal power is highly efficient, requiring 1/16th of the electricity EI transformers need in standby. This steps right in line with Plitron's response to consumer demand for cleaner, greener power, by developing innovative energy efficient technology. This incredible transformer isolates 120 V to power your equipment with low impedance and high current. The result is pure isolation and consistency, even with spikes in household power or electrical storms that can damage your treasured equipment. The larger models have the ability to step 240 V power down to 120 for even more current reserve.

The RM15 weighs a manageable 21kg (46lbs) measuring 42cm x 29cm x 9cm (16.5"x11.5"x3.5") making it fit nicely into any rack. The front panel has a large recessed toggle switch which turns blue when engaged while the rear panel offers an AC input, 10 hospital grade outlets and a ground.



Shanon Says...

Audio musings from the Great White North

by Shanon Swetlishnoff

The biggest question for me was how would using the RM15 impact the music. I'm a vinyl enthusiast and a huge fan of classic rock but listen to a wide range of music in both digital and analog. Honestly, there was some initial skepticism that there would be a huge sonic improvement, but the RM15 made me a quick believer. When you are savoring time in your listening chair, you know how much full bodied bass, crisp vocals, fine details and unimpeded power add to the overall experience. The increased enjoyment the RM 15 brings to my entire music collection is instantly clear. Major improvements in texture, channel separation and fine detail resolution disappear the minute I go back to merely using the wall socket.

The RM15 brings bass out of the background giving it more kick and dynamic punch. Even without a sub added to the system, there is more bloom, texture and power to the low end. Going straight to *Who's Next*, the bass drum and guitar take on a more commanding role in this classic rock recording. While I usually need to play Rush's "Anthem" and "Subdivisions" at window shaking level, I found the power behind these cuts still on tap at modest levels, where I didn't before.

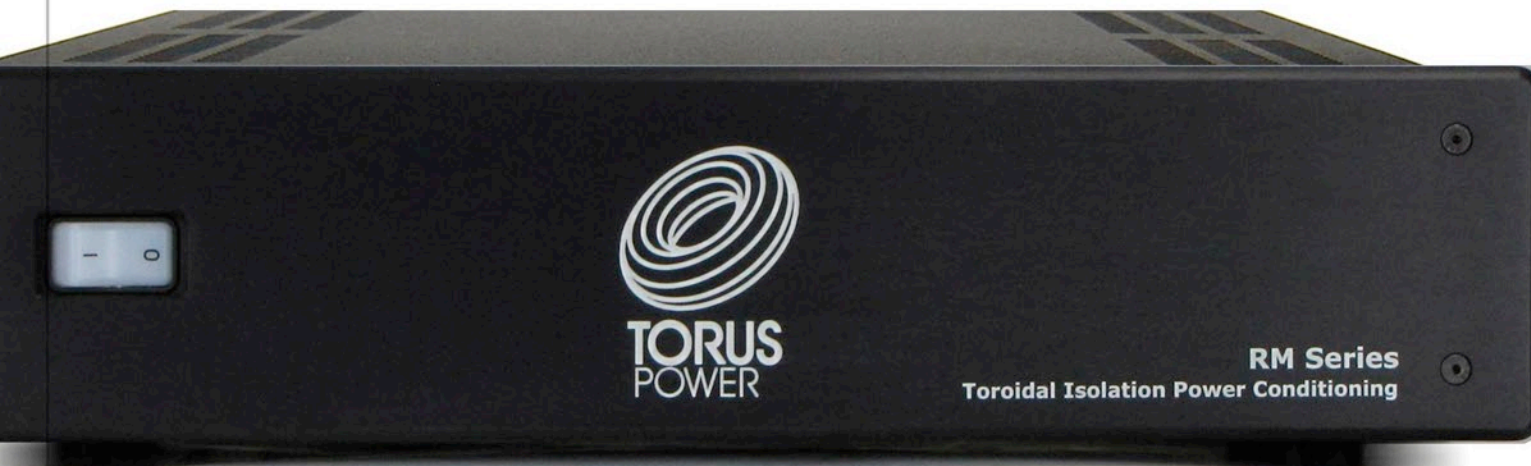
Small background details that often get lost are hard to miss while vocals are crisp and genuine too. Slowing down the pace for the Buena Vista Social Club record, Ibrahim Ferrer's voice mixed with the intimate percussion on these tracks feels more alive than merely plugging into the wall. I went back and forth a number of times, just to make sure I wasn't freaking myself out.

It's hard to contain my enthusiasm for the consistent improvement that the Torus RM-15 delivers.

Now I appreciate the sweet spot more than ever, yet even off axis, I can still hear the improvement. If you haven't addressed this aspect of your system, your eyes and ears will be opened.

Time to crank up some more Rush...

<https://www.toruspower.com/>



TONE100.037

Tone Imports

ACOUSTICPLAN

AUDITORIUM 23

EMT

J.C. VERDIER

LEBEN HI-FI

LINE MAGNETIC

MURASAKINO

RIVIERA LABS

SENTEC

SHINDO LABORATORY

SPEC CORPORATION

SUGDEN AUDIO

TELLURIUM Q

TONAPPARATE

TONEIMPORTS.COM



Playlist: What Our Readers Are Into



Ok, ok. Even though Christmas is past and some of you don't even celebrate the holiday (which is just fine, BTW), but Christmas songs are a big part of the season. This collection, versions 1, 2, and 3 are some of our favorites. Extra credit if you have the cassettes.

no. 2 Portland

TONE Playlists are sponsored by:



THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS: THIN FILM ACCURACY, DEEP BASS THRILLS.

Cone speakers can't reproduce mid-range and high frequency audio with the lifelike detail and three dimensional effect of an electrostatic loudspeaker. Nothing delivers bass like woofers in a box.

MartinLogan combines these elements in the most advanced electrostatic hybrid loudspeaker ever, **Renaissance ESL 15A**, flagship of the Masterpiece collection.

With a unique suite of innovative tech and proprietary design elements, these loudspeakers deliver detailed imaging and dynamic soundstage, even in the most challenging listening spaces.

No other loudspeaker features the controlled dispersion radiation pattern of a curvilinear electrostatic transducer combined with our reflection-defeating PoweredForce Forward woofer alignment. The result is breathtakingly accurate and seamlessly integrated full-range performance. On-board Anthem Room Correction (ARC®) technology instantly optimizes response for the best sound in any room.

Renaissance ESL 15A is a revolutionary melding of form and function. This is exactly what we mean by *Truth in Sound*.

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 MartinLogan 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!"

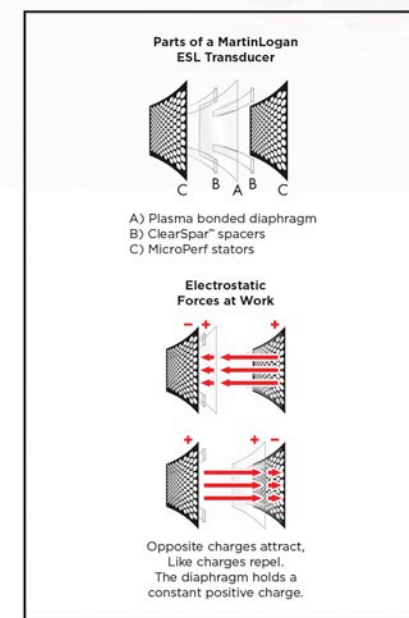
*Impression ESL 11A
Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi+*

"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, great-sounding 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*



Renaissance
ESL 15A
by **MARTINLOGAN**

35
YEARS
1983 - 2018

"...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."



Sonus faber

Aida
LIMITLESS IMMERSION

sonusfaber.com

Headphone Art

The Fine art of Personal Listening

Personal Pleasure Focal Utopia Headphones

\$3,995
www.focal.com

Having lived with a number of Focal speakers over the last five years, the family resemblance between the Utopia headphones and their floor-standing speakers is unmistakable. The quick, lively, accurate sound I've grown accustomed to is now available for personal listening.

Long story short, we love them.

Enjoy the Experience



PASS

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

Headphone Art

The Fine art of Personal Listening



At \$3,995, these are top-tier premium phones to be sure. Yet unlike some of the other big guns, the Utopias sound incredibly good merely plugged in to my first gen Astell & Kern player or even the Dell desktop that I use to control ROON in my main system. Ditto for the iPad, so these are not like a number of other premium phones that absolutely require a major headphone amplifier to deliver great sound.



TORUS POWER

Toroidal Isolation Power Transformers

“ ONCE I EXPERIENCED THE DIFFERENCE CLEAN POWER MAKES IN THE PERFORMANCE OF MY SYSTEM, TORUS POWER GAINED A CUSTOMER FOR LIFE. ”

DAVIS W. | ARDMORE, PA

“ MY ALL-TIME BEST AUDIO INVESTMENT. ”

MARTIN O. | STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN



INSPIRED PERFORMANCE

WWW.TORUSPOWER.COM
SALES@TORUSPOWER.COM

Headphone Art

The Fine art of Personal Listening

Past experience with Focal speakers (and their beryllium tweeters) shows they need a while to break in properly, sounding slightly edgy out of the box. The Utopia headphones are similar, so they stayed plugged into the Dell with music on repeat for a solid week before beginning serious listening. I suggest you do the same, or the brittle sound you start with may scare you off.

Plugging in to a number of different headphone amplifiers, Kevin Deal from Upscale Audio suggests the Feliks Audio Elise. At only \$1,649, this makes for an incredible combination, where my Pass HPA-1 is still slightly forward for my personal taste. The Elise transforms the Utopias, mellowing them out that last bit. Passing from my desk to the living room where a pair of Focal Kanta no.3s are playing (via an all tube VAC i170) the sonic signature is wonderfully similar. We'll have a full report on the Elise very soon.

The Utopia uses a single, full-range beryllium driver, and I firmly believe that this lack of crossover is a big part of the coherent, open sound these phones deliver. Thanks to the low mass of this driver, the Utopias sound remarkably similar to my favorite planar phones.

No matter what kind of music you gravitate towards, the seamless quality of the Utopias will bring it out. Tracking through a long playlist of Blue Note classics shows off how well these phones capture the fine details of acoustic instruments. Horns and piano are full of texture, and thanks to the ultra dynamic nature of the Utopia driver, drums take on a new level of realism, capturing the initial strike of the drum heads with amazing precision.

Listening to Frank Zappa's *Freak Out!* reveals what makes the Utopias worth the price. Their ability to disentangle complex recordings is fantastic. Anyone who happens to be a student of Zappa knows how much he packs into any tune. The massive bass riff in the opening of "Who Are The Brain Police?"

is kept in balance with all the tinkly percussion bits, surrounded by layer upon layer of vocals – with Zappa staying front, center, right inside your brain as you listen.

The Utopias do an equally enticing job with sparse musical selections. Moving all the way through *Twin Peaks (Music From the Limited Event)* I'm stopped dead in my tracks on Sharon Van Etten's "Tarifa." If you aren't/weren't a Twin Peaks fan, at the end of the new episodes (produced around 2017) there is a different band playing in the bar. David Lynch had an incredible sensitivity for the music featured in the original series, continuing this trend here. It's worth a spin on your favorite streaming service, you might find a few good test tracks!

As you take the Utopias out of their supplied carrying case, you'll quickly notice the high level of fit and finish these headphones offer – just like a pair of Grande Utopia Ems. Everything is machined to a standard that you might expect from an F1 car or fine wristwatch. With Focal, engineering and craftsmanship always serves the art. Beautiful to behold, yes. But remarkable to listen to.

Well worth the price asked, these belong at the top of the premium headphone mountain.



Time Warp

Assorted Bits of our history...

The Beginning

Back in the summer of 2003, the Washington economy was fairly go-go, and no one wanted to rent us 1500 square feet of office space, because it wasn't a big enough transaction. So what next? Build a damn building in the back yard.

Once in place, I felt a lot like the mysterious character in Tom Waits' "What's he building?" As did the neighbors. But we all got along, and 96 sheets of dry wall later, TONE was up and running.



TONE100.047

IT'S A **FAMILY AFFAIR.**



TRADE-UP PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

EAT

European Audio Team

Distributed by VANA Ltd.

MINE: it should be yours

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.

Adidas Classics

\$39-\$79/pair
adidas.com

Just like hifi accessories, casual footwear has been sneaking off the charts, price-wise, so it's nice to see some re-issues that have been re-imagined with an eye on affordability. More money for records!



TONE100.049

FLORIDA AUDIO EXPO

Listen In Paradise

February 7-9, 2020

863-825-5380 | barta@floridaaudioexpo.com
www.floridaaudioexpo.com

Embassy Suites by Hilton Tampa

555 North Westshore Boulevard
Tampa, Florida 33609

"The inaugural year of the FAE was a great success; the show was well organized, attendees were plentiful and interesting, with many new faces we don't see at the other shows. We will be back!"

— Jeremy Bryan, MBL North America

MINE: it should be yours

The Stylos Fountain Pen

\$100 (approx)
metaxis.com/shop

Though you could order this pen with a traditional fineliner/ballpoint, there is something so deliberate about using a fountain pen that begs to go there.

It's such an exquisitely analog experience.

Nothing less than you would expect from Kostas Metaxas, the man behind Metaxis & Sins studio. The same mind that brings us tape decks that look like they came from the 22nd century and a skull shaped headphone amplifier (among other cool things) brings his unique personal style to the pen.

Whether you are new or experienced with the fountain pen, this is a writing instrument you will enjoy. And, it is available in a wide variety of colors too.

You never know, you just might get lured into one of those tape decks?



ABYSS[®]
Made in America



Diana[®]

Boulder
The Foundation of Your System



— EXPERIENCE THE NEW —
1110 PREAMPLIFIER & 1160 STEREO AMPLIFIER

Boulder Amplifiers Inc | 255 S Taylor Ave | Louisville CO 80027 | USA
303-449-8220 | sales@boulderamp.com | www.boulderamp.com

MINE: it should be yours



The NASA Graphics Manual

\$79
nasa.gov

Packaged to look like the world's biggest pop tart, this is a very interesting bit of NASA's history, with a lot of details on how their graphics needs have expanded over the decades.

A must for your favorite space nerd.

MINE: it should be yours

Nerf Grenade Launcher

\$49
amazon.com

Speaker placement and vta adjustments got you down? Tired of arguing with people about MQA? Five minutes with one of these and suddenly life gets better.



50 BRANDS
8 DEMO ROOMS
1 LOCATION



433 Carrall Street | Vancouver | Canada | 604 688 5502

hificentre.com

MINE: it should be yours



UBeesize Tripod S
\$17.99
amazon.com

When you really need a low angle shot, the UBeesize Tripod S really helps make it happen, and is especially handy in low light situations.

In a pinch, it will hold a DSLR, but we wouldn't trust it there terribly long.

TONE100.057



PRIMALUNA
NEW! EVO 400 Tube Preamp
RCA & Balanced In/Out
\$4,499

53lbs of badass, dual-mono, tube-rectified bliss! Plus, transformer-coupled XLR. Look inside on our YouTube channel.



MUSICAL FIDELITY
MX-VYNL Our Favorite \$1000
Phonostage Is On Sale
\$749 (regularly \$999)

The MX-VYNL is fully-balanced, adjustable on-the-fly, and sounds fantastic. Pair w/ Booster for reference-level performance!



VPI
Super Prime Scout w/ 10.5"
JMW Arm & VTA On The Fly
\$2,899 (was \$58,997.32!)

Watch our video! Upscale Audio Exclusive with upgraded tonearm and base! Cartridge bundles. #1 VPI dealer worldwide!



PATHOS ACOUSTICS
Aurium
Hybrid Headphone Amp
\$1,295

Class-A, zero feedback hybrid design using two 6922 on the front end. Hot-rod it with a Booster Power Supply!



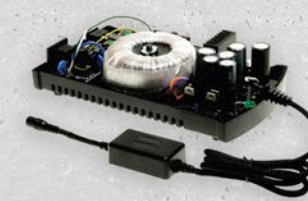
NAIM
NAC 152 XS + NAP 155 XS
Pre/Power Bundle
\$2,249 (was \$5990!)

62% off! We made your dream of owning Naim come true! Take a peek inside on our YouTube channel.



LUMIN
LUMIN Network Music Players
aka Streaming DACs
\$2,300-\$13,990

Lumin's secret sauce yields incredible musicality from digital files, Tidal, Qobuz, and more. Call us and do digital right.



SBOOSTER
BOTW Power & Precision MKII
Audiophile Power Supply
\$359-\$399

Vastly improve the sonic performance of any compatible device in your system. DAC, streamer, router, turntable, etc.



FELIKS AUDIO
Euforia
Tube Headphone Amp
\$2,599

Learn why Focal uses Feliks headphone amps to demo Utopia at our YouTube channel. Amps starting at just \$679.

KIRMUSS ULTRASONIC RECORD CLEANER

Restores THREE LPs
and ONE 45
Simultaneously



Upscale Audio Edition

VINYL RESTORATION TAKES TIME

The Upscale Audio Edition processes 50% more LPs per session than the standard Kirmuss Record Cleaner.

Just \$1,335

LIMITED TIME OFFER

\$999



MINE: it should be yours



TASCAM DR-05x
\$99
amazon.com

For those of you doing any kind of live recording, or podcasting, the TASCAM DR-05x delivers surprisingly professional results at a bargain price. Even better with an external microphone.

TONE100.059

FOCAL® & naim
LISTEN BEYOND

SPECIAL OFFERS

KANTA N°2 & UNITI STAR HI-FI SYSTEM AT

\$12,999
*USD



USA distribution by Focal Naim America ||| CANADA distribution by Focal Naim Canada ||| Contact us for more information: 1 866-271-5689 / info@focal-naim.com

MINE: it should be yours

Clear Click Video

\$129.95
amazon.com

At first blush this might seem way out of our normal range of things on our radar. However, if you or one of your family members still has some memories on videotape, and a working VCR, this is a very handy way to transfer it to an SD card, and then into your computer, to edit at your leisure.



Audio Technica
AT-OC9XSH Dual
Moving Coil Cartridge
\$648.99



Nordost
QKore3
Ground Unit
\$3,499.99



Clearaudio
Balance V2 MM/MC
Phono Stage (Silver)
\$3,499.99



VAS
Nova Special MC
Cartridge w/Stylus
\$1,799.99



Audio Desk System
Vinyl Cleaner Pro
Record Cleaner
\$3999.99



Audioquest
Niagara 1200 Low-Z Power
Noise-Dissipation System
\$999.95



Cayin
A-50T MKII Tube Int.
Amp w/MM Phono Stage
\$1,899.99



Equi=Tech
1.5RQ Power
Conditioner
\$4,699.99



Hana
ML Microline
MC Cartridge 0.4mV
\$1,199.99



IsoAcoustics
GAIA I Speaker
Isolators (Set of 4)
\$599.99



KirmussAudio
KA-RC-1 Ultrasonic
Restoration System
\$875.00



Stax
SR-009 Ltd. 80th Anniv.
Open Back Headphones
\$3,824.99



Music Hall
Aztec Blue Turntable
Platter Cork Mat
\$89.99



Klaudio
KD-CLN-LP200
Ultrasonic Cleaner
\$4,799.99



Music Hall
MMF-3.3 Turntable
w/ Ortofon 2M Red
\$699.99



WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US:

- Friendly and Helpful Customer Service
- Expert Packaging and Quick Delivery
- Great Selection of High End Equipment
- Over 10k Unique Records In-Stock



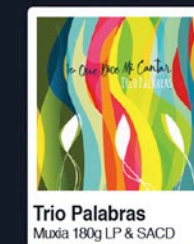
Sasha Cooke
Yarlung 180g 45rpm LP



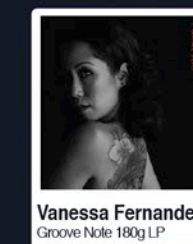
Kenny Burrell
Blue Note Tone Poet 180g LP



Jennifer Warnes
Impex 180g LP & SACD



Trio Palabras
Muxia 180g LP & SACD



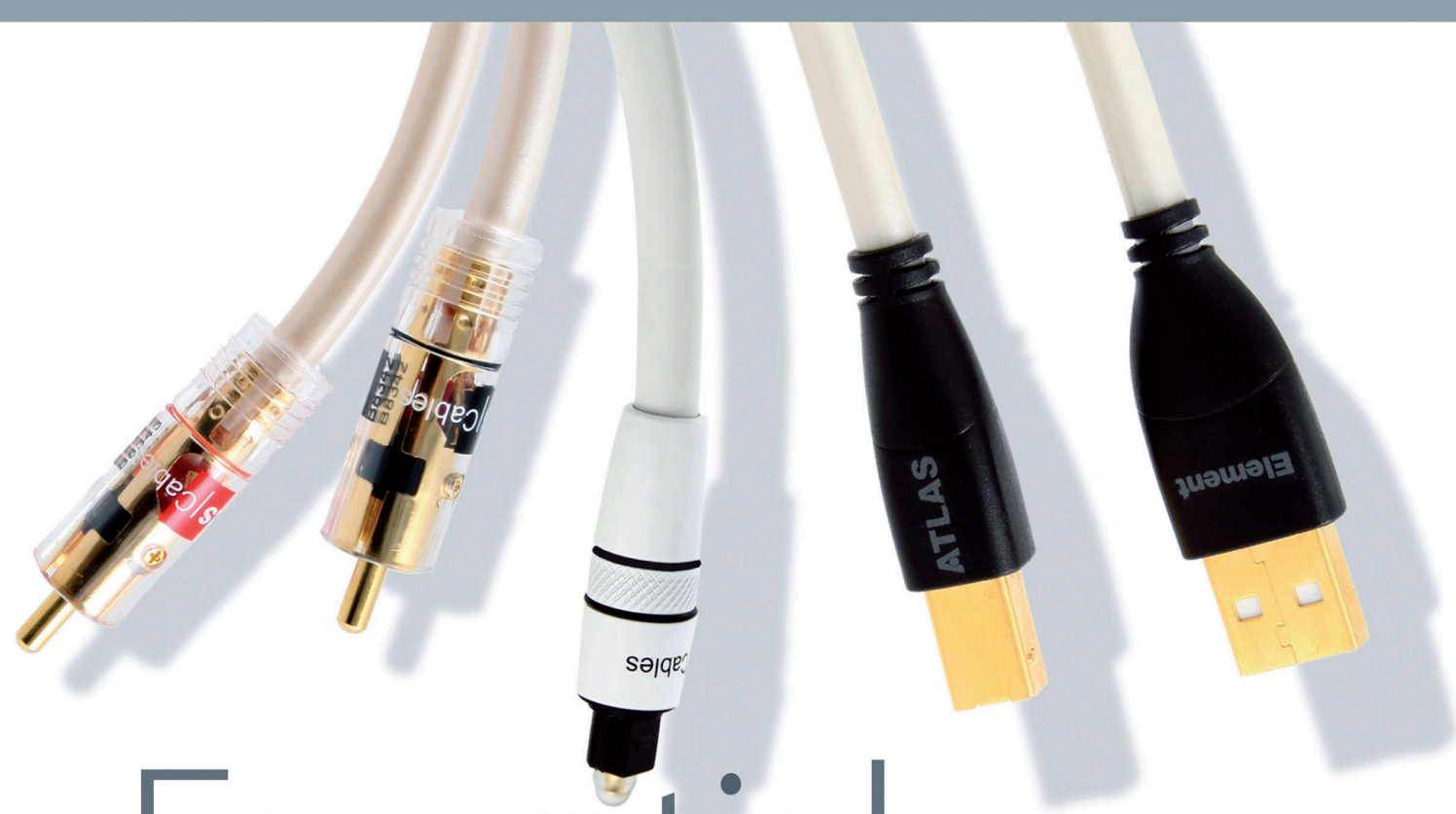
Vanessa Fernandez
Groove Note 180g LP



Beethoven
Chasing The Dragon 180g LP

Can't Get it Out of my Head

By Jeff Dorgay



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.

Our latest Element sc USB cable is based on research showing solid core cable delivers superior results to conventional multi-strand.

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

winner
BEST ANALOGUE INTERCONNECT
2012 • 2013 • 2014

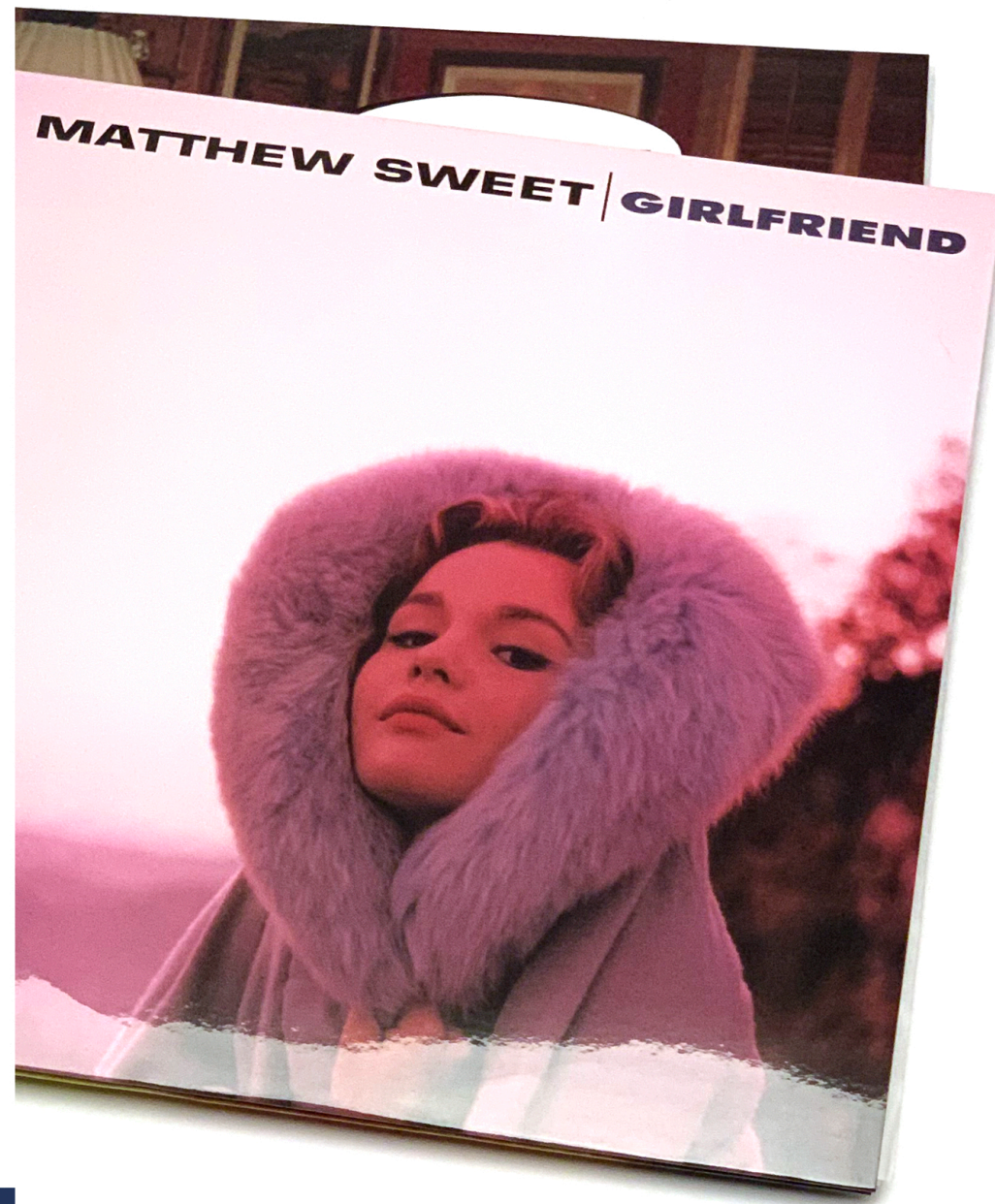
WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2012
CABLES & ACCESSORIES
BEST ANALOGUE INTERCONNECT
ATLAS ELEMENT INTEGRA

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2013
ACCESSORIES
BEST ANALOGUE INTERCONNECT
ATLAS ELEMENT INTEGRA

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2014
Accessories
Best analogue interconnect
Atlas Element Integra

Distributed in North America by:
VanaLTD www.vanaltd.com

ATLAS
the performance connection
atlas cables.com



Emily Duff has been really busy recording a new album and taking care of holiday business, so we gave her the Christmas season off.

One record that is never too far out of my head is Matthew Sweet's *Girlfriend*. Many Sweet fans argue that it's his best work, while others like 100% Fun and Altered Beast better.

A while back, Intervention Records did a superb job remastering all three, with premium covers to match. If you can still find these rare treats, I suggest pushing the buy button instantly.

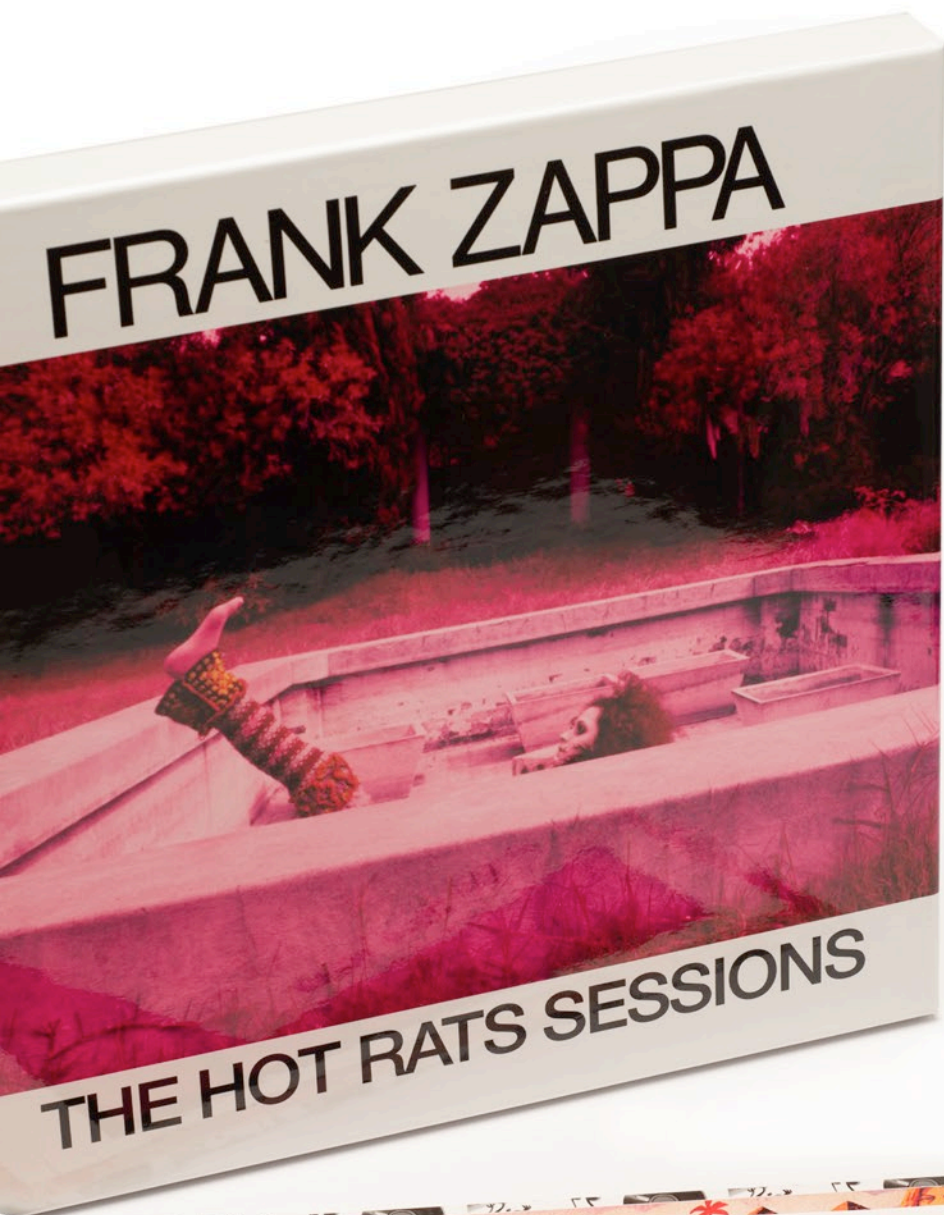
The sonics on all three are fantastic, and this is a record that draws you in, perhaps too far in, to Sweet's life after his divorce.

It's almost worth listening to one of the other two right after, if for no other reason than to lighten the mood somewhat.

But here's a tip of the parka hood to one of my all time faves.

Can't Get it Out of my Head

By Jeff Dorgay



Frank Zappa took me away from day one, and my journey started with Hot Rats, “Peaches En Regalia” to be exact. In a room with a black light on.

But I digress.

The wacky lyrics, incredible guitar work and time signatures that are all over the board still blow my mind.

The “Sessions” collection is a six CD set (see I told you not to get rid of your CD players...) and includes every single variation on the theme during the creation of this legendary record.

In addition, a book full of liner notes from Matt Groening, and essays from Ian Underwood and Joe Travers complete the additional pictures supplied. And there’s a board game. Yeah.



TONE100.073



Cardas Audio
Established 1987



The Nautilus Power Strip

- Cardas 4181US Outlets
- RFI/EMI Protection On Every Outlet
- Point-to-Point Wiring with Cardas 10 AWG Solid Core & 11.5 AWG Multi-Stranded Litz Conductors

www.cardas.com

Time Warp

Assorted Bits of our history...

An incredibly long time ago, in Ken Ball's basement, he started modifying headphones; upgrading the cables and making these beautiful wooden driver cups for bargain Grado headphones.

Today Campfire Audio is known and loved world wide. You all know how big personal listening has become.

But it's fun to look back, and these humble SR60's are still one of my favorites. Congrats to Ken and his team. They've come a long way.



TONE100.067

INTERNATIONAL MULTI-AWARD WINNING

AVID
ACUTUS TURNTABLE

AVID HIFI
MADE IN THE UK
WWW.AVIDHIFI.COM

hi-fi & records
Redakteurfavoriten

i-fidelity.net
Highlight

GOLDEN GROOVY
10/10

hi-fi Choice
EDITOR'S CHOICE

AUDIO EMPFEHLUNG
KLASSIK

hi-finews
OUTSTANDING PRODUCT

HI-FI WORLD
RECOMMENDED

U-lite
Testurteil 2019
89/90
Oberklasse
www.lite-magazin.de

stereoplay
HIGHLIGHT
05/2019

Meilleur achat
HAUTE FIDELITE

HIGHLY Hifi Pig
RECOMMENDED

GROOVY
8/10

HI-FI WORLD
RECOMMENDED

hi-finews
OUTSTANDING PRODUCT

STEREO-TEST
KLANG-NIVEAU 94%
PREIS/LEISTUNG
★★★★☆
EXZELLENT

Hi-Fi Choice
RECOMMENDED

LONG LIVE VINYL
GEAR OF THE YEAR
HIGHLY COMMENDED
2018

PUBC
TONE Publisher's Choice Award

STEREO-TEST
KLANG-NIVEAU 67%
PREIS/LEISTUNG
★★★★☆
EXZELLENT

Hi-Fi Choice
RECOMMENDED

Hi-Fi Choice
EDITOR'S CHOICE

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

i-fidelity.net
Avid Pelleere
Testurteil: überragend

HI-FI WORLD
RECOMMENDED

i-fidelity.net
Highlight

U-lite
Testurteil 07/16
1+
Spitzenklasse
www.lite-magazin.de

i-fidelity.net
Highlight

Paul Rigby
(The Audiophile Man)

GROOVY
8/10

hi-finews
OUTSTANDING PRODUCT

hi-finews
HIGHLY COMMENDED

U-lite
Testurteil 06/15
1.0
Oberklasse
www.lite-magazin.de

Hi-Fi Choice
RECOMMENDED

WHAT HI-FI?
★★★★★

i-fidelity.net
Referenz

avforums
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED AWARD

i-fidelity.net
Avid Pulsare II
Testurteil: überragend

Hi-Fi Choice
RECOMMENDED

★★★★★



“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

FIGARO XL in GRAY OLIVE



1648 WESTWOOD BOULEVARD LOS ANGELES, CA 90024
(424) 344-0011 OZ@HIGHENDBYOZ.COM

Swill

Sponsored by Cardas Audio

By Jeff Dorgay

Sometimes you just need a good dark beer without getting too carried away with things. These days it's so easy to get lost in beers that have a more complex pedigree than the dog that won Westminster.

It's easy to forget or overlook the favorite that still gets the job done. Guinness Extra Stout is just the beer for the job.

Guinness claims that Extra Stout “is a direct descendant of a beer first brewed in 1821.” It's robust and smooth as a Dynaco Stereo 70 tube amplifier with NOS tubes.

Much like your favorite I.P.A., this is beer that fills you up. This isn't something to wash away your thirst quickly, it's more to savor.

Oddly enough, it's great for taking the sting out of super spicy food too.

guinness.com

Legal Stuff: While we all enjoy consuming adult beverages, (if you're of legal age, of course) TONE and Cardas Audio ask you to be responsible...



Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into

Wave -
Antonio Carlos Jobim

Hejira -
Joni Mitchell

Magic Touch -
Stanley Jordan

Better Days Ahead -
Norman Brown

The Nightfly -
Donald Fagan

The Dynamic Duo -
Jimmy Smith and
Wes Montgomery

Come to my Garden -
Minnie Ripperton

Inner City Blues -
Grover Washington Jr.

Something/Anything -
Todd Rundgren

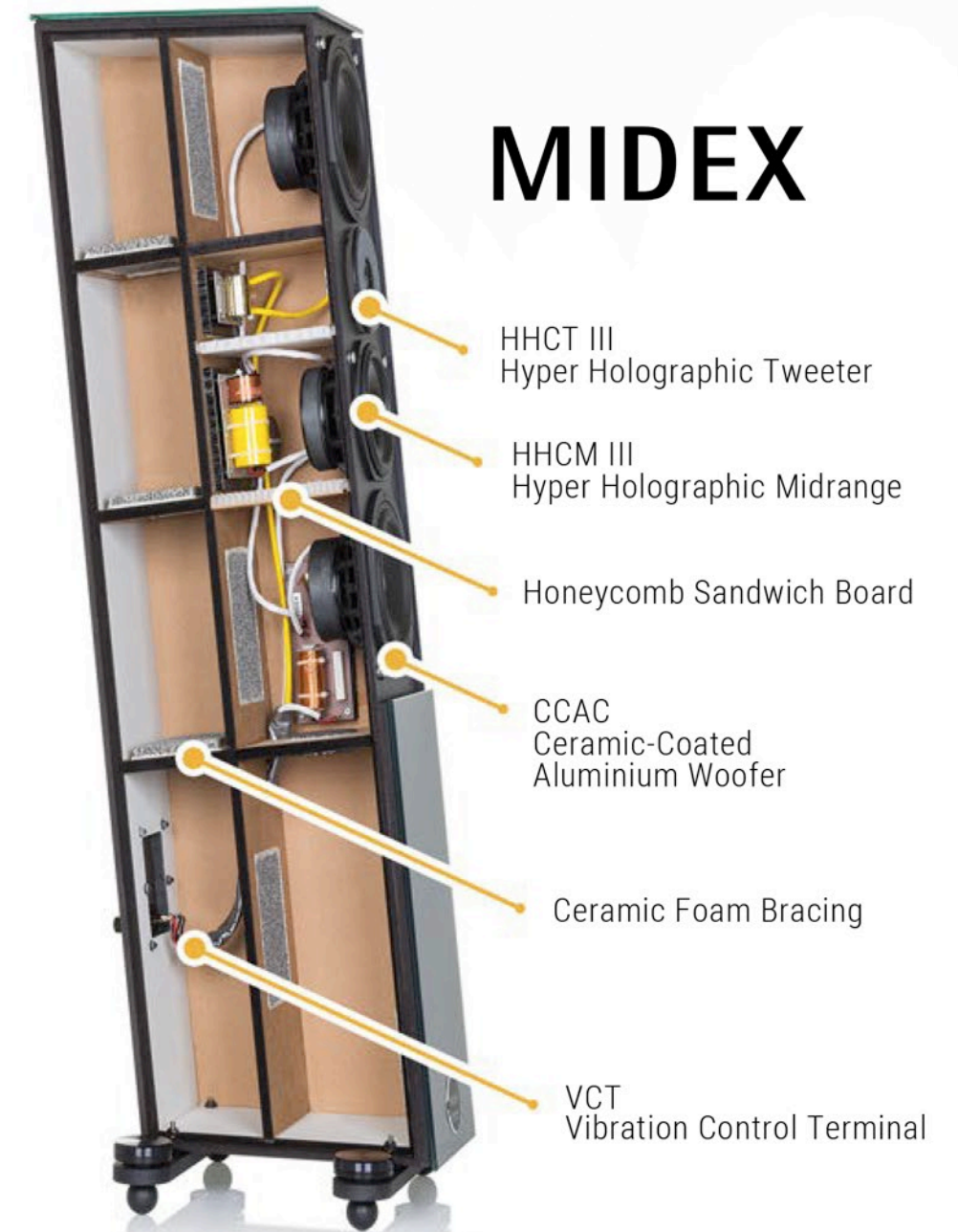
Brazilian Love Affair -
George Duke



"Wonderfully
rich....

absolutely
flawless...

energetic at
low volumes."



audio physic

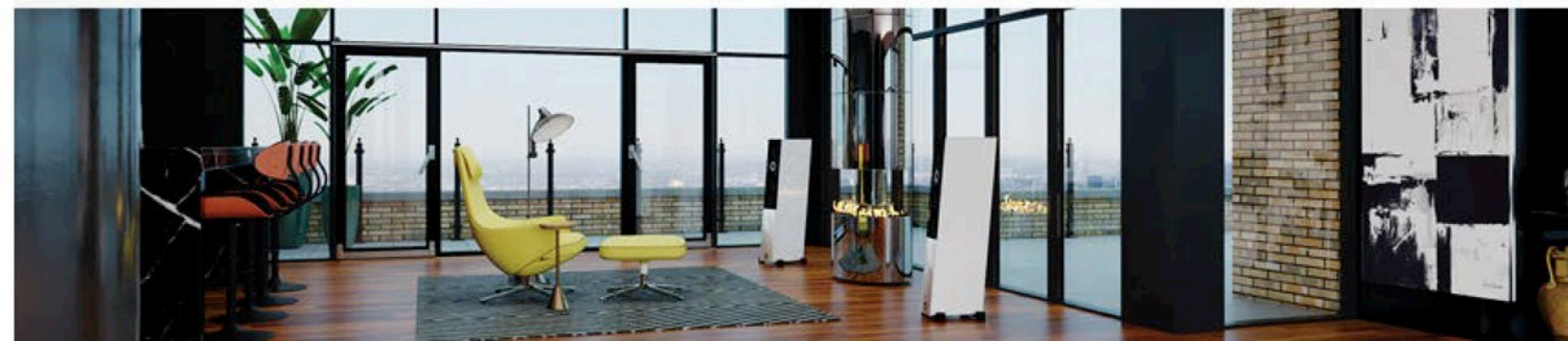
Distributed by VANA Ltd.

TONE reader and soon to be music contributor, Jeff Harris sent us a list of albums he loves to kick back to.

no. **3** Oregon

TONE Playlists sponsored by...

qobuz



Cover Story: A Classic Reinvented.



For some of us, big sound means big speakers. While today's technology has made incredible advances, a small speaker can still only move so much air.

Just as some transportation lovers prefer the inherent torque of a large displacement engine to the horsepower of a high revving, razor tuned small displacement engine, there's something about a big, pair of 3-ways to get the blood pounding.

Though the current JBL L100s don't have the recording studio pedigree that the originals do, they are better in nearly every way. Taking inflation into account, the \$273 each that a pair of originals cost, is about \$3,300 a pair today. So a 27% price increase over about 45 years really isn't that bad, is it?

The JBL L100 Classic
\$4,000/pr
jblsynthesis.com

In the 70s and throughout the 80s, the JBL L-100 was a very successful loudspeaker. Having a long production run from 1970 to the mid-80s, the L-100 sold in more significant numbers than any other JBL model, and is one of the greatest selling speakers in audio history.

Considering what three to four thousand dollars buys in a pair of speakers these days, the new JBL will not be everyone's cup of, but the value they do bring to the table is unmistakable. There are definitely more *audiophile-y* speakers out there, but to this writer, loudspeakers are like buying a painting. Some prefer the French impressionists, while others like Andy Warhol, and yet others like something else.



If you want more resolution and a broader sound field, think about a pair of comparably priced MartinLogans, or Magnepans. If you'd like midrange that does a better job with the human voice, think about some Harbeths, Grahams, or ProAcs. We all know that there are tons of choices, and \$4k/pair is an excellent speaker budget. You should be able to find something you love with four thousand big ones in your pocket.

But if you want a pair of speakers that really rock, get the JBLs. You either get this, or you don't, and I don't mean that in a bad way. Just as one person would rather peel out with a nearly 600 horsepower Dodge Challenger than a wimpy four-cylinder Porsche Cayman S that is only about 350 horsepower (but goes around corners way better), it's easy to see the attraction. Fun can be delivered within different paradigms and still be fun.

Comparing to the originals

It's incredibly easy to let a romanticized past get the better of you. And as a boomer to all of you in Winter gets longer and more treacherous the older

you get. It happens. We try not to play it that way. With a pair of mint originals at hand to make a direct comparison, it underlines even further what great speakers the new Classics are. The originals still have an unmistakable cool factor, and there are several updated crossover kits on the market that claim to make the originals otherworldly. That's a project for another day. One can only tweak things so much and not lose their way.

Unlike today's reimagined muscle cars paying fairly close visual homage to their 70s counterparts, the L100 classic looks incredibly close, whether the grilles are on or off. The pulp cone midrange driver (albeit updated) and woofer (same) are still in place, though today's 12-inch woofer now sports a rubber cone surround, where the original featured a pleated paper surround. The paper coned tweeter in the original is now replaced by a titanium dome, which incidentally, JBL has done an excellent job at taming.

Best of all, the sculpted foam grille remains. When I sold these speakers back in the late 70s, everyone knew that grille. Whether on purpose or by accident back then, this was part of what made the L-100 an icon. And this charm remains. Foam choices remain orange, blue, and brown. My originals are orange, so it felt like a great idea to get more subdued brown ones this time. Fortunately, your JBL dealer can supply the other colors for \$249 a pair, so I foresee some blue ones in my future.

While many snooty late 70s/early 80s audiophiles dismissed the L100 of the day, it was a much better speaker than many gave it credit for. Unfortunately, most mass-market retailers sold em with a crappy Kenwood receiver (or something else equally dreadful) that didn't have the current drive to tame the woofer, or the refinement to get a decent top-end response. I always seemed to remember connecting connecting my pair up to a Conrad Johnson MV50 with great results, but again, that memory thing.

This time though, I was right. Hooking the old JBL's up to the PrimaLuna EVO400 monoblocks with a full complement of EL34 tubes is indeed glorious, and in fact, even *better* than I remember.

Out with the old, in with the new

The L-100 Classics were far and away the hit of the 2018 Rocky Mountain Audiofest, even if they were hooked up to an awful sounding Levinson amplifier. As part of the same conglomero, I'm sure they had to use that sterile, boring Levinson amp, but they should have pulled out a freshly re-capped Marantz 2275, or god forbid, a McIntosh MC275. Sometimes you have to cross party lines to reach the desired result. But I heard enough to get the essence.



ANTHEM

THE NEW FACE OF STEREO

What do you do when you've achieved the limits of amplifier technology?

You ignore the limits.



ARC ROOM CORRECTION

ARC mobile

24-bit / 192 kHz compatible

USB DAC

The STR Integrated Amplifier is a true revolution in two-channel amplification. More power, more control, more connection options, and the most advanced new two-channel pre-amp/amplifier platform available in any single component. Includes the new Anthem Room Correction (ARC™) audio optimizing technology: the *easiest, most accurate* ARC ever.

The new STR Integrated Amplifier ignores limits, and so should you.

Experience it at your Anthem dealer, or buy it today at anthemAV.com.

- High-resolution preamplifier section
- High current, high output amplifier section
- 8 bipolar output devices per channel
- Up-sampling of lower-resolution sources
- Asynchronous USB audio input support 32-bit / 384 kHz PCM, and DSD 2.8 / 5.6 MHz
- S/PDIF coaxial and optical
- Balanced AES/EBU inputs
- MM and MC phono
- Graphic front panel display



Earlier this year, getting a pair of these for review proved nearly impossible. Getting someone at Harman to even pick up the telephone is almost impossible. So, the kudos for making this review possible go to Mr. Steve Rowell at Audio Classics for putting this together.

I rarely buy a piece of gear before the investigation even begins, but I knew I wanted to get old with a pair of new L100s

Staff member Jessica Sieracki took the vintage ones off my hands after the review, so onward and upward.

Like several other speakers with a metal dome tweeter, the L-100 is slightly bright out of the box. This went away after about 50 hours of play and entirely by 100 hours. The midrange and tweeter level controls are much more useful than they are on the originals and come in handy fine-tuning to your destination amplifier, cable, and room choice. My living room is a bit livelier than in the main listening room, so a nudge of the tweeter control is both handy and welcome.

How do they compare?

Now that these speakers have been out for just over a year, the internet abounds with multiple opinions, many centering around the L-100 classic, not being an "audiophile speaker." It is, and it isn't. If by audiophile speaker, you mean hyper-detailed, with pinpoint imaging, and pretty much no bass to speak of, then the L-100 classic speaker is not an audiophile speaker.

While attending a demonstration of another manufacturer, the fellow running the show said that when making a speaker, you can go for accuracy, or you can go for something more fun. Clearly, the JBL engineers went for the latter, as these are without question one of the most fun pairs of speakers I've ever used.

Like the originals, these are genuinely a garbage in, garbage out speaker. Pair them with a low quality, low-resolution equipment chain, and they will reveal what is behind them. Mate them to great electronics, and they stand up very well indeed.

THE COMPONENTS OF EXCELLENCE: LASTING VALUE

Before you buy a new audio component, consider why some people would rather own a used McIntosh than a new anything else.



Made in the USA

"The best source I know for all things McIntosh is Audio Classics in Vestal, New York. They do a lot of restoration work on McIntosh products and are an authorized McIntosh dealer and service center."

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

Timeless design. Legendary construction.
Sound investment.

www.AUDIOCLASSICS.com
AUDIO • HOME THEATER • STEREO

3501 Vestal Road • Vestal, New York 13850 Call 607-766-3501 or 800-321-2834
Hours: Monday-Friday 8-5:30 EST - Other Hours by Appointment

The L-100s go deep. A comparable pair of monitors from across the pond sound absolutely wimpy at first blush in comparison. A side by side comparison with a pair of Harbeth Compact 7s reveals the Brit speakers cleaner and less cloudy through the mid-band - you can't argue with the BBC. Think of the Harbeths as a cool white color rendition and the JBL's a warm white rendition. I own both, I enjoy both, but if you have to choose one, it's probably going to be down to your personal taste.

The L-100s definitely go down deep, but the character of the bass rendered is slightly warm. This just seems to benefit your favorite classic rock and jazz tracks in a way that needs to be experienced.

Those of you on a quest for the absolute sound, whatever that is, will probably go elsewhere.

Much like the originals, plopping a Joni Mitchell record on the turntable and easing back in the couch with the L100 Classics is one of life's great pleasures. Especially with a good tube amp. I'd highly suggest the PrimaLuna or an MC275.

The JBLs paint a fairly big sonic picture, but it's more diffuse. While it expands slightly beyond the speaker boundaries, it's not all-encompassing the way a pair of panel speakers or a perfectly optimized pair of Falcon LS3/5as can. They don't entirely disappear in the room all the way, but that's ok.

One other forgotten aspect is the ability to play at a reasonably convincing level. When the other speakers have long run out of dynamic capability, the L-100 Classics still have plenty of headroom left to spare.

Oddly, while they are slightly grainy in comparison to a few other speakers, this does not increase at higher levels. There's no question the insights that JBL has gained in studio monitor and sound reinforcement have trickled down to these speakers. If you want a pair of real rock and roll speakers, these will do quite nicely.

At the end of the day, the JBL L-100 Classics remind me a lot of that great American amplifier, the McIntosh MC275. It's not the last word in any of the standard audiophile qualifiers, but I dare you to have a bad day listening to one. The same goes for the L-100 Classics. I dare you to have a bad time listening to your favorite music, no matter what generation it's from.

And that's their charm. Considering I've had a pair of the originals in one form or another for the last 40 years, the chance that these will be with me till the end is high. Want a good deal? Show up at the estate sale in 2055. I'm sure our kids will sell em to you cheap.



Time Warp

Assorted Bits of our history...

When too much is...too much

Near the fall of 2011, just before the first generation of Sonus faber Aida's arrived, it was time to tidy up the main listening room. Things had gotten just a bit out of control with a few too many turntables.

Fortunately, after the Aida's left, things were tidied up considerably, and these days, the main listening room is much comfier. And neater, except the week before deadline.



"No one offers a better combination of high performance, classic good looks, and functionality in a compact form factor than Nagra does with their Classic Line. When you want maximum performance in a minimal footprint, this is the way to go!"

Jeff Dorgay, Tone Audio

NAGRA

SWISS INNOVATION SINCE 1951

The Publisher's Choice Awards are few, and self-indulgent on my part.

Product of the Year, and Exceptional Value awards, I hope are fairly self-explanatory, but the handful of products presented on the next few pages are special, in a way that I feel doesn't need to conform to a specific price or performance target.

This issue, we had a few more main awards, yet still a few "teacher's pets" here.

Enjoy.



PS Audio Stellar Phono

\$2,499

psaudio.com



Stellar Phono Preamplifier

PS Audio has always been known for great performance and great value. Their new Stellar phono raises their game to a new level.

Two inputs, either assignable as MM or MC, and a level of refinement you'd expect to pay a lot more for. What's not to love?

[Read our full review right here.](#)



Line Magnetic LM-805IA

\$4,999 toneimports.com

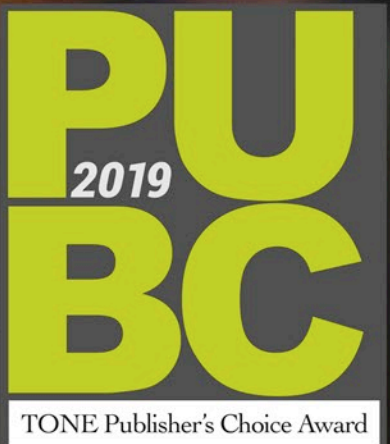
If you've always wanted the seductive sound of an SET, but 3-9 watts per channel just isn't enough, the LM-805IA will do the job nicely.

Producing 48 watts per channel, this is an SET with some grunt.

Wonderfully executed, this is a joy to listen to. But not to lift! (It's almost 100 pounds, so get a friend to help.)



[Read our full review right here.](#)



Abyss Diana Phi Headphones

\$3,999 abyss-headphones.com

How do you improve on awesome?

Great as the original Dianas were, the new Phi version is better, lighter, and thinner incorporating what Abyss learned in creating their flagship AB-1266 phones.

Headphone listening takes on a new dimension with the Dianas.

In addition to being our publisher's choice for an award, they are his personal reference as well.



Tellurium Q Statement Phono

\$4,499 telluriumq.com

We postulate that there is no cable more important in your system than the one carrying that tiny signal from a moving coil cartridge. So far, nothing we've yet tried preserves the integrity of that signal than the Statement Phono from Tellurium Q.

At \$4,499, this is not an impulse purchase, nor is it a budget system purchase. This is a master class purchase. You've got the Pink Island first stampers, you've got the Koetsu Jade or the Goldfinger, and you still want more analog performance.

This is that final link in the chain.

It will take you there.





Luxman C-900u and M-900u

\$15,000 each luxman.com

The easiest way to explain these two components is that they are flagship components for nowhere near the price of flagship components.

And the level of execution is beyond that of most top tier audio components. Those requiring more power need only flip the switch on the rear panel, turning the M-900u into a mono amplifier. Just add a second amplifier.

We seek high value in everything we review, yet some things go above and beyond what is expected at any given price. Such is the nature of the Exceptional Value Awards.

Continuing last year's trend, we had a few more than our usual ten EV awards. We really got a lot of high-value stuff to evaluate this year! This is a trend that we really hope continues, it's the only way to get new people to join our journey

We hope that at least one or two of these manage to make it on your radar, and we thank all of the manufacturers that have sent things our way for review.

Here's to 2020!



Bryston 28B Cubed Amplifier

\$11,995(ea) bryston.com




You might think we've gone completely mad for calling a 24 thousand dollar pair of amplifiers an "Exceptional Value," but when you compare these 1000 watt per channel monoblocks to their nearest competition, it's hard not to.

Bryston has raised their game both audibly and visually with the cubed series, and let's not forget their 20-year warranty. Come to think of it, have you ever heard of anyone with a Bryston product that's failed? We haven't.

If you have power hungry speakers, want more headroom than you'll ever need, or you just like to crank it up beyond the point of pain, the 28B Cubed monoblocks are a fantastic choice.



 Living Sounds Audio

EXCLUSIVELY AVAILABLE AT
UnderwoodHiFi.com

Better than the big boys at one-third the price

underwoodhifi.com 1.770.667.5633

**CORE POWER
TECH AV**

LISTEN TO THE SILENCE
HEAR THE HIDDEN DETAILS



Totem Kin Play

\$1,150(pair)

totemacoustic.com



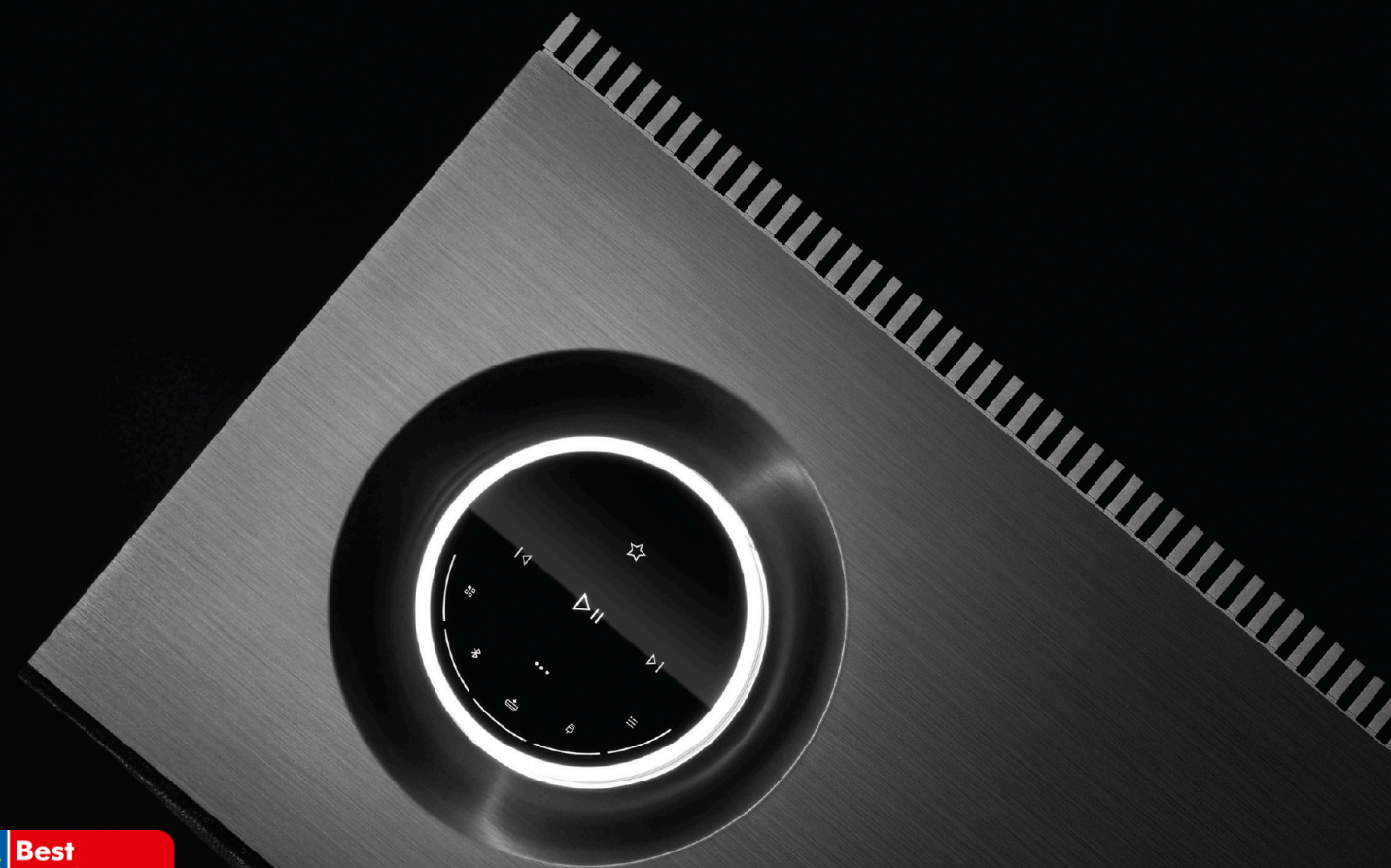
While other manufacturers are offering powered speakers at this price, Totem gives you a pair of premium powered speakers along with a DAC and phono stage.

There's even a subwoofer output to make the Kin Play part of a 2.1 system.

The Kin Play is an entry-level music system without peer.

Excellence Remastered

The Mu-so 2nd Generation from Naim.
The premium wireless speaker your music deserves.



“ With the Mu-so 2nd Generation, Naim has taken that winning formula [Mu-So] and reinvented it, packing in both extra features and more sound quality, utilising completely new drivers co-designed with Focal, making this even more of a one-box solution for room-filling music ”



Paradigm 700F

\$799/each paradigm.com



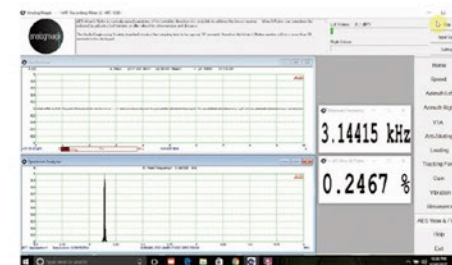
Paradigm does an incredible job with trickle down technology from their top models.

Sharing much from their flagship Personas, that cost ten times more, it's amazing just how much music these modest sized towers can create.

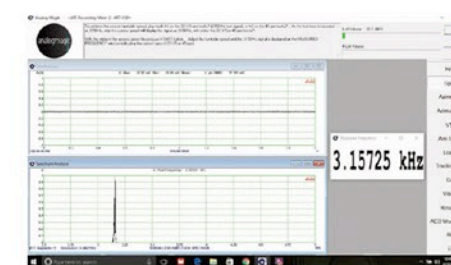
analogmagik™

All In One
Cartridge
Setup
Software &
Test LPs

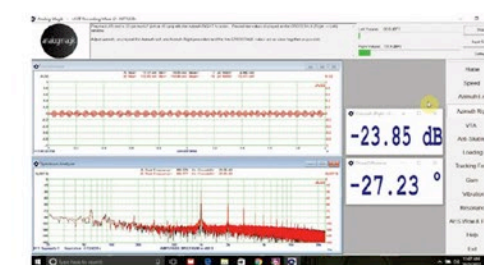
Anyone Can Be A Setup Guru



WOW & FLUTTER



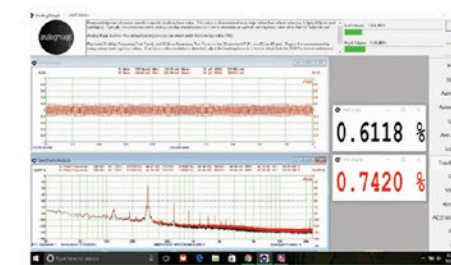
SPEED



AZIMUTH



VTA



VTF



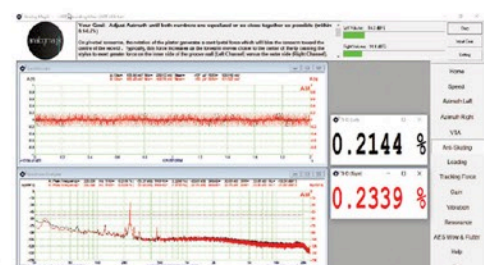
RESONANCE



LOADING & GAIN



VIBRATION



ANTI-SKATING



www.AnalogMagik.com
info@AnalogMagik.com

North America Distributor:
info@rutherfordaudio.com



EU Distributor:
info@acoustical-systems.com





New Flagship Integrated Amplifier

L-509x



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

Luxman 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

LUXMAN

General Inquiries:
Luxman America Inc., 27 Kent Street, Unit 122, Ballston Spa, NY 12020
Tel: +1(518) 261 6464 Email: sales@luxmanamerica.com

Luxman Japan Head Office:
1-3-1 Shin-Yokohama, Kouhoku-Ku, Yokohama 222-0033, Japan
Tel: 045 470 6991 Fax: 045 470 6997 www.luxman-global.com

Audio Solutions Figaro M

\$7,500/pair

highendbyoz.com

EX VAL
2019

TONE Exceptional Value Award



This company has been making a great showing all over the world. Their speakers tick all the boxes: great sound, great style, and great value.

And, they are easy to set up, as well as being easy to drive.



**EX
VAL** 2019
TONE Exceptional Value Award

Whammerdyne DGA

\$3,299 whammerdyne.com

If you're looking for the perfect amp to drive your super sensitive horn speakers, look no further.

The Whammer DGA (Damn Good Amplifier) will change your mind on what you think a Single Ended Triode amplifier can do.

And... they make a few models above this one, but it's such a great place to explore premium SET sound.

WHAMMERDYNE
HEAVY INDUSTRIES

DYNAUDIO



This is performance
This is Confidence

Anthem MRX 520

\$1,399 anthemav.com



If you fall into that category of theater/multichannel enthusiast that doesn't necessarily need 11.2 channels (the Anthem MRX 1120 is perfect for that, if you do), there's the MRX 520. Our basic theater sensebilities have always liked the MRX5xx series, and the new 520 is better, more powerful and more capable in every way.

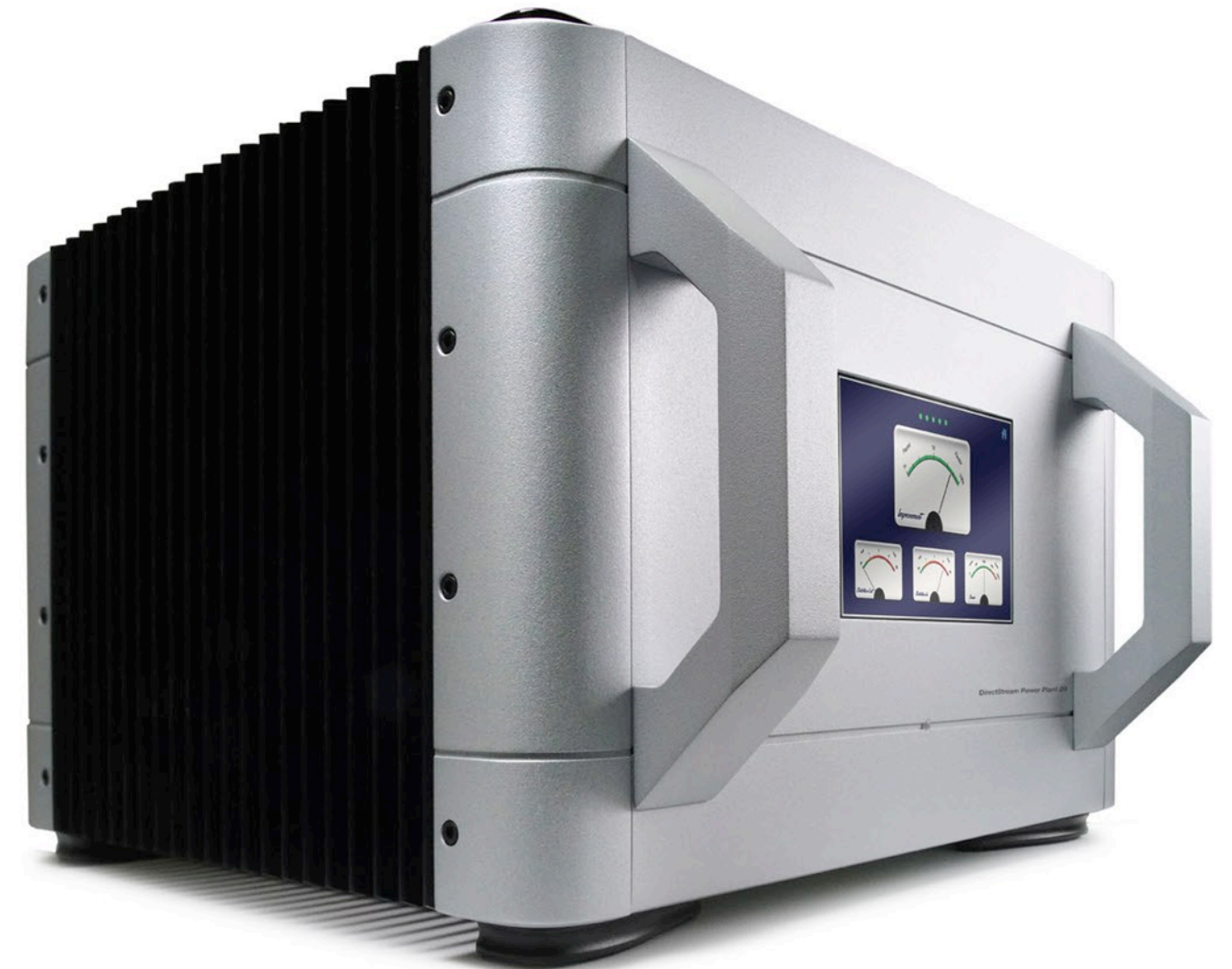
We'd be lying if we didn't tell you the deck was kinda stacked in their favor with this one. Anthem never disappoints.

We've often made the comment "a great place to start your audio journey," or "a great place to start your analog journey." The Anthem MRX 520 is the perfect place to start your home theater journey. And after almost a decade our MRX 510 is still going strong!



The PS Audio DirectStream Power Plant 20

It will take less time to hear the improvement it makes, than it will to read this headline.



"Nothing does a better job at supplying clean power to my reference gear than the P20."
—Jeff Dorgay, TONEAudio

 P S A U D I O

www.psaudio.com 720.406.8946 Boulder, Colorado

Wharfedale Lintons

\$1,499/pair (with Stands)

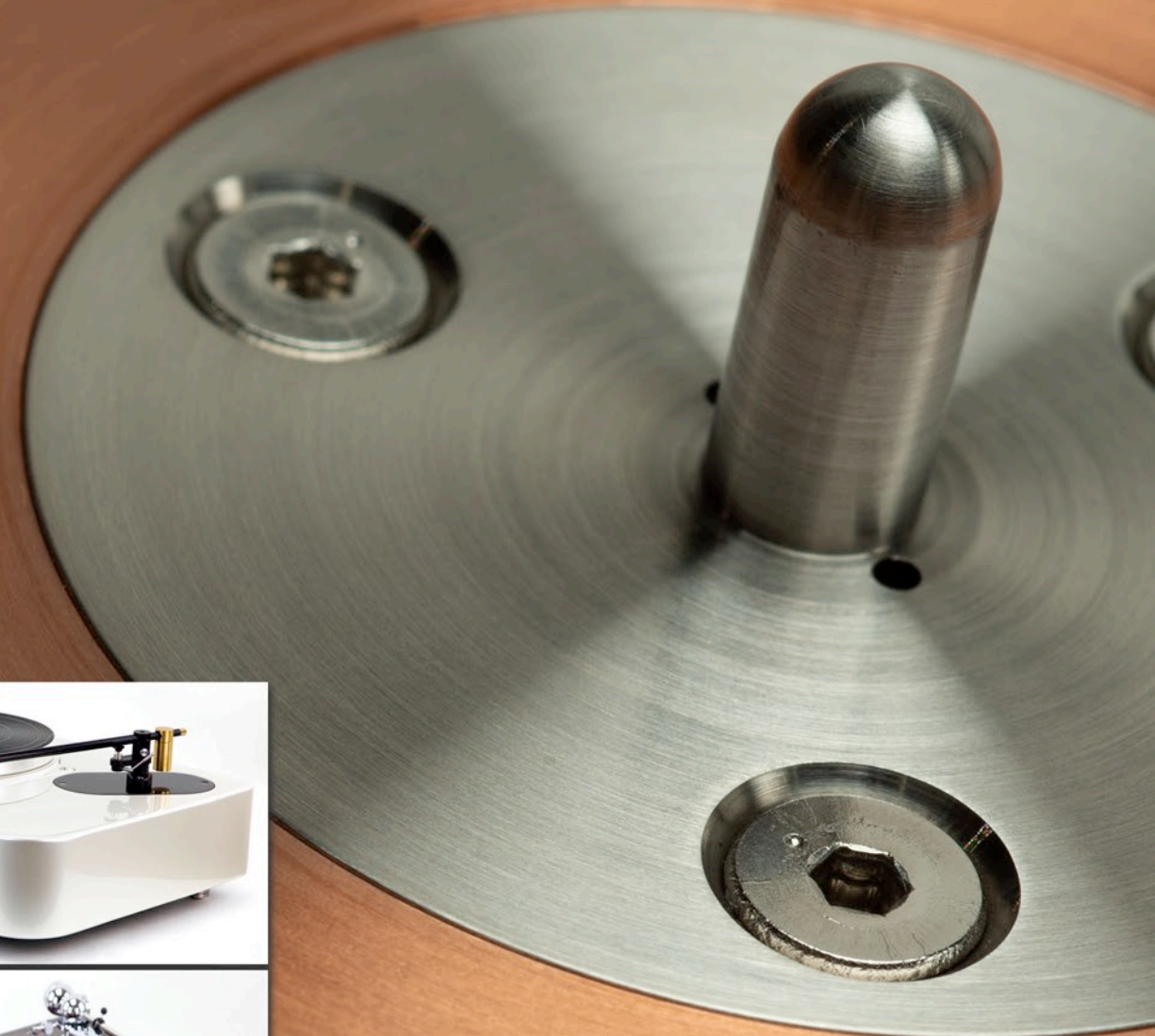
mofidistribution.com



We believe good hifi should be fun, affordable, and approachable. The Lintons tick all the boxes and then some.

Whether this is your first pair of serious speakers, or the anchor for a secondary system, you're gonna love these.

A n a l o g E x c e l l e n c e



Artisan Fidelity

When off the shelf won't do...

artisanfidelity.com

SVS Prime Pinnacle

\$799.99(each) svsound.com



Some people think SVS only makes great subwoofers. But they have a full line of bookshelf, floorstanding and surround speakers too.

They offer maximum value by keeping it simple. Great products, great service, great sound.

The Prime Pinnacle towers make for an excellent anchor to your 2 channel (or 2.1) system, or the front channels to a surround setup. Either way, these are great audio building blocks.



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.

echo)))
audio

www.echohifi.com 888.248.echo



Feliks Audio Elise

\$1,649 upscaleaudio.com

Bridging the gap between the mega headphone amps and the budget contenders, the Elise has way more in common with the top of the list.

And the sound will take your breath away.



You already own the music.
You might as well hear all of it.
Contact The Sound Organisation
today for your closest retailer.



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



Our Product of the Year Awards celebrate what we feel is the ultimate expression of a particular component, whether it be at a specific price point, or technological prowess.

While we have tried very hard to take more of a “concierge” approach here at TONE, trying to find what we feel are the most exciting to put on your short list, the TPOY products deliver even more.

Much as we hate to use the B-word, the gear to follow certainly represents the “best of the best” of what we’ve had the privilege to listen to this year.

We’ve completed full reviews on most of these, but a couple are still in process, with reviews to follow early in 2020.

Again, we would never expect you to spend your hard earned income on something, simply because we think it’s outstanding, but it is our hope that should you be looking for something in one of these categories, that you’d take the time to investigate, audition, and compare these to what you were thinking of.

Our hope is that should any of the products on the following pages fit your criteria, that upon thorough investigation, you would enjoy them as much as we have.

It’s all about finding that special piece of gear that will take you somewhere you’ve never been.

All of these components pass that test.



TPOY 2019
TONE Product of the Year



OVERALL: Pro-Ject PreBox S2 Digital

\$399 each

pro-jectusa.com



Now and then, we get accused of only being concerned with high pricetag gear, yada, yada, yada. But in today's world of mega components, with pricetags to match, there is nothing more fun than finding gear that is in everyone's reach, that truly sounds great.

We firmly believe that this is the way to involve the next generation of people that would like audio that performs considerably better than a bluetooth speaker, or some earbuds.

Pro-Ject's PreBox S2 Digital the perfect example of this philosophy.

While they are often better known for their high value turntables, the Pre Box S2 incorporates an awesome DAC, headphone amplifier and line preamplifier in a smaller package than a Big Mac. Start out with the the PreBox S2 and your favorite headphones, and add an amp and speakers when you get your next paycheck. It's that easy.





Digital: Aqua La Scala DAC

\$7,700

aquahifi.com

**TP
OY**
2019
TONE Product of the Year

Aqua's LaScala DAC uses an FGPA architecture, bypassing off the shelf chipsets to tailor the sound in a more precise way. Somehow it seems like our favorite DACs all have this in common...

This is a unique product in the sense that it provides a level of finesse that is normally associated with much more expensive DACs.

This level of performance is usually more than enough to receive an exceptional value award. However, what makes the LaScala a POY is that this performance is delivered in the context of a total package.

Build quality, upgradability, aesthetics, and user friendliness combined with high sonic virtues is what makes it a product of the year.

This is one of the finest DACs we've had the privilege to use at any price.



Analog: Pass XP-27

\$11,500 passlabs.com

**TP
OY** 2019
TONE Product of the Year

This two input phonestage from Pass Labs is an update to the prior XP-25, which looked identical, featuring dials for resistive and capacitive loading along with a three position gain control all on the front panel. Pass has always eschewed the LED display and microprocessor controls used in a handful of other preamplifiers.

They claim the purist approach results in lower noise and higher signal purity, and we agree. The only downside to this approach is resetting the controls manually when switching from one input to the other. A small price to pay.

As with everything Pass, what they learn producing their top components always trickles down. The XP-27 is starting to gain serious ground on the XS Phono.



Resistive Loading



Power Amp: PrimaLuna EVO 400

\$4,699(ea) primaluna-usa.com



Past PrimaLuna amplifiers have been excellent, but even their last round of monoblocks were still under the magic 100 watt per channel level. Oh, maybe we forgot to tell you that the EVO 400s can be used in stereo or mono operation by merely flipping a switch on the back panel.

With the supplied EL34 tubes (in ultralinear mode) they easily push out 140 watts each. Upgrading to KT150 tubes will get you close to 200 wpc.

The EVO 400 defines the “painless” tube amplifier category. They’ve written the book. But now with this level of refinement and power output, Prima Luna is ready to take on the rest of the tube world.

You’ll only need one quick listen, to see why we like these as much as we do.





Preamplifier: PrimaLuna EVO 400

\$4,499 primaluna-usa.com



The companion to the EVO 400 amplifier, the EVO 400 pre provides equally stunning performance. Those staying in an all PrimaLuna ecosystem, or having a DAC and phono stage with single ended RCA outputs can opt for the slightly less expensive EVO300 preamplifier, which Kevin Deal tells us is sonically identical, minus the balanced input and output transformers





Integrated: VAC Sigma 170i

\$10,000 - \$13,000 (config. dependent) vac-amps.com

**TP
OY** 2019
TONE Product of the Year

Integrated amplifiers have always been a “favorite thing” here at TONE, and in the last decade, a number of premium manufacturers have jumped into the game, producing integrated amplifiers every bit the equal of all but the most lofty separates.

Considering where the price of premium cable and equipment racks has gone, the once lowly integrated is now the perfect choice for music lovers wanting high performance with a smaller footprint.

Valve Amplification Company hits it out of the park with the Sigma 170i, and offers you the option of ordering it with one of their fantastic phono stages built in, should you so desire.



Speaker: Totem Tribe Tower

\$5,300-\$5,800 pair (finish dependent)
totemacoustic.com

**TP
OY** 2019
TONE Product of the Year

Again, Totem is our speaker of the year (and we've reviewed a lot of speakers this year). Every aspect of the Tribe Towers is off the chart good: in addition to providing way more sound than you'd ever expect to come out of these slender cabinets, the level of fit and finish is even higher than those of you used to Totem's lofty standard.

Best of all, they sound drop dead great, and are easy to place in the room, providing a great listening experience for all.



Accessory: Kirmuss KA-RC-1

\$969.99 elusivedisc.com



See those grooves? That's what super clean record grooves look like when they've had the Kirmuss treatment. Clean grooves mean no clicks, pops, or other distractions.

We've been cleaning records for a long, long time. We've pretty much tried them all, and a majority of the different elixers that claim to bring vinyl back to life (there's even one named "Vinyl Re-Virginizer" that's not half bad) but what makes the Kirmuss stand out above the rest is twofold:

First, it's cost effective. If you've got even a few hundred LPs that you cherish, investing in a record cleaning system makes excellent sense.

Second, it does an incredible job. Better than most, arguably better than the competition.

It is, however, a bit time consuming. Good, fast, cheap - pick two we like to say. At the end of the day, it's the one we use.





System Enhancement: Cardas Nautilus Power Strip

\$1,500

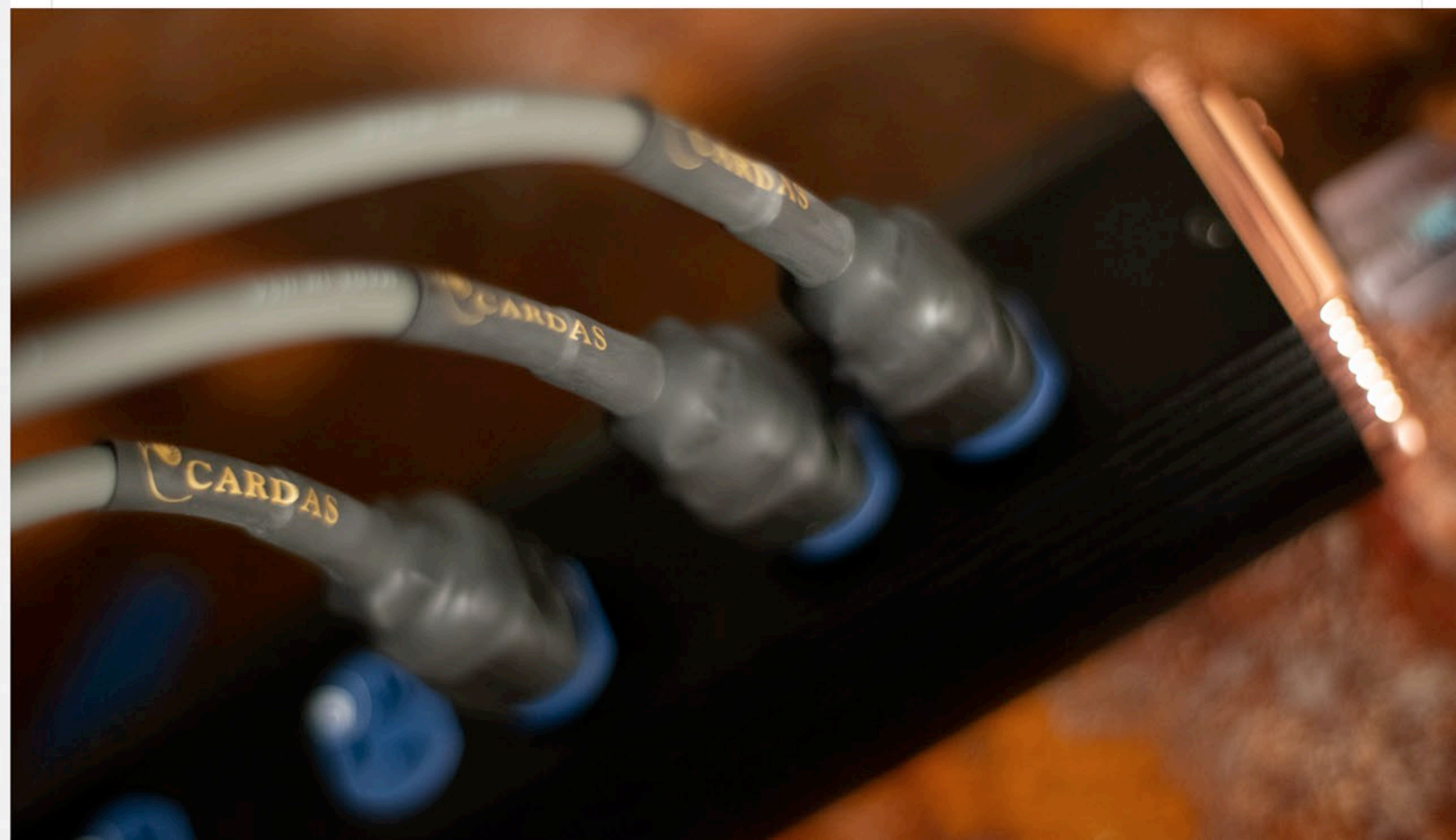
cardas.com

**TP
OY**
2019
TONE Product of the Year

When you need more outlets, you don't want to plug all those premium power cords into a sub standard wall strip, do you?

We maintain that clean power delivery is a must for any high performance audio system. Every link in the chain is a potential weakness, and a chance that some of the resolution you've paid for, can be lost.

Thanks to premium construction, and a trio of Cardas 4181 outlets, the Nautilus Power strip will never be the weak link in your audio chain.





Personal Fidelity: Warwick Aperio

\$25,000 warwickaudio.com

**TP
OY**
2019
TONE Product of the Year

In order to truly wrap your brain around the Warwick Aperio, you need to take a system approach.

\$25k for a set of headphones, and a matching amplifier is not for the light hearted, or light funded. But, as everything is relative in context of the \$80k Sennheiser system, the Aperio is a steal. If you moved from Tokyo to Scottsdale, three million bucks for a 6,000 square foot home would feel like nothing.

There are definitely a handful of \$10k headphone/amplifier combos that are on par with the Aperio in terms of headphone performance.

And then you need a DAC, and, and...

That you get a line level preamp and a DAC, that alone are worth more than the Aperio - along with a tip-top headphone amp and pair of matching phones is what puts the Aperio over the top.

This solution is not for everyone. But if this is the solution to your system requirements, nothing else will do.

And when headphones arrive in a flight cases this big, you know there's something cool inside.



Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into

Rush -
Working Man

Neil Young-
Cortez the Killer

Steely Dan -
Babylon Sisters

Talk Talk -
Happiness Is Easy

Stevie Wonder -
Another Pure Love

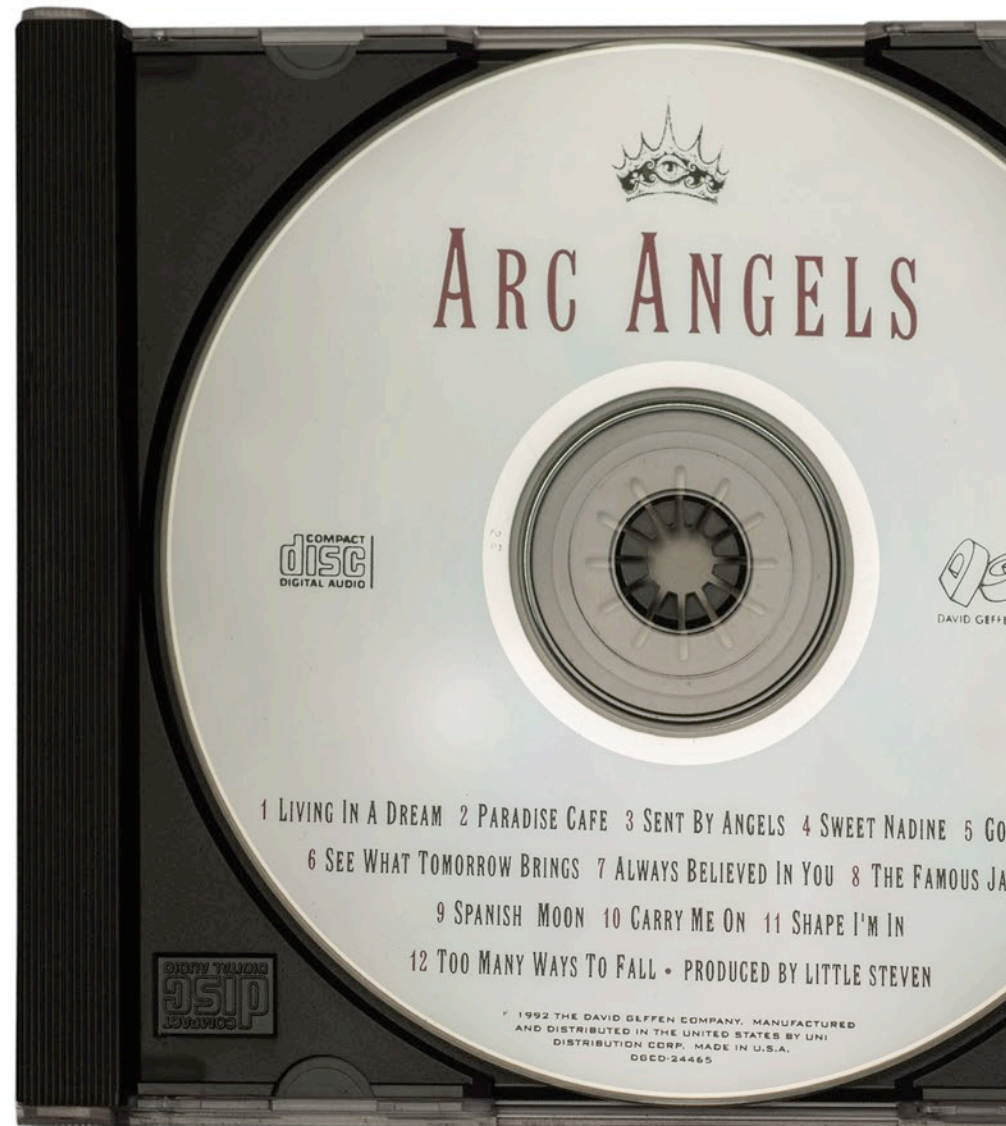
Billy Idol -
Yelling at The Christmas Tree

Flim & The BB's-
Tricycle

Michael Jackson -
You Are Not Alone

Bruce Springsteen-
My Home Town

Arc Angels -
Living in a Dream



We asked our readers on Facebook to list some tracks they never get tired of. We got a pretty wide range of selections, and here's part two.

Ironically, one reader wrote: "Can't we give Nils Lofgren and Patricia Barber a rest?" Yes we can!

no. 5 The World

TONE Playlists are sponsored by...

qobuz

audio research
HIGH DEFINITION®

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.

Contact your local Audio Research Dealer for an audition.

audioresearch.com

At this point in my life and career, I may only get to do this once, so I want to make sure it counts.

I've been a serious high end audio consumer for forty years now. And I've been writing about this stuff for almost half that. While I haven't heard everything, I've had the good fortune to hear quite a bit of gear that matters. Some at shows, some at various factories, but much in the familiarity of my own space.

The three products over the next six pages, to me, are even more than products of the decade. These are three things that have completely redefined how I listen to, and enjoy music. They are not merely "teacher's pet" products.

Two of these products are fairly expensive, bordering on crazy. The other is approachable, but equally important to me. I own all three, so I have put my money where my heart is.

In the end, they have all advanced the state of the art in music reproduction technology.

What's on your list?

And seriously, I hope to see you all in 2029. Maybe we will finally get those damn flying cars they've been promising.





REL no.25 Six Pack

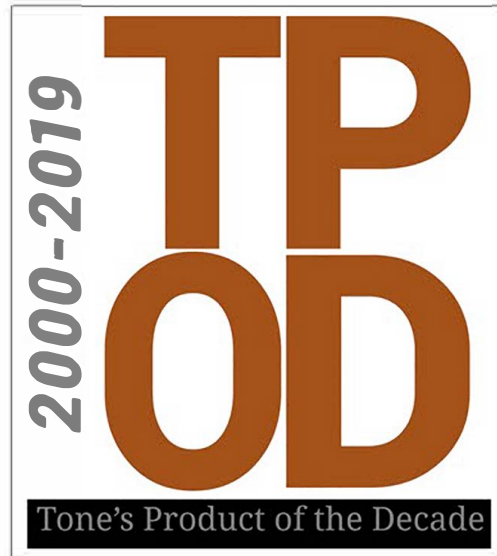
\$45,000 rel.net

That's not a misprint.

Considering that 80% of the sonic information we hear and feel is in the lower registers, a bass system that has as much attention to quality as your main speakers kinda makes sense, if you sit and think about it.

Experiencing a six pack of REL 25's will open a new door of perception.

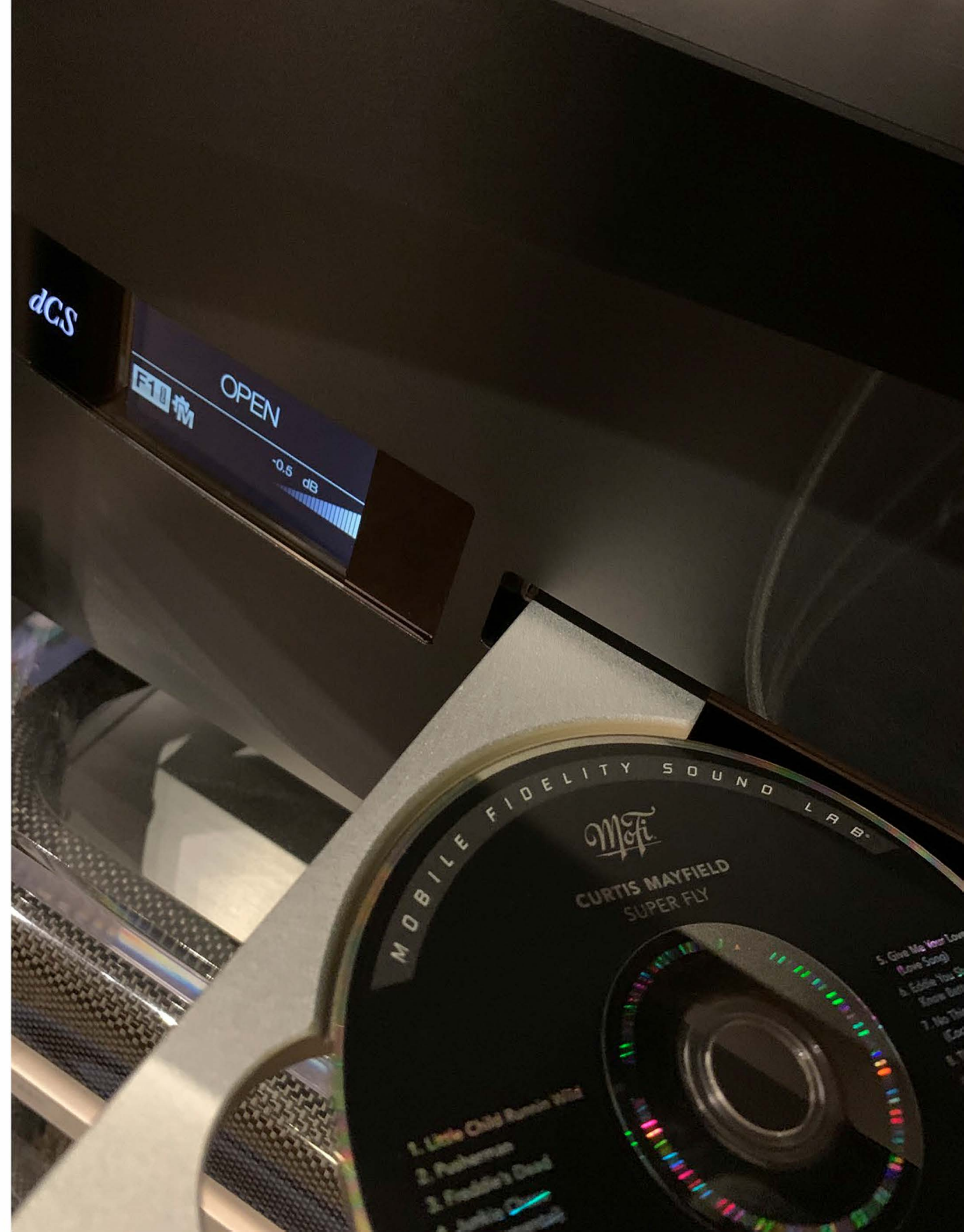




dCS Vivaldi ONE

\$80,000 dcsLtd.co.uk

Whether you choose the single box Vivaldi ONE or a combination of the Vivaldi components to make a stack, dCS' flagship does such a convincing job of decoding digital files, you might just notice that turntable collecting more dust than usual.





Roon

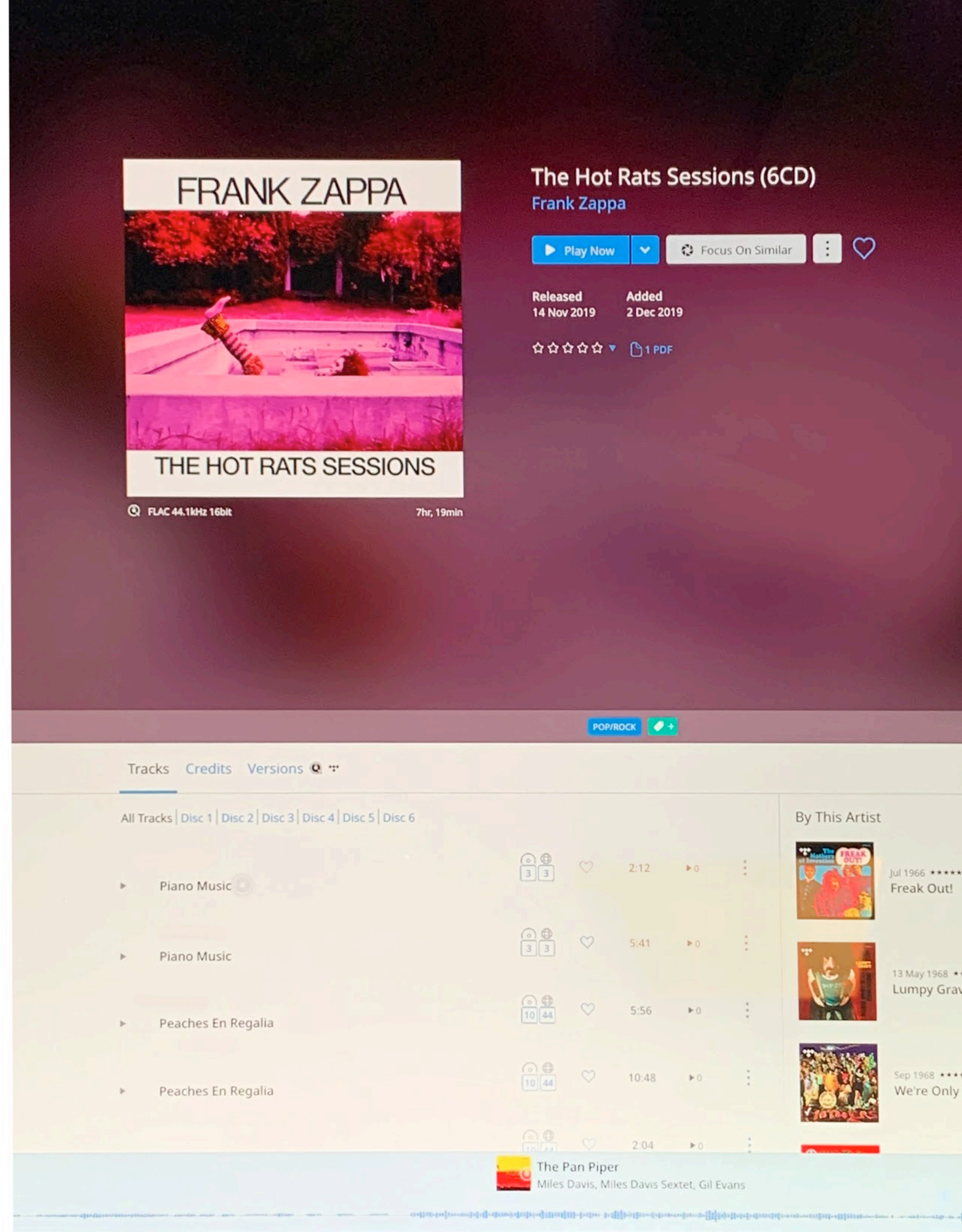
Pricing subject to solution roonlabs.com

The Team that invented ROON was on to something big when they created the Sooloos system almost 15 years ago.

Finally, computer audio didn't suck.

Finally, all the music you love is at your fingertips 24/7 and everyone can use it.

That's true freedom of choice



Time Warp

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

Originally, TONE was going to launch at the Consumer Electronics Show in January of 2006. But there was a new show, the Rocky Mountain Audio Fest, that had only been out for a year, with great success.

A number of friends and industry colleagues suggested that perhaps we launch the first issue "off Broadway," so we moved the launch date from January to October 1, 2005 and went for it. There would be quite a few more crowded elevators to follow.

Not sure if this photo is from that original RMAF, but it is fairly early, as there are no iPhones anywhere!

It proved to be a good move. We got a lot of valuable feedback, and by CES, we had made some good changes to the magazine. And by issue three we had already gone over 100 pages. Shades of things to com.



Pro-Ject
AUDIO SYSTEMS

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

ELECTRONIC SPEEDCONTROL



SUMIKO BLUE POINT NO.2 CARTRIDGE



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

Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...

ORA GQ Headphones

orasound.com
\$499

Canadian company ORA's claim to fame with these new headphones is a driver made from graphene, the latest space age material with some pretty magical claims made for it.

Our initial listening is in fact exciting, and the GQ phones look to be a significant player in the \$500 headphone segment.

Review very soon.

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 S3 dac



La Scala Optologic dac



Formula xHD dac



La Diva cd transport

aquahifi.com

aqua
acoustic quality

Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...

Clearaudio Jubilee Panzerholz MM Cartridge

\$899.99
clearaudio.de

We're big fans of the Clearaudio MM carts. They've applied so much of the technology from their flagship cartridges to affordable models, it makes great sound available to a wider range of analog lovers.

A big thanks to the staff at Elusive Disc for providing our review sample. It's a keeper for sure.

[click here to get yours.](#)

Some of us never quit....

Reel to reel isn't the only revolution.

If you've always enjoyed making a mix tape, but are tired of the crazy prices for NOS cassettes, now there's an answer.

Try the new Capture C-60 cassettes, from Splicit.

It's a Type 1 tape, with plenty of range, to capture the nuance on your favorite LPs or CDs.

Hence the name.

www.splicit.com



Future Tense

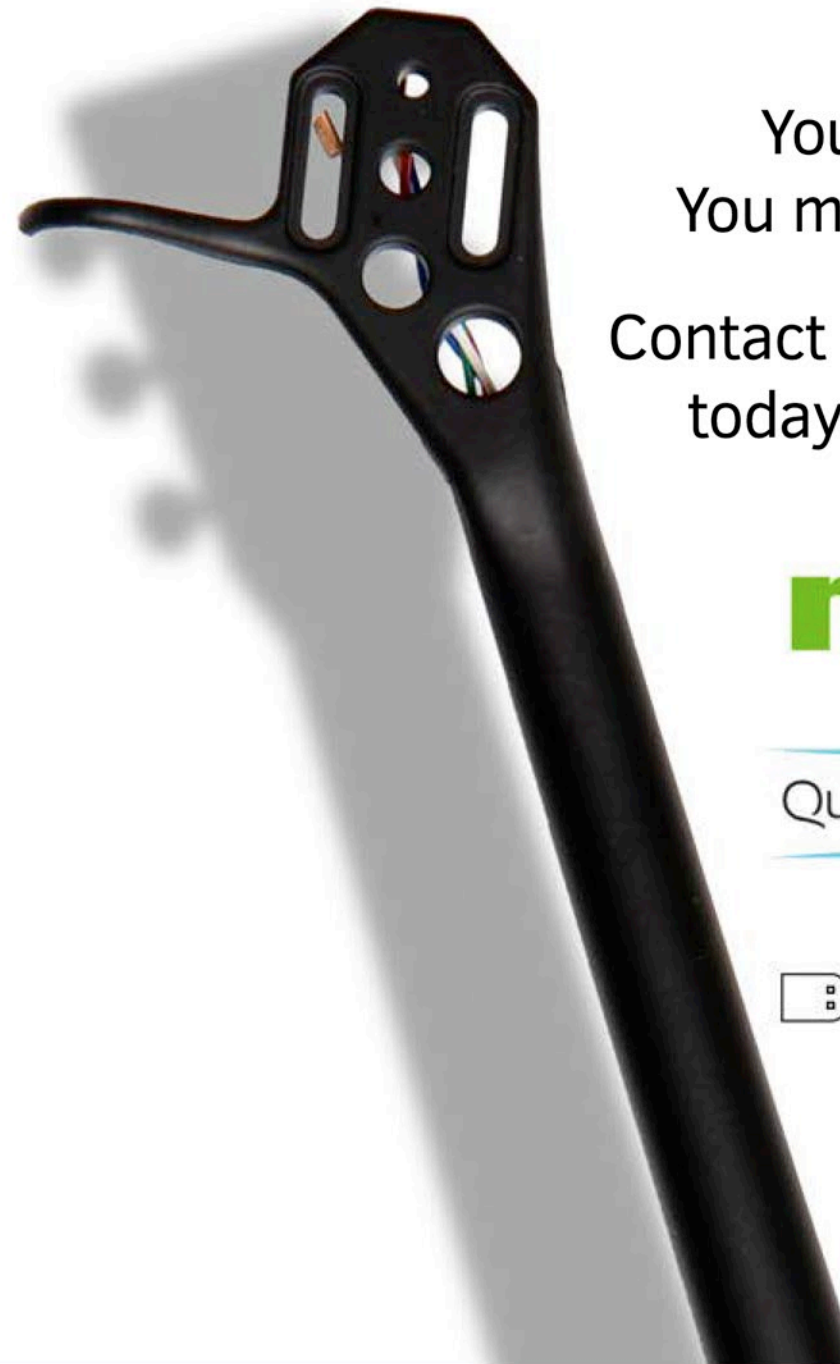
Reviews in our immediate future...

AVID Reference Ruby Cartridge

\$7,995
avidhifi.com

Taking AVID full circle in the analog realm, they now have a range of cartridges to go with their world-class tonearms and turntables.

Spoiler alert:
The Ruby is fantastic!



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

Contact The Sound Organisation
today for your closest retailer.

rega

ProAc
perfectly natural

Quadraspire

THE
CHORD
COMPANY

BRYSTON

kit
Face the Music

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

The
s)und
Organisation

Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...



Clarus Duet Power Conditioner

\$1,250 (each)
claruscables.com

Clarus claims that their new Duet Power conditioner is made specifically for monoblock amplifiers. We've got a handful of amplifiers we'll be running it through its paces with and report back shortly.



SOLARIS

CAMPFIRE
AUDIO

WWW.CAMPFIREAUDIO.COM

Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...

ARC PH9

\$8,500
audioresearch.com

Often, when you mention Audio Research, the conversation goes straight to their Reference line of gear.

While the praise is deserved, not everyone has a budget for REF components, and doesn't want to buy a pre-owned component either. Their Foundation series is the answer, and though we reviewed the entire system a while back, we've spun around to revisit the individual components in-depth.

The PH9 has a lot of the performance of the REF Phono 3 at a much lower price. If you only need one input, it's a steal.



TONE100.159

SCULPTURE A



A.4 Silver

A.3

A.4 Copper



made by Ana Mighty Sound

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.



A.3 & A.4 SCULPTURE A PHONO CARTRIDGES

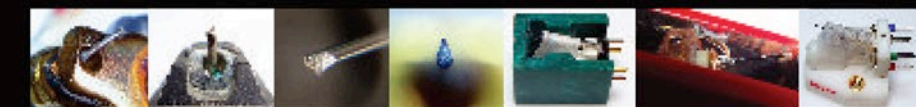
Already awarded by French press with a « Remarquable » award, the A.3 and A.4 phono cartridges display a minimum tracking of 90 micron @300Hz lateral that will allow you to get the full definition of your records. For this we have developed a specific damper and use only boron cantilevers with dedicated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

info@
anamightysound.com

Ana
MIGHTY SOUND





IS-1000

ALL-IN-ONE



Gold Note is a pretty special kind of Italian audio company. We have been lucky to have a great team of engineers being able to design a complete line of audio gears.

The 25 years of experience in designing 100% in house has led us to developing a unique amplifier capable of great sound.

IS-1000 is also very smart and offers a lot of user friendly, easy to use features. We thought about the needs of the contemporary audiophile and decided to formulate our answer in a new all-in-one unit. Therefore, IS-1000 is a new generation amplifier created to be a whole stereo system on its own.

It can be matched with everything from the web as well as a turntable and a CD player, enjoying real "High End Audio" as a new refreshing experience, hassle and cable free.

Unlike other All-In-One products of brands mostly AV oriented and built with consumer technology, IS-1000 is designed as a pure high-end audio premium amplifier. Every component has been selected for this purpose making it able to cross the bridge between a traditional High-End audio integrated amp and a modern All-In-One unit.



www.goldnote.it

Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...



MartinLogan

Motion 40i

\$1,199.99/each
martinlogan.com

MartinLogan is well known for their electrostatic panel speakers, but they've been quietly expanding the Motion range in the background for years.

In typical ML fashion, they refine, refine, refine and the new Motion 40is are a perfect example of this philosophy.

If you have had a chance to hear these at a dealer, or hifi show this year, you know how inviting these speakers are.

We've got reveiws on the 20i and the 40i you see here very soon.



3000 SERIES SUBWOOFERS

Reference Subwoofer Performance Hits New Lows.

Room-shaking output, subterranean low frequency extension and pinpoint control at a breakthrough price.

New 13-inch high-excursion SVS driver with flat edge wound split-wind voice coil generates seat-shaking bass with unerring accuracy and crisp speed in transients.

Sledge STA-800D2 Amplifier with fully discrete MOSFET output rated at 800 watts RMS, 2,500+ watts peak power unleashes massive amounts current to fully maximize on the potential of the robust 13-inch SVS driver.

Groundbreaking SVS Subwoofer Smartphone App manages volume and custom presets for one-touch tuning for movies, music and more. Also controls parametric EQ, low pass filter, phase, polarity, room gain, port tuning (PB-3000 only) and more.



PB-3000

SB-3000

Critics agree, 3000 Series subwoofers deliver unrivaled performance.

"Even at reference levels, the subwoofer didn't break a sweat—each bass note hit with power, precision, and speed. I was completely blown away by my experience. It has no equal at its price."

-Sound & Vision

"Refinement and musicality that is genuinely excellent but still delivers seismic levels of low frequency energy."

-AVForums

"The bass I heard bordered on the difficult to believe -- very fast, very tight, very deep, with more than enough output to fill my room with sound-pressure levels that would satisfy the most demanding bass heads."

-Soundstage



Learn more at SVSound.com



Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...

Boulder 866 Integrated Amp

\$12,250 - 14,450
boulderamp.com

With 200 watts per channel, and a new touch-screen interface, the newest offering from Boulder is anything but entry level.

Following up their incredible 508 phono, the 866 builds on efficiency with the 866 integrated. The lower priced model has only line level (but all balanced XLR) inputs, while the higher priced version has a built in DAC and streamer, that is also a ROON endpoint.





Quality Meets Quantity

“ THE REL 212/SE DOES **DEEP** AND IT DOES **LOUD**. ODDLY, IT ALSO DOES **SUBTLE** AND IT DOES **BRASH**, TOO. AND SOMETIMES IT MANAGES TO DO BOTH AT ONCE. IF YOU TRULY “GET” DEEP BASS, IF YOU LIKE YOUR KIT TO BE ON SHOW RATHER THAN HIDDEN AWAY AND — ABOVE ALL — YOU FEEL THAT URGE FOR **TRULY ENERGETIC AUDIO**, THEN THE REL 212/SE IS ACTUALLY **GOOD VALUE**. ” | ADAM RAYNER, HOME CINEMA CHOICE

Join the Pursuit™
rel.net

Experience the 212SE's Twin long-stroke 12" Continuous Cast™ Alloy Bass Engines and dual 12" passives
Visit rel.net to learn more about REL and find an authorized dealer near you.

Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...

Golden Ear Triton One.R

\$3,299 each
goldenear.com

Golden Ear's Triton REF was our product of the year last year, and it's no secret that Golden Ear always offers superior sound in their relative price points.

Still powered, like the Triton REF, the One.R is a click down on the size and price, for those with a slightly smaller room and budget.





Experience the new line of granite loudspeakers from Acora Acoustics. Hear the sonic advantages of utilizing granite enclosures. Granite provides rigidity that conventional enclosures can't. Granite allows you to hear the music, not the enclosure. This results in greater imaging and micro-dynamics leaving you with just the music, pure and simple.

*Acora Acoustics
-Hear the Truth-*



Find out more about the benefits of granite enclosures, and the other advantages utilized by Acora Acoustics. Please visit <http://www.acoracoustics.com>



Like us on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/acoracoustics>

Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...

Jico Shure Stylus

\$159
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

The Jico stylus for the Shure V15 series cartridges has been revered by many, for some time now.

This inexpensive update, combined with legendary trackability, makes for an excellent MM solution for vinyl lover on a tighter budget.



TOTEM
Discover yours

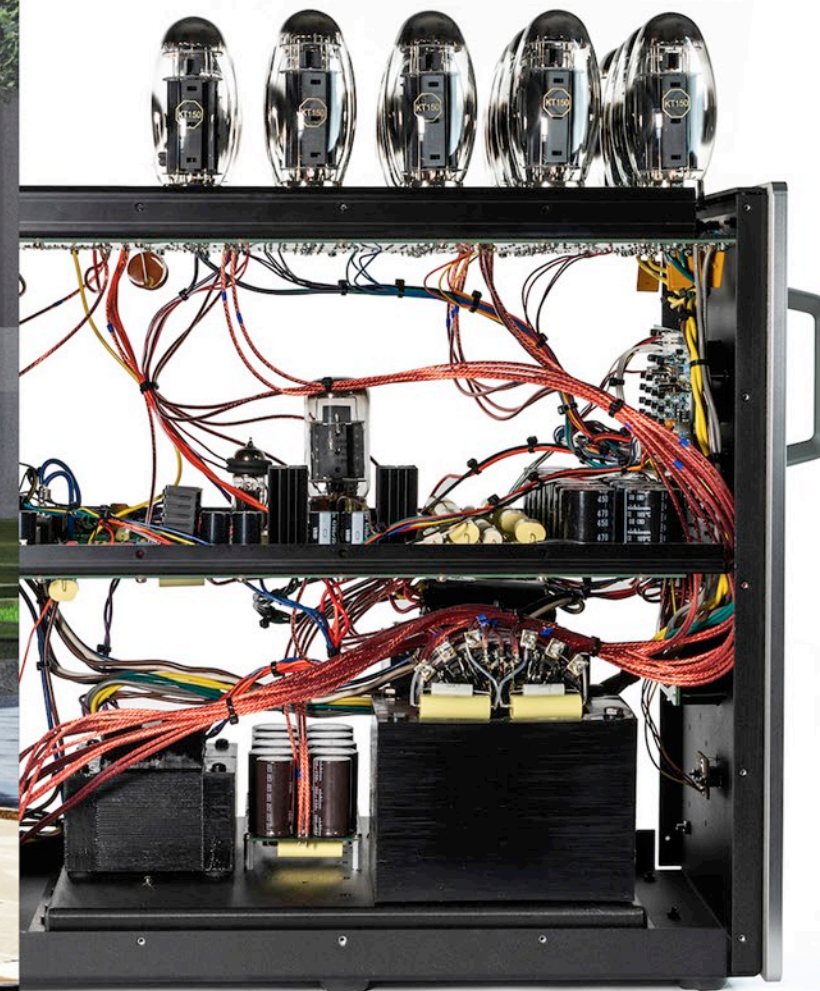
TORRENT
TECHNOLOGY

The new V2 woofers are a dramatic advancement of our famous 7" Torrent driver. Evolved and meticulously developed over the past 10 years, exclusively by Totem, they are at the very top of the world's dynamic speaker pyramid.

The New Element Metal V2 ... A state-of-the-art musical experience!

Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...



Audio Research 750SEL Mono Power Amplifiers

\$75,000/pair
audioresearch.com

Audio Research has pushed the boundaries of their biggest monoblocks, resulting in the SEL you see here. Though it doesn't look different from the last two versions externally, ARC says that the 750SE model can not be updated to the current version due to extensive changes.

Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...



Luxman L-550AXII

\$5,500

luxman.com

Luxman makes some of the most elegant gear going, in sight, sound, and feel. We've always enjoyed the sound of their solid-state amplifiers, but the Class-A models are incredibly special.

The L-550AX Mark II is only 20 watts per channel, so it's not for everyone. But if it's for you, you will really enjoy this one.



www.francoserblin.it

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.



DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY
TO HEAR THE BEST SOUND

DAVID MICHAEL AUDIO
DETROIT, OCTOBER 5th, 2019

TONE OF MUSIC
SAN FRANCISCO, OCTOBER 19th, 2019

GOODWIN'S HIGH-END
BOSTON, NOVEMBER 2nd, 2019

FILTRONIQUE
MONTRÉAL, NOVEMBER 9th, 2019

MUSICAL ARTISANS
CHICAGO, DECEMBER 6th AND 7th, 2019

EARSNOVA
NEW YORK, MARCH 2020



Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

San Francisco, California - AudioVision San Francisco

www.audiovisionsf.com

1628 California Street

San Francisco, California 94109

415.614.1118



Austin, Texas - Whetstone Audio

www.whetstoneaudio.com

2401 E. 6th. Street #1001

Austin, Texas 78702

512.477.8503



No. 25

No. 25 commemorates a quarter century of our pursuit of perfect sound, while pointing to our next 25 years of building the finest sub bass systems available. No. 25 employs our most advanced design, engineering and craftsmanship, featuring our ultra-reliable 1,000watt amplifier, lightweight carbon fibre 15" driver and legendary filter sets, crossovers, and zero compression wireless connectivity.

Featured here is the No. 25 Line Array, three No. 25s arranged vertically, permitting bass to emerge more naturally as it propagates throughout the room, striking our sinuses, kicking at our chest cavities and rumbling along the floor with power and majesty. Welcome to the pinnacle of sound, 25 years in the making.

Join the Pursuit™ | rel.net



Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

Vancouver, Canada - HiFi Centre

www.hificentre.com

433 Carrall Street

Vancouver, BC V6B 6E3

888.232.9995



Gig Harbor, Washington - Gig Harbor Audio

www.gighroboraudio.com

3019 Judson St. Suite D

Gig Harbor, Washington 98335

253.228.6021



Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

Marietta, Georgia - The Audio Company

www.theaudioco.com
146 South Park Square NE
Marietta, Georgia 30060

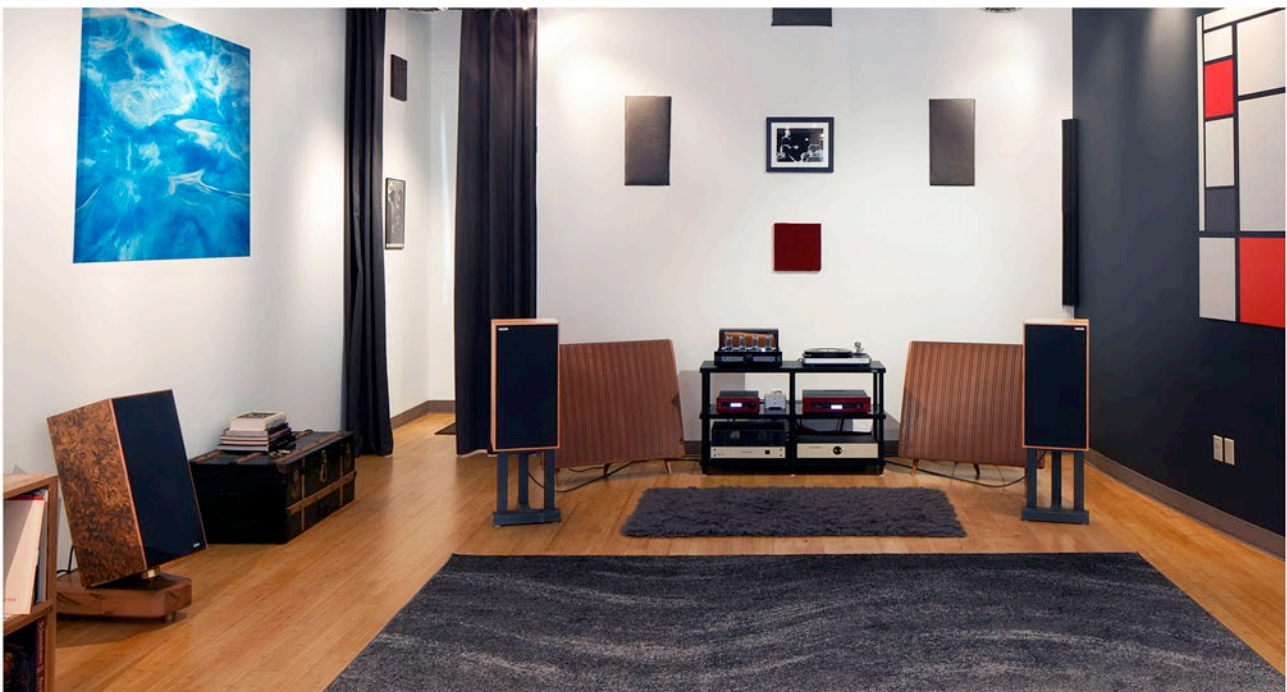
770.429.0434



San Diego, California - Deja VU Audio West

www.dejavuaudiowest.com
4848 Ronson Ct. Ste E
San Diego, California 92111

858.412.4023



APERIO
WARWICK ACOUSTICS 



"The Warwick APERIO is truly in a universe of its own. Not only does it provide one of the world's finest personal audio experiences, it includes a world-class DAC and line preamplifier. In the end, one of high end audio's best value propositions."

Jeff Dorgay, ToneAudio



www.warwickacoustics.com/headphones

Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

Sarasota, Florida - Suncoast Audio

www.suncoastaudio.com

7353 International Place, Unit 309

Sarasota, Florida 34240

941.932.0282



New York City, New York - Noho Sound & Stereo

www.nohosound.com

62 Cooper Square

New York, New York 10003



Cardas Audio

Established 1987

*Iridium
Power*

*Iridium
Interconnect*

*Iridium
Phono*

*Iridium
Speaker*

www.cardas.com

PASS

Enjoy the Experience



PASS

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

Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

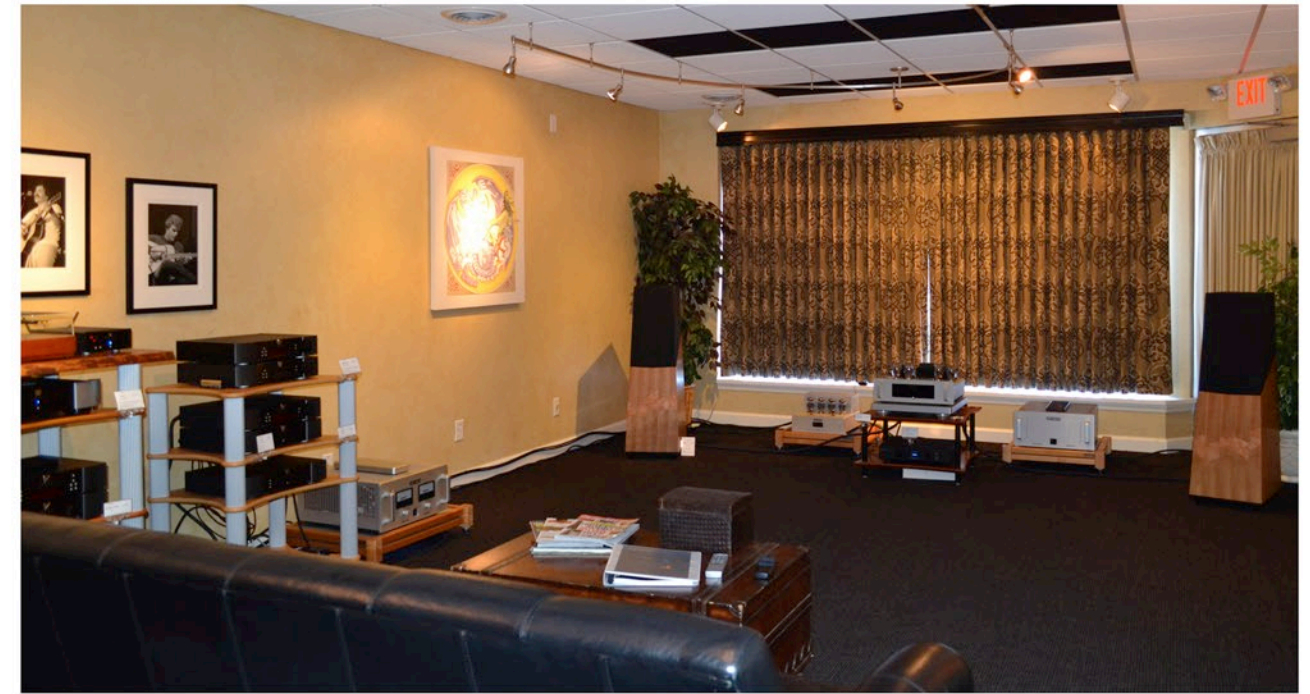
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin - Ultra Fidelis

www.ultrafidelis.com

7125 West North Avenue

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53213

414.221.0200



Portland, Oregon - Echo Audio

www.echohifi.com

5904 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy

Portland, Oregon 97221

888.248.3246



Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

Morton Grove, Illinois - Quintessence Audio

quintessenceaudio.com
5701 W. Dempster Street
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

847.966.4434



Scottsdale, Arizona - LMC Home Entertainment

lmche.com
15507 N. Scottsdale Road, Suite 135
Scottsdale, Arizona

480.403.0011

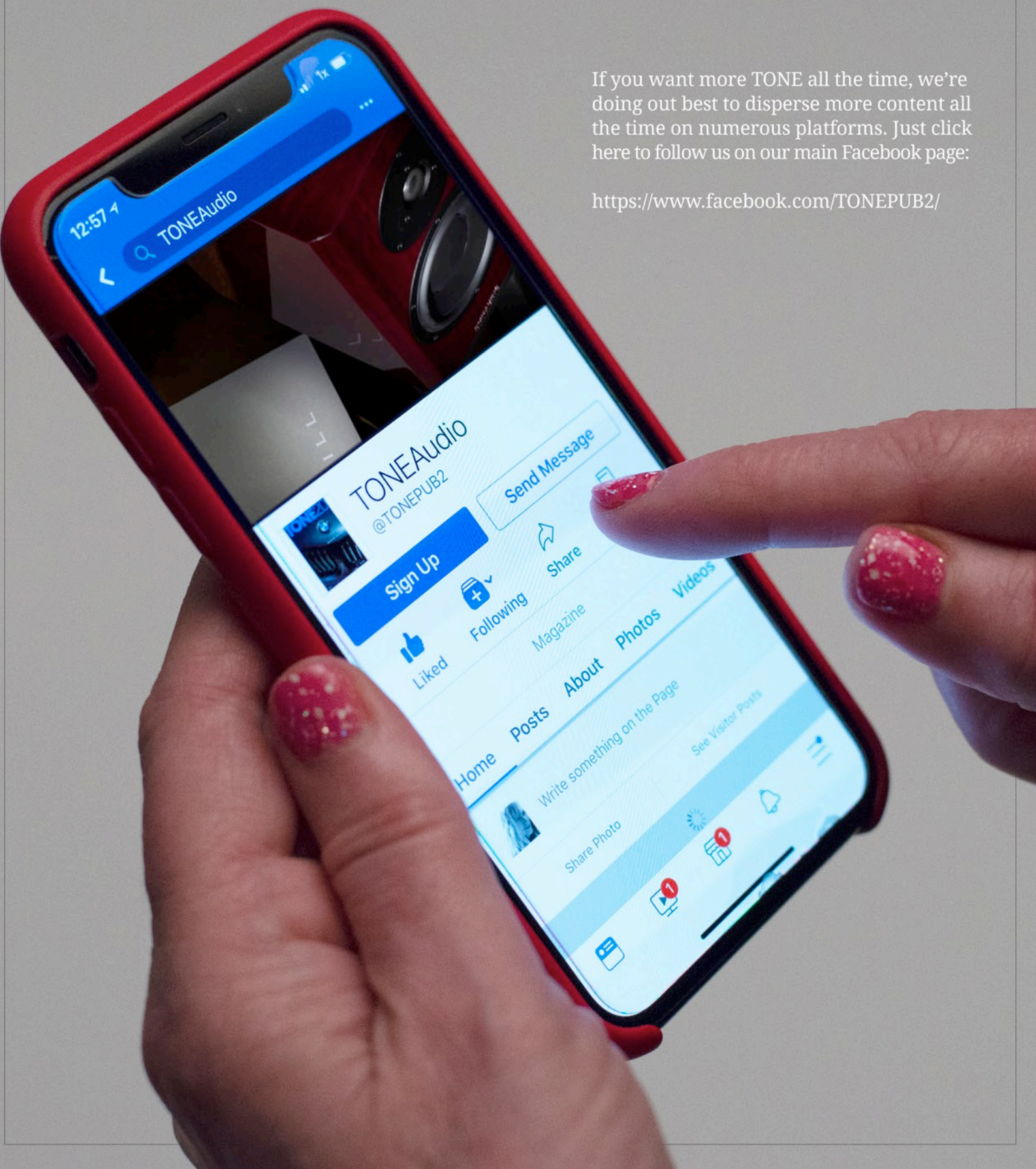


Socially Speaking

TONEAudio's Online hangouts

If you want more TONE all the time, we're doing our best to disperse more content all the time on numerous platforms. Just click here to follow us on our main Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/TONEPUB2/>

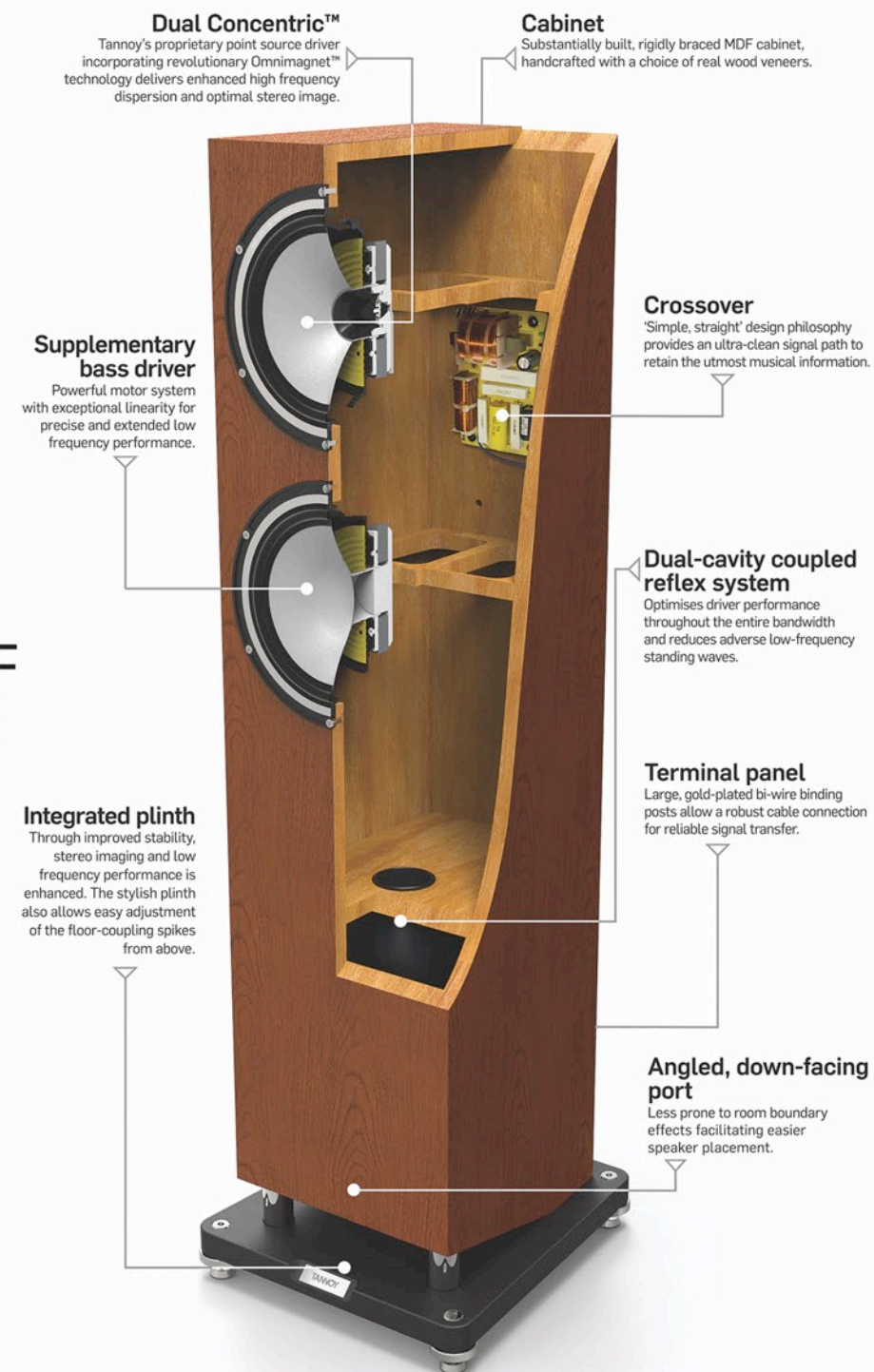


Revolution XT 8F

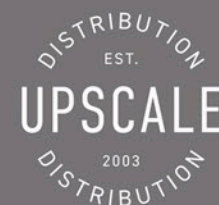
THIS \$10K SPEAKER IS JUST \$2300 PER PAIR

AVAILABLE IN
GLOSS BLACK
GLOSS WHITE
DARK WALNUT
MEDIUM OAK

TANNOY



"The Tannoy Revolution XT 8F was Robert Harley's top discovery at the 2015 Consumer Electronics Show. His first impression was as follows: 'After listening to it and looking at the real wood enclosure, I guessed the price at \$7000 to \$10,000. The Revolution XT's price was then revealed to be just \$2600 per pair!' After living with the 8F happily for several months, I was ready to declare it a sensational entry-level loudspeaker. But I see that I need to slightly amend that statement—the only thing entry-level about it is the price. The real wood veneers and level of finish don't suggest an entry-level product, and sonically it performs to a much higher standard. I'm in total agreement with Robert's assessment: The Tannoy packs a virtuoso midrange that is competitive with speakers approaching \$10k retail!"
— DICK OLSHER, THE ABSOLUTE SOUND



AudioVision
san francisco

welcome to the hifi show



AUDIOVECTOR

Handmade in Denmark since 1979



Inspiring Loudspeakers that are designed
to be easily placed in any room!

from less than \$1500 a pair and up

1628 california st. (on the cable car line)
san francisco, california 94109

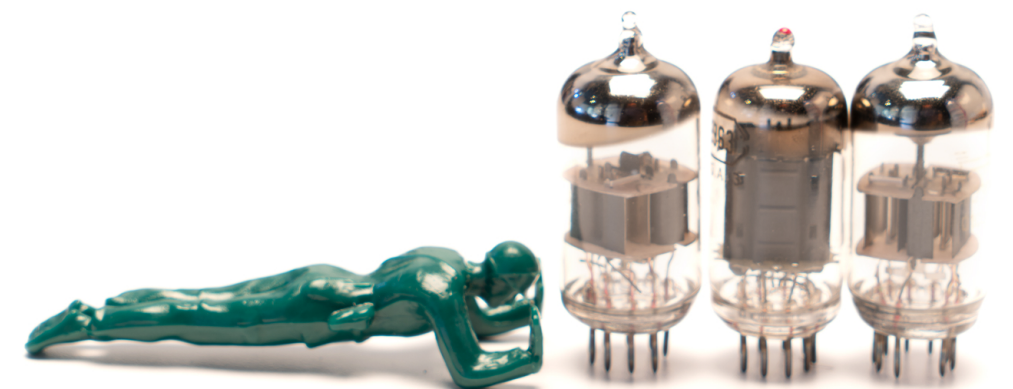
www.audiovisionsf.com

abyss
alta audio
audeze
audio physic
audiovector
dali
davone
dynaudio
elac
focal
gallo
gamut
grado
hifiman
jl audio
kef
mrspeakers
psb
raidho/scansonic
rel acoustics
triangle
warwick acoustics
wilson benesch
yg acoustics

anthem
antipodes
arcam
astell & kern
atoll
audioquest
bel canto
bluesound
cardas
chord electronics
clearaudio
crystal cable
deqx
devialet
dr. feickert
eat
funk firm
h.r.s.
ifi
integra
kiseki
lyngdorf audio
lyra
marantz
margules
mcintosh
moon by simaudio
nad
naim audio
nordost
nuforce
octave
ortofon
pear audio
primaluna
pro-ject
ps audio
quad
quadraspire
rega
shinola
sme
sonos
soundsmith
stillpoints
technics
unison research
woo audio

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

Abyss	abyss-headphones.com	Chord Cable	soundorg.com
Acora Acoustics	acoraacoustics.com	conrad-johnson	conradjohnson.com
Ana Mighty Sound	anamightysound.com	Core Power	underwood hifi.com
Analog Magik	analogmagik.com	dCS	dcsLtd.co.uk
Anthem	anthemav.com	Dynaudio	dynaudio.com
Aqua Audio	aquahifi.com	E.A.T.	vanaltd.com
Artisan Fidelity	artisanfidelity.com	Echo Audio	echohifi.com
Atlas Cable	vanaltd.com	Elusive Disc	elusivedisc.com
Audio Classics	audioclassics.com	Esoteric	esoteric-usa.com
Audio Physic	vanaltd.com	Exogal	exogal.com
Audio Research	audioresearch.com	Focal	naim-focal.com
Audio Solutions	highendbyoz.com	Franco Serblin	francoserblin.it
AudioVision SF	audiovisionsf.com	Gig Harbor Audio	gigharboraudio.com
AVID HiFi	avidhifi.com	Gold Note	goldnote.it
Boulder	boulderamp.com	Golden Ear	goldenear.com
Bryston	bryston.com	Grand Prix Audio	grandprixaudio.com
Cardas Audio	cardas.com		



T H E F I N E A R T S

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.



conrad-johnson It just sounds right.
2800K Dorr Ave • Fairfax, VA 22031 • phone: 703-698-8581, fax: 703-560-5360 • www.conradjohnson.com

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

HiFi Centre	hificentre.com	REL	rel.net
Kiseki	kiseki-usa.com	Qobuz	qobuz.com
Luxman	luxman.com	Rega	soundorg.com
McIntosh	mcintoshlabs.com	Sonus faber	sonusfaber.com
MartinLogan	martinlogan.com	Splicit	splicit.com
Musical Fidelity	naim-focal.com	Sumiko	sumiko.net
Nagra	nagraaudio.com	SVS	svsound.com
Naim	naim-focal.com	Tellurium Q	telluriumq.com
Octave	octave.de	Torus	toruspower.com
PS Audio	psaudio.com	Totem	totemacoustic.com
Paradigm	paradigm.com	Upscale Audio	upscaleaudio.com
Pass Labs	passlabs.com	VAC	vac-amplifiers.com
PrimaLuna	primaluna-usa.com	Vitus Audio	highendbyoz.com
ProAc	soundorg.com	Warwick Acoustics	warwickacoustics.com
Pro-Ject	pro-jectusa.com		



Time Warp

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

That's a wrap. Again a big thanks to all of you that have followed TONE's journey. And welcome to those that have just joined us.

I've been obsessed with music, and having a great hifi system as a way to enjoy music since my high school years.

Here's a snapshot of my system in 1983...

Acoustat 3s, Conrad-Johnson PV2a, Oracle turntable with Dynavector Ruby Karat cartridge, and a few other choice bits.

On many levels, it's come a long way, but it's still awesome.



v i t u s **VA** a u d i o
Handcrafted in Denmark

Best Integrated Amplifier on the planet.. Period!



AUTHORIZED DEALERS

HOUSTON, TX

3mA AUDIO
1431 W. Alabama St. HOUSTON, TX 77006
(832) 530 - 4716 sales@3maudio.com

SAN CLEMENTE, CA

Cake Audio
<http://cakeaudio.com>
(949) 369 - 9262 ken@cakeaudio.com

LAS VEGAS, NV

Argutus AUDIO
7650 Dean Martin Dr. STE. 101 LAS VEGAS, NV 89139
(702) 888 - 3787 info@argutusaudio.com

NORTH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTOR

HIGH END By OZ LLC

11870 Santa Monica Boulevard 106672
LOS ANGELES, CA 90025
(424) 344 - 0011 oz@highendbyoz.com

DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOME

Last Word

Our parting thought to ponder.

That's a wrap.

On to issue 101 and 2020!
Many quad mochas have been consumed.

GRAND PRIX AUDIO Monaco Turntable v2.0

A new achievement in analog



“Let the record state that this is the finest turntable I’ve experienced, at any price.”

-Jeff Dorgay, Tone Publications

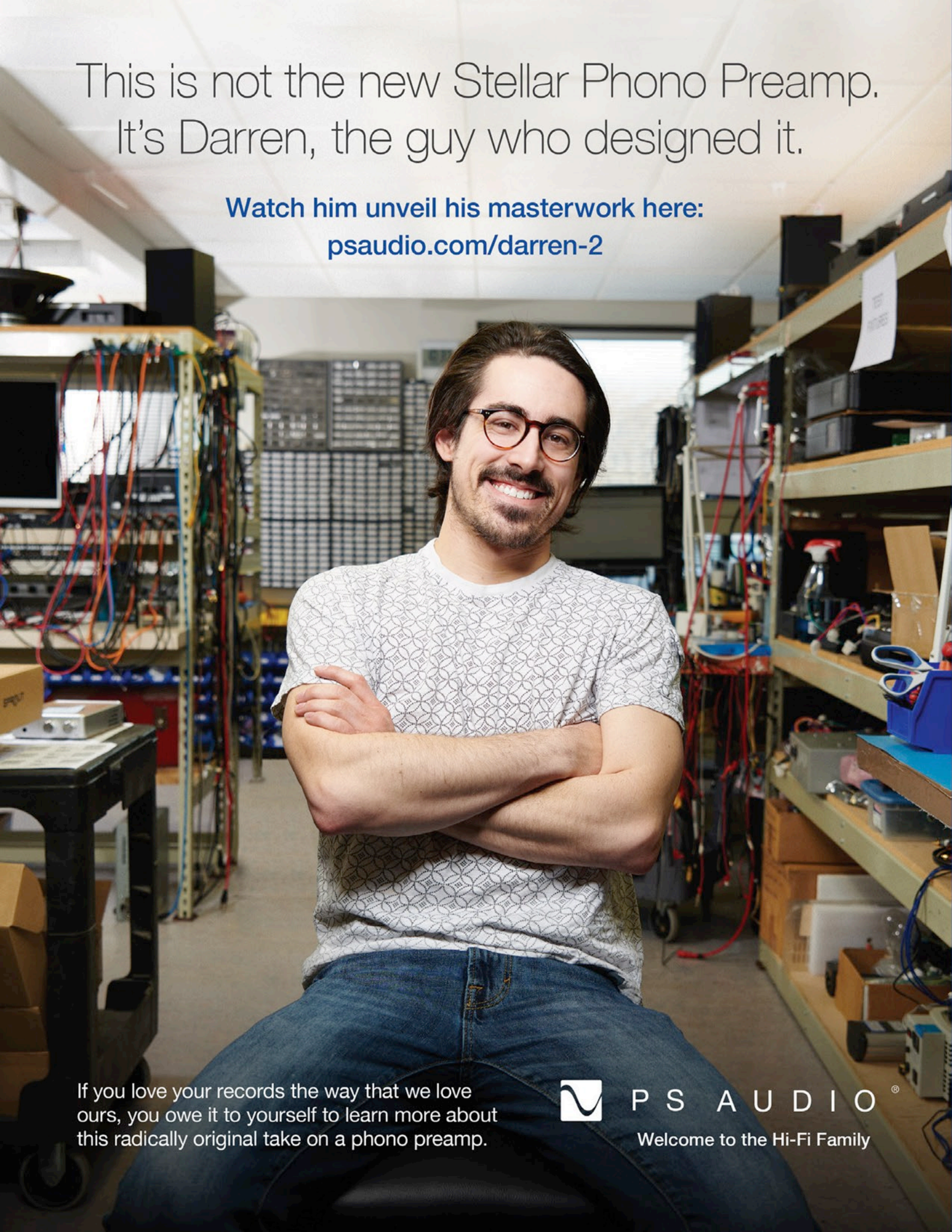
Music deserves innovation

www.grandprixaudio.com



This is not the new Stellar Phono Preamp.
It's Darren, the guy who designed it.

Watch him unveil his masterwork here:
psaudio.com/darren-2



If you love your records the way that we love ours, you owe it to yourself to learn more about this radically original take on a phono preamp.



PS AUDIO®

Welcome to the Hi-Fi Family

Next issue, **101:**

And it will be a surprise.

Not quite sure what 101 will be. We have a lot of content piled up here.

Happy new year to all.



TONE