



The Golden Ear

Newsletter of the *Chicago Audio Society*

January 2001

Meeting Notice

Sunday, January 21st - 2:00pm

CES and THE Show Reports

New Music

Audio Compression

A few of us attended the Consumer Electronics Show and The High End Show in Las Vegas held recently. John Kotches, who writes for the online publication *Secrets of Home Theater and High Fidelity*, will give a synopsis, as will others, and literature collected and photographs taken will be available for viewing.

We have some new music to play, and of course we want to hear yours. The dual layer SACD (playable on any CD player) handed out by Mark Levinson (the man) at the Red Rose Music demonstration, the third sampler CD from Burmester, and several recommended classical LPs from Cisco (King) Super Analogue are among those received...

We will have nominations and voting for club officers as discussed last month; due to other commitments Dennis Anderson will no longer be able to fulfill the treasurer position. (Thank you, Dennis, for a superb job while you were able to!) Members wanting to be more actively involved in the Society's activities and organization may volunteer to participate in the proposed Executive Committee. Comments on and any proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws distributed last month may be brought up for discussion.

A new preamplifier will be demonstrated...

Audiophiles may be shocked to discover that almost all FM radio broadcasts and most popular music CDs have been subjected to a type of audio signal manipulation called dynamic range compression. Members **Matthew May** and **Martin King** will discuss the technical aspects of compression, the rationale of broadcasters and music producers for employing it, and then demonstrate compression's effects using various musical selections.

Last Month

We held our Christmas party and listened to a variety of music in addition to music of the holiday season. We played both CDs and vinyl. Thanks to Gregg Straley, Alan Kimmel, and Dennis Anderson for providing the gear.

Future Months

Feb. 18 - To be announced.

March 18 - Mark Schifter, Perpetual Technologies (tentative, to be confirmed).

Others in the works: Sedrick Harris, Immedia (as well as Audio Physic, Lyra, and Herron); D.J. Casser, Black Diamond Racing; a return visit in June to TLG Acoustical Design in Chicago to see and hear their new "smaller" (in relative terms only!) speakers.

Dues Are Due

Please take care of dues at once, either at this month's meeting or by mail (the address is listed at the bottom of this page). Thanks to funds raised from the audio fair held last September, we are able to maintain the same reasonable rate while continuing to hold what we hope are interesting, informative meetings.

Website

We are making progress on our redesigned website, which features audio related news stories from several important websites,

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website: www.chicagoaudio.org

We meet on the third Sunday of each month at 2pm at The Dance Building, 1330 Webford Ave., Des Plaines IL, nonmembers are welcome (\$5 fee, may be applied to \$30 annual dues, prorata). CAS is a volunteer, nonprofit organization of audio and music enthusiasts dedicated to having fun. Our constitution and bylaws are available on our website at <http://www.chicagoaudio.org> or in printed form upon request.

enabling you to catch up on the news just by visiting our site. When completed, the new site will be easier to get around, as you will be able to go anywhere most often by a single mouse click. Some features are being added, including a direct link to the Audio Asylum (about the hottest discussion site out there), an improved site search, a list of music we've been listening to recently (and recommending--suggestions invited), and a list of equipment recently auditioned or purchased by members. Check it out in the meantime...the large record logo/menu is gone in favor of a more efficient layout, yet it's more fun than ever.

The Classical Corner

Len Cronin

This month I will be taking a look at Shostakovich's Fourth and Tenth Symphonies. The Fourth Symphony was completed in 1936 but was not given its first performance until December 1961. The reason being that Joseph Stalin took issue with the composer's second opera 'Lady MacBeth of the Mtsenk District' and issued a stern warning against 'formalism' and decadent western influences on Soviet musical development. Discretion being the better part of valor, Shostakovich withdrew the symphony before its premiere. The symphony is over an hour long and is written in three movements. The first and last movements each last about 25 minutes, while the middle movement is about 10 minutes long. This is complex music, often dissonant and always original. Many consider it the composer's greatest work. I won't go that far, but I do highly recommend it, especially when the best recording of the Fourth Symphony is teamed up with a really good Tenth and is sold at a bargain price on Sony Essential Classics. Eugene Ormandy leads the Philadelphia Orchestra in a recording that only lacks some impact and deep bass but is otherwise first rate. Highly recommended.

Stalin played a prominent role in the Tenth Symphony, although this time he did not delay its premiere; rather, Shostakovich waited for Stalin to die before writing another symphony. In 1948 a cultural purge took place in the Soviet Union, and Shostakovich was a victim. The work is written in four movements and is approximately an hour in length. The second movement, allegro, is said to be a musical description of Stalin, and after listening to this music it would be hard to deny this

interpretation. The Ormandy is good, but the Haitink on Decca with the London Philharmonic is outstanding.

In a slight shift of gears, George Antheil was an American composer who at one point in his career was called the American Shostakovich. Perhaps a bit more than a stretch, but Antheil deserves to be heard, and the perfect place to start is with Naxos American Classics series. Symphonies Four and Six and the concert overture 'McKonkey's Ferry' are performed by Theodore Kuchar and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. If you are familiar with American symphonies that were being written in the 30's and 40's and can imagine a large dose of Shostakovich and Prokofiev mixed in, then you might have an idea of what lies in store for you. By all means if you are at all adventuresome, give this music a try.

Next month some more Shostakovich and Finnish composer Kalevi Aho. Until then, good listening.

For Sale

Audio Research VT-100 Mk I, \$2000. Audio Artistry Dvorak speakers, \$2500. PS Audio Power Plant 300 with Multiwave option, \$750. Ken Kirkpatrick (847) 869-8139 (or email kkirkpa@home.com).

Bob Craig wants to know who had the Revox B790 turntable for sale at our audio fair. (773) 772-2329 (or email arsisi@megsinet.net)

Audiophile cleans closet. Audiostatic ES100/SW100 full range crossoverless electrostatic speakers, satin white with accessory feet, \$2700; Lazarus h1a hybrid tube/mosfet amplifiers (50 w/ch stereo, 200 w mono, single ended and balanced inputs), \$1500/pr.; Threshold CAS1 amplifier (75 w/ch), \$400; Linn Sondek LP12 (can be upgraded with Valhalla, etc.) with sought-after Ittok LVII tonearm and Asak MC cartridge, with 45 RPM adaptor, AQ Sorbothane mat and upgraded tonearm cable, \$900, prefer not to separate; Grace 707 tonearm mounted in Linn armboard, with GAS Sleeping Beauty Shibata MC cartridge, offers; Mitchell Cotter Mk 2 'P' moving coil step-up transformer, \$135. Can deliver. Brian (847) 382-8433 (or email bpwalsh@speakeasy.net).

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