



The Golden Ear

Newsletter of the Chicago Audio Society

March 1999

Meeting Notice

Sunday, March 21st - 2:00pm

Martin DeWulf - Bound For Sound

Bob Crump - T.G. Audio Lab

Simply put, this will be a meeting remembered for a long time to come. Find out why--plan to attend, and bring a friend. Bring records and CDs to play!

Those who met Marty a little over a year ago at Nordic Hills remember the engaging conversations. Marty will be open for questions. Be warned--he is passionate about audio!

Bob Crump has been around the audio community for quite a few years, having special interests in cabling and various tweaks such as mechanical isolation. A native of Evanston, Bob lives in Houston, Texas and is visiting Marty before they drive up together for our meeting. Bob will show the new CTC Blowtorch preamp (CTC stands for Curl-Thompson-Crump), and it is a no holds barred solid state design. Bob will demonstrate it (line stage only, phono stage coming) along with his latest upgrade of the Vendetta Research phono stage (also designed by John Curl and Mr. Thompson). You be the judge of what the designers have accomplished. Bob is a lot of fun and knows what he's talking about.

Last Month

Alan Kimmel showed his prototype hybrid power amplifier, rated at 75 watts per channel. Driving Rich Sacks' IMF Monitor Mk. III speakers, which usually demand a good amount of power to sound right, Alan's amp had no problem driving them. Alan is a

strong believer in mu follower circuit designs, and the MOSFET output stage combined with tubes on the front end made for excellent sound. Welborne Labs is scheduled to be selling the amp in assembled and kit form later this year. Prices have not been set.

We auditioned a variety of music on CD and demonstrated the Walker Audio Valid Points and Resonance Control Discs (cones and pucks, in layman's terms), on loan from Quintessence Audio. As for the Walker accessories, many readily heard improvements they made to the sound (better definition and imaging, lower noise, and so on)--see the latest issue of *The Absolute Sound* for a complete rundown on these goodies, about which two reviewers raved. Removing the 1-inch thick RCDs (pucks) from on top of the speakers was apparent. Isolating front end components is especially important, according to the instructions, which encourage you to experiment.

It's also worth mentioning we treated the meeting room with ASC Tube Traps of various types, along with a sheet of bed foam on the back wall, with seemingly good results. We invite your comments.

Next Month

To be announced.

May Meeting

There will be no regular meeting on May 16th, since that's the last day of the HiFi '99 (aka Stereophile) show, which will be held at the Palmer House Hilton downtown (public days are Friday the 14th through Sunday the 16th). It will be worthwhile attending.

But because we're audiophiles and need our monthly "fix", we've arranged a factory visit to TLG

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We meet on the third Sunday of each month at 2pm at The Dance Building, 1330 Webford Ave., Des Plaines IL, nonmembers welcome (\$5 fee, may be applied to \$30 annual dues). CAS is a volunteer, not for profit, *fun* group of audiophiles and music lovers.

Acoustics in Chicago, makers of that huge stereo horn speaker system shown for the first time at the Winter CES in Las Vegas this year. The tour will be on Saturday, May 8th.

Industry News

We have heard from several sources that *Fi* magazine has shut down. Since *Ultimate Audio* editor Myles Astor has just announced that Michael Gindi and Jack English, both formerly of *Fi*, have joined his publication as senior editors, the news must be true.

Harry Paller, designer and builder of the fine Technik Avant Garde preamp, shared the following interesting news at last month's meeting regarding the **new DVD audio standard** (thanks, Harry):

The DVD Forum has announced the establishment of a format for DVD-Audio.

The Forum's Steering Committee approved the format, called Version 1.0, and will have the DVD-Audio standards book published shortly. DVD-Audio will be the fifth DVD format to be put in place, after DVD-Video, DVD-ROM, DVD-RAM and DVD-R.

The final format includes the addition of Dolby AC-3 encoding as the standard for video clips. The format supports sampling frequencies as high as 192KHz and as low as 44.1KHz and uses 16, 20 and 24 quantization bits. Version 1.0 can store 192KHz, 24-bit, two-channel sound for 74 minutes on a single-layered, single-sided disk. When standard PCM coding is used, 64 minutes of 192KHz, 24-bit, two-channel sound can be stored in a single-layered, single-sided 12cm disk.

In response to requests from content producers, the Forum's Working Group 4 introduced a lossless coding method in order to transmit limited-transfer-rate, high frequency audio

signals without any loss of the original musical information, enabling the storage of 74 minutes of sound at the highest frequencies. When using the lowest sampling frequency CD sound (i.e., 44.1KHz, 16 bits for two channels) more than 7 hours of sound can be stored on a single-layered, single-sided, 12 cm disk.

Sony and Philips, even though both are members of Working Group 4, proposed a competing high-performance format called the Super Audio CD. This format, however, has seen very little development to date after its proposal was made in late 1997.

Although this long-awaited format is now ready, DVD groups are still disagreeing on where it should be used. In very high-end audio? In multi-function players? In relatively low-priced portable players?

Matsushita (Panasonic) plans to introduce in mid-to-late Spring of this year (1999), a fully compatible DVD deck which will be able to play both DVD-Video and DVD-Audio disks.

SUMMARY OF BASIC PARAMETERS

Coding - Linear PCM

Sampling Frequencies -
48KHz/96KHz/192KHz ;
44.1KHz/88.2KHz/176.4KHz

Quantization Bits - 16/20/24

Transfer Rate - 9.6M bits

Channels - From 2 to 6 Channels Maximum
(For 192KHz and 176.4KHz sampling, only 2 channels maximum)

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