



The Golden Ear

Newsletter of the *Chicago Audio Society*

April 2001

Meeting Notice

Sunday, April 22nd - 2:00pm

Demo of Manley Labs and Camelot Technology gear

John Kotches reviewed the Manley Labs Neo-Classic 250 monoblock amplifiers (\$9000) for Secrets of Home Theater and High Fidelity (www.hometheaterhifi.com) and has them as well as the Manley Purist line stage preamplifier (\$1650) for our demonstration.



Sorry, no picture of the Camelot Round Table DVD player (\$3995) which features progressive scan digital video technology by DVDO, Burr Brown PCM 1732-based 24-bit/96 kHz HDCD®-compatible DAC

section, and automatic upsampling of 16/44 CDs to 24/96.

Pascal Ravach of Mutine Inc, representing Audiomat, Mutine, Vecteur, and Equation, had to cancel his visit this month due to a bout with mononucleosis. We look forward to him visiting in a few months hence.

Last Month

We demonstrated the Perpetual Technologies P-1A DSP-based Resolution Enhancement Loudspeaker + Loudspeaker/Room Correction System (\$1099) and P-3A 24-Bit 96kHz (optional 192KHz/DSD) Digital-to-Analog converter (\$799). We also demonstrated the Fidelix SH-20K Natural Spectrum Harmonator (\$2000), a digital device which is described as restoring frequencies above 20kHz to create a uniform natural spectrum and improved sonic results.

Future Months

May 20 - Mark Schifter, Perpetual Technologies

Others in the works: Sedrick Harris, Immedia (as well as Audio Physic, Lyra, and Herron); "Clearing the Digital Fog" by John Kotches; a return visit in June to TLG Acoustical Design in Chicago.

The Classical Corner

Len Cronin

It was at the CAS meeting that featured Herron Audio, that I played my copy of Copland's Rodeo from an original Mercury pressing - SR90172. Ever since then I had several members ask me if I wanted to sell the record and the answer is always the same. No. Well, if you really desire that or any other classical

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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 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.

record, your best opportunity to obtain that elusive disk is just around the corner on Saturday, May 13, from 9:30 to 4:30 P.M. at the 2000 Midwest Classical Record Show in the Holiday Inn Northshore, 5300 Touhy Avenue, Skokie, Illinois. Take my word for it, this is vinyl heaven.

If you decide to attend and this is your first classical show, some of the terms and definitions used by the dealers and collectors would be in order. On the RCA Living Stereo series, you might see a sticker with either an 'SD' or 'WD'. This is short hand for shaded dog and white dog which appear on the label. The shaded dog labels are usually more desirable and command a higher price. On RCA's budget Victrola label the most sought after records are the ones with a 'plum' colored label. What makes the plum label desirable is the fact that it was pressed on thick vinyl and sonically comes close to the original RCA pressings.

The situation is a little more complicated when discussing Mercury Living Presence recordings. You might hear the term 'color back' thrown around or someone will mention that they have a 'vendor' copy. What is really important is the pressing of a particular record. Just as RCAs are referred to as shaded dogs or white dogs ('SD' or 'WD'), Mercs are referred to by their pressing stamper's designation. In this case the two most desirable pressings are 'FR' and 'RFR'. Of the two, 'FR' is by far the more sought after and can cost about twice as much as an "RFR" pressing. Don't consider any other pressings. They are usually inferior to the previously mentioned pressings.

Two other popular labels are London/Decca and EMI in both cases look for English pressings. In the case of London/Decca, it will state on the label and record jacket where it was manufactured. Although not bad, those records that were made in Holland usually are

not as good as those that were made in England. Also, you should be aware of the term 'Blue Back' which refers to early pressings of London recordings. The back cover of the jacket is colored blue, thus the name 'Blue Back'. These are usually not as pricey as RCAs or Mercs, however, they still command a premium. In the case of EMI there are several countries of origin and various labels to consider. As stated earlier, we are only going to consider English recordings. As for the labels, the two most common are referred to as 'Large Nipper' and 'Small Nipper' or 'LN' and 'SN'. The small nipper is about the size of a rectangular postage stamp and is the more sought after pressing. The large nipper pressings used a soft vinyl formulation that can become tacky after repeated use and thus their lower value.

Remember, this information is only scratching the surface of collectible classical records. What I wrote about is only concerned with audiophile recordings. Luckily most of the dealers are real nice and are very willing to share their knowledge with you.

I'm keeping May 13 open because, there is some Shostakovich that I've been looking for and this is the perfect place to find it. Hope to see you at the show.

Society Business

Reed Rehorst expressed interest in serving as Treasurer of the Society, taking over for Dennis Anderson who has found it necessary to step down. Judging from Reed's enthusiasm and helpful ideas, I think he'll do a great job. Thanks to Dennis and Reed for working through this transition, and for Frank Putnam who is putting the finishing touches on the membership database for use in generating mailing labels.

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