



The Golden Ear

Newsletter of the Chicago Audio Society

April 1999

Meeting Notice

Sunday, April 18th - 2:00pm

Harry Paller - Technik Avant Garde

If you missed seeing and hearing the TAG Model One Signature preamplifier in 1997, you missed a good one. Here's a second chance. Harry, designer and builder of this ultra high end preamp, will describe several of the facets and design objectives of this creation which gave Harry Pearson and others cause to audition it seriously for a long time and review it favorably in *The Absolute Sound*. We understand Marty DeWulf is auditioning the preamp and will publish a review in a future issue of *Bound for Sound*. Harry Paller will cover features in some more detail than in his previous presentation. This will be a good time to audition one of the finest preamplifiers in existence and gain insight.

Of course, please bring music to play.

Last Month

Bob Crump of T.G. Audio and Marty DeWulf of Bound for Sound visited. Bob showed the CTC Blowtorch preamp, deserving of a meeting by itself. CTC stands for Curl-Thompson-Crump, indicating the design is a collaboration with John Curl and Carl Thompson. The case of the unit (actually two, one being a power supply) is milled from a solid billet of aluminum to minimize resonances and can be built to the customer's needs, with options such as a phase switch. A phono stage similar to the Vendetta Research (designed by Curl and Thompson) will be available soon as a built in option. It is sold direct

only. It should offer serious competition to other no compromise designs.

Bob also demonstrated the T.G. Audio cables, including interconnects, speaker cables, and digital cable. T.G. Audio "Pointy Things" cones were mounted under components for isolation, and T.G. Audio Bybee-Sucker power line conditioners were used throughout the front end to lower noise, etc. A G&D Transforms CD transport and Entec Number Cruncher 1.1 DAC (modified by Bob) were used for CD playback, while Bob's tweaked Vendetta Research phono stage fed by a SOTA Cosmos/SME V/Koetsu Rosewood Signature were used for LP. Bob has been experimenting with connectors, wire, insulation, etc. for many years, in pursuit of the best sound possible. While the sound at the meeting was less than superb, for which we offer Bob an apology, we suggest you audition his cables in your system. We are looking to correct the room acoustics further, especially in the bass, and speakers used in the future will be fully broken in.

Marty DeWulf, editor and publisher of Bound for Sound, captured members' interest as he told about components and low cost tweaks he has found to be of merit. One of the most notable tweaks mentioned is checking proper power cord polarity (on each component), described in the 12/96 issue and available on the (recommended) BFS web site at <http://www.boundforsound.com/WEBTEXT2.html>

Next Month

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.

Chicago Audio Society, P.O. Box 313, Barrington IL 60011, tel. (847) 382-8433 website: <http://www.xnet.com/~bpwalsh/cas.html>

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.

We have arranged a factory visit to TLG 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.

Opinion

You may have seen Circuit City commercials on TV promoting a format known as DIVX. While it may not be appropriate to summarily dismiss Circuit City ads, those promoting DIVX certainly should be--it's just a bad idea. Circuit City would have you think it's less expensive or at least more convenient to purchase a DIVX player and discs instead of a DVD player and rent discs, there is more to it than that. Mass merchandiser Best Buy argues convincingly for DVD instead of DIVX on its web site at <http://commerce.bestbuy.com/Divx2.asp>

Salient points: A DIVX machine is initially costs more than a DVD player of similar quality; you must connect your DIVX player to a telephone line and keep it connected, or you won't be able to view many of your discs; limited number of movies available; DIVX has the ability and right to send promotional materials directly into your onscreen account (ads); and so on.

This may be interesting to the audiophile from the point that the new DVD-Audio standard, published in last month's newsletter, presumably will be incorporated in future DVD (audio/video) players, which many of us will purchase. There isn't much sense in

buying into a closed, proprietary format, subjecting you to potentially irksome advertising and possibly clueless service people.

Misc.

Alan Kimmel (847-671-4405 or email mu@megsinet.net) mentioned an elderly person with a home for sale in Des Plaines, complete with a basement full of audio equipment. Lots of speakers, 4-track reel to reels, amps, etc.

HiFi 99

By now you're aware of the show which will be at the Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago. If you can possibly make it, plan to attend. Public days are Friday, May 14th through Sunday, May 16th, and cost is reasonable (we urge you to contact an audio dealer in the area for tickets, which may be less expensive than paying at the door).

A concert schedule for the three public days is posted on our web site, and we'll also have the list available at this month's meeting.

Web Site Updated

If you haven't visited our web site recently, you're in for some fun surprises. We've added and updated some links, as well as adding a discussion forum and mailing lists, among other things.

Also, see a few photographs of our last meeting on the web site (under Meetings).

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