

The Golden Ear

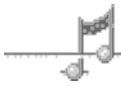
Newsletter of the *Chicago Audio Society*

July 2002

Meeting Notice

Sunday, July 21st, 2:00 pm

Music



Bring some music to play, and say a few words if you like. **Brian Richardson** will be bringing the Birdland DAC and Aiwa transport. **Randy Nuss** hopes to bring his new PS Audio digital amp as well as an Audio Research preamp. **Dennis Anderson** has volunteered to bring his Ohm speakers. Should be fun, so tell a friend!

Last Month

Michael Hobson and **Coleman Brice** of **Classic Records** and **Gilles Gameiro** of **Birdland Audio** visited and kept everyone's attention in what could be described as one of our most interesting meetings.

Mike Hobson described many factors that enter into what results as the final product, and toward the end of his talk spoke about and demonstrated Classic Records' new vinyl formulation and profile, Quix SV-P, which will be used henceforth on all new vinyl. Many in attendance reported hearing significant improvements with the Quix SV-P. Mike and Coleman proved they really know their stuff!

Although he didn't have as much time as we may have liked, **Gilles Gameiro** surely showed his

products are to be taken seriously. His **Odéon-Ag** 24bit / 192KHz upsampling Digital to Analog Converter (\$1295, if memory serves) sounded very good in combination with a Pioneer DV-525 DVD player used as a transport, and was compared side by side with a SOTA Cosmos/SME V/Kiseki Purpleheart (vacuum hold down was not available to be used) with output going through a Vendetta SCP-2T phono stage. Each was connected to **Brian Richardson's** Audiomat Solfege integrated amplifier, which powered **Dennis Anderson's** Ohm speakers.

Mike Hobson carefully adjusted vertical tracking angle (VTA) on the tonearm for each different record, and in the listening comparisons between DVD-A and vinyl used a Radio Shack sound level meter to make a reasonable attempt at matching levels (frequency response differences for each were different, making exact matching impossible). The differences turned out to be small, in favor of one or the other medium depending upon recording being played and personal preferences.

Gilles also showed and demonstrated his **Pleyel-Ag** amplifier, which can be used as a stereo 18 watt/channel amplifier or a 65 watt monoblock. In a very gracious gesture, Gilles left the Odéon-Ag DAC with the club on long term loan for members to audition and enjoy. Anyone interested in doing so should contact Rich Sacks or other club officer.

At the end, **Mike** and **Coleman** gave away some goodies, ranging from a T-shirt to some of their new jazz pressings. A fitting end to a wonderful afternoon of informative demonstrations and answering questions as well as good listening. We hope both **Classic Records** and **Birdland Audio** will return in the near

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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 (first meeting is free, otherwise \$5 fee or \$40 annual dues). CAS is a volunteer 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.

future, each to do meetings on their own so members may learn more about and appreciate their fine products and their enthusiasm for good music.

Future Meetings

August 18th - Brett Riehl - Audio Machine & Design.

September 15th - Dr. Bruce Edgar - Edgarhorn.

Starting in September, we'll be meeting at the Arlington Heights Historical Society.

Shows

Sat., July 27 - Chi-Town Summer Horn Bash, Star Plaza Radisson, Merrillville, Indiana. Details at http://www.diyacable.com/horn_bash.htm

Tweak

Someone had been telling me about Superior Electric (who?) binding posts I should be using on my amplifiers and speakers, saying he thought they were better than anything else he's tried, including all the well known audiophile brands. I finally got up the nerve to get online and order some, and recently changed the posts on the amps. The existing ones appeared to be generic gold plated with black and red plastic hex nuts. Ironically, the Superior Electric ones I had put in look identical yet sound dramantically better. At about \$23 for a stereo set, it wasn't a lot of money, and the result is greatly improved focus, dynamics, imaging, air, etc. They only have a couple of days' break in so far, and it will take about 120 hours before they're done, but the improvement is significant. I put on the Edgar Meyer/Bela Fleck 'Improvisations' CD, and Bela's banjo jumped out of the speakers, and I'm not talking about aggressive sound. I just about bodily extruded a dark rectangular building component. It's a whole new ball game. The ones I bought from Allied Electronics (<http://www.alliedelec.com> or 1-800-433-5700) were the gold plated double type with 10-32 studs with black and red hex nuts, mfr. type BP30-2BR10, Allied stock no. 645-9990, \$11.60 ea. They don't look like much, no audiophile brand name, but folks, try them for a most pleasant surprise. -- BW

The Classical Corner

Len Cronin

The last few weeks I've been playing with my new toys, a pair of AKG 501 headphones and a Sony SACD/DVD player. Well, when you get an SACD player you just have to get some SACDs. Both of the SACDs reviewed are on the Sony label and brings up my one real complaint about Sony. Why doesn't Sony manufacture hybrid disks? Sony is the biggest player in the game, and to my knowledge none of their SACDs are hybrids. If the format fails, Sony will only have itself to blame. So much for venting and on to some music.

Mark O'Connor's "The American Seasons" Sony SK89660 with the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra, Scott Yoo conducting is loosely based on Vivaldi's Seasons. It's sort of a combination of down home fiddlin' and chamber music. I like it, however, I might like the rest of the album more. 'Strings & Threads Suite' and 'Appalachia Waltz' is the kind of accessible writing that just might be a good introduction to classical music.

Hilary Hahn is the best violinist of her generation. Her newest album contains the Brahms and Stravinsky Violin Concertos with The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Sir Neville Marriner conducting, Sony SS89649. On the Brahms I would have preferred a larger orchestra, but I can't complain about Miss Hahn's playing. The real reason to buy this disk is the Stravinsky concerto. I had never warmed to this music until I heard Miss Hahn play this piece. This is modern, tonal and terrific music that really deserves to be heard. Please read the liner notes because not only is Hilary Hahn a tremendous talent, but she also wrote the notes to the album. Perhaps there is hope for this generation.

As far as sound, both albums are good examples of what SACD does right. Rather than spectacular, the sound is natural, and with classical music that is what I want. Highly recommended, especially the Stravinsky/Hahn.

Society Business

At this month's meeting we will discuss some proposed changes to the Bylaws and Constitution, as drafted by the Executive Committee, which consists of the Society officers and other members who are

very active in the group. After discussion of the changes, a vote will be taken at next month's meeting, at which point they would go into effect. The proposed changes are mostly about things the officers and executive committee do, to more accurately reflect how things have been running, and membership including how dealers and other people in the industry may be involved.

Newsletters by Email

At a recent meeting of the Executive Committee, the topic of members receiving these newsletters by email in lieu of postal mail was brought up. A mailing list for this purpose exists through our website, so you may wish to pursue this.

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Because most people these days are in the position of receiving email, we are considering a change to newsletters by email as the standard way of doing things, although those without could continue to receive them in the postal mail. Another idea was to mail just a postcard announcing each meeting, with the full newsletter on the website as well as being emailed. All of this is being considered in order to reduce the workload for Bill Sweet, who takes care of the mailings, as well as limit costs.

We invite your comments. Meanwhile, check out the newsletters mailing list through the website.