

The Golden Ear

Newsletter of the Chicago Audio Society

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Last Month

David Birch-Jones of **Marantz America** demonstrated the Model 7 preamp, Model 9 mono amps, and CD-63SE CD player to a well attended meeting. The Model 8B stereo amp was also displayed. David gave a fine historical account, dating from Saul Marantz's original 'consolette' mono preamp, to Saul's association with Jon Dahlquist, to the current day. Interconnects and speaker cable were Vampire Wire, and analogue playback was from a Linn Sondek and Cotter MC transformer fed into the Model 7's phono stage. Thanks to **Dennis Anderson** for bringing his Ohm 250 speakers once again. Several interesting questions and strong opinions (why not?) were expressed by those in attendance, some of whom own the original gear, mentioning modifications by designer Sid Smith. **Jim Kreiser** brought along his original Model 7, with 7C wood case, for an interesting side by side comparison. At the end of the meeting new member **Jim Silasiri** brought in his Model 10B tuner to demonstrate, a nice treat. **Great meeting!**

This Month's Meeting

August 18 - **DH Labs** Silver Sonic cables. Never heard of them? Check them out. We can compare interconnects, and you're welcome to bring along yours to try as we get time (we can schedule more of this in the future if enough people are interested). Of course how cables work are largely system dependent, but let's give it a shot. We'll also hear demonstrations of different **recording and microphone techniques**, more lucidly than before--the differences are immediately audible, and you'll probably hear things in your recordings you may not have noticed. Feel free to bring records and CDs to play.

Down the Road

We're working on the ones we mentioned last month, as well as a few surprises. Let us know of your interests,

too--presentations and short topics by members are welcome, and we invite you to bring equipment to demo and of course music to play.

September 15 - **Mystery guest**. This will be revealed at this month's meeting. Not to be missed!

October 20 - **Naim Audio**. Chris West will demonstrate the new preamp (\$2100) and the new Credo loudspeakers which were based on their well regarded SBL's, as well as other fine components. It should be an interesting, refreshing presentation.

Meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month in the Pinehurst Room (formerly known as the Viking Room) at Nordic Hills Resort in Itasca. The meeting begins at 2pm, doors open at 1. Nordic Hills phone number is (630) 773-2750. Newcomers are welcome to attend a meeting without cost or obligation.

New Members

Welcome to the several people who've joined us in the past few months, including:

Martin Daley, of LaGrange - (630) 482-0372

Jim Silasiri, of Elmhurst - (630) 832-4366

We'll have updated membership lists available at the next two meetings, for those who've been asking.

Tidbits

Paul Heath (the man), who is currently affiliated with **Joule Electra**, recently sent information on the new Rhythm integrated single ended triode tube amp by **Gamma Acoustics** of England. Rated at 17 W/ch and having only an input selector switch (line only) and volume control, it features one 211 output tube per side and has had favorable reviews in some of the overseas audio magazines. How does it compare with the absurdly expensive Audio Note Ongaku?

Radio Shack recently introduced two speakers using dipole versions of the **Linaeum** tweeter.

Recording of the Month

Nothing this month -- we invite your comments for publishing here. Hear some "records to die for" (one which may knock your socks off) at this month's meeting.

Tweaks

This one's easy, one you'll hear more about and for yourself at this month's meeting. Cones! Try some today--mmm, tasty! Vanilla, chocolate, name your flavor. Michael Green, Marigo, and Black Diamond Racing all make good ones, and depending on your equipment and the way it's positioned, you may prefer one kind over the other. Some are metal, some ceramic, some carbon fiber, while others are combinations of various materials. The difference can range from slightly cleaner sound (if your gear is already fairly isolated from feedback) to a major improvement. I'd like to share my brief experience with Black Diamond Racing products.

I put some cones (\$20 apiece) under the BAT preamp and one of their 'The Shelf' (a composite sandwich plinth, which at \$730, I must be nuts, but bear with me and read on) resting on cones under the SOTA turntable. Background noise (what might be attributed to rumble, hiss, record noise, etc.) was reduced noticeably, I'd say by 6 dB or more--substantially

"blacker". Images were more stable, and depth and soundstage increased, on excellent records to a significant degree. Focus and "palp factor" increased, with more air around the instruments. The music "spoke" to me as never before. CDs also sounded a bit more musical, not to the same degree as LPs, possibly due to the cumulative effect of the cones and Shelf under the turntable as well as the cones under the preamp. On the other hand, bright recordings were still bright--they weren't just rolling off the highs. While the flaws of less than perfect recordings were more readily apparent, they were also more listenable, in a forgiving sort of way.

I would encourage everyone to try some cones under their components. CD players, turntables, electronics, even speakers. Not a panacea (get a good sturdy rack or table, if you don't already have one), these will help improve your system's sound. They won't magically transform your system to do what it can't, but they *will* take out some of the grunge and noise to enable you to *enjoy the music*. And *that's* what it's all about, right?



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