

Chicago Audio Society Newsletter, October, 2004

Meeting Notice-Sunday, October 17th, 2:00-5:00PM

For directions go to:

<http://www.chicagoaudio.org/directions.htm>

Sedrick Harris of Acoustic Partners (<http://www.acousticpartners.com/>) will be presenting Nola (formerly known as Alon) loudspeakers, Berendsen electronics, and Soundstring cables. This will be Sedrick's fourth meeting with us over the years, and all have been excellent and entertaining presentations-be there! What Sedrick has planned for the meeting:

Nola (formerly Alon) Lotus Elite Plus's (a new model above the normal Elite and below the Signature model.

Nola Thunderbolt subwoofer.

Nola Li'l Rascal III bookshelf speakers.

Berendsen electronics consisting of:

Control 22 Pre-amp pre-production unit (if UPS finds it in time - this is the premier audition of this unit to anyone in North America. If it doesn't arrive, I will use the Prel-SE Berendsen pre-amp).

STA-150 SE Stereo power amplifier

CDP-1 CD player (According to Sedrick-this one you have to hear to believe it. Have someone bring a classical CD with chorus all at maximum intensity - it is still music with this unit.)

IPA-80 Integrated amplifier (8 inputs - all individually adjustable for input sensitivity)

Soundstring cables - lots. (speaker cables, digital power cords, a prototype high level inexpensive power cord +++ and interconnects.

SSC pucks & bases

Giveaways:

I have 5 of the Soundstring Digital power cords to be awarded to the lucky winners. In addition, another individual will win a 3 foot pair of Soundstring interconnects (RCA or XLR - they will be custom made for the individual) and an 8 foot pair of Soundstring speakers cables (bananas or spades or one of each - again custom made) Total giveaways of \$1,500 worth of product.

Information on all the above products can be found at Acoustic Partners website listed above.

September Meeting Recap

Audiopoints (<http://www.audiopoints.com/>) presented an entire system (except for the digital front end) of their own design including stands, all cables, speakers, and electronics. The meeting was hosted by Brent Riehl, their chief engineer and designer, and Robert Maicks, head of sales and marketing. Joe Jurzec, of Jam'N Audio, their dealer, supplied a Goldmund universal disc player. The Audiopoints products shown included:

Harmonic Precision Caravelle Monitors
Harmonic Precision electronics
Sistrum Platform Stands (electronics and speakers), including new prototype stands for the speakers
Sonoran Cable
Micro-bearing steel fill

The Caravelle Monitors, a compact 8" 2-way design in a non-wood composite cabinet, succeeded in filling our room (48'x 27') nicely with music. The entire setup with the unique stands was impressive and we hope to have some pictures in the future. Many noted a very involving sound, with only the bottom octave a bit lacking. Brent Riehl explained the theory and practice behind their products, of which some is shown in a white paper on the company website above. Brent Riehl also indicated that they measure 30 Hz at -3 db down at their location and felt that 3-4 days for the micro-bearing steel to settle in the stands would result in further bass response.

Our thanks to all our guests, who put together a first class system and presentation.

Important Announcements

The Vice President vacancy will be voted on at the October meeting. Those interested can have their name placed in nomination and a vote will be taken at the beginning of the meeting.

Please NOTE CAREFULLY the DATES and TIMES for FUTURE MEETINGS listed below.

Baroque Bits by Brian Richardson

There are a plethora of new Baroque operas performed on original instruments being released at this time. Emmanuelle Haim's "Le Concert d'Astree" (The Concert of Stars) is consistently coming out with new, exciting readings of famous but rarely heard Baroque masterpieces. In the last Baroque Bits, I discussed her rendition of Monteverdi's L'Orfeo, which I would still recommend. She has also come out with a new version of Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, with Susan Graham as Dido and Ian Bostridge as Aeneas. Dido and Aeneas is an opera I have actually performed in at the University of Illinois, although we did a truncated version that was in publication at that time, some 30 years ago. Haim's version is in three acts, and has witches and sorceresses and other metaphysical fun stuff that adds color and excitement to the score.

Christoph Gluck has had a couple of his operas revived recently, his Alceste with John Elliot Gardiner (English Baroque Soloists, Monteverdi Choir, Anne Sofie Von Otter, and Paul Goves) on Phillips, and now another "Orfeo", Orpheus et Eurydice with Mark Minkowski and Les Musiciens du Louvre.

Minkowski did a recent version of Handel's *Guilio Cesare* (Julius Ceasar), which go rave review, and now this new Gluck work. I haven't listened to the entire opera yet, but what I've heard are crisp playing, beautifully clear and detailed sound, and ravishing orchestration.

The Arkiv label has re-released what many people consider to be one of the very best versions of Handel's *Messiah* on SACD, the recording with Paul McCreesh and the Gabrieli Consort and Players, with soloists Dorothea Roeschmann, Susan Gritton, Barnarda Fink, Charles Daniels, and Neal Davies. This is a lean, crisp sound on this recording, and may not please those used to the massive forces and Romantic interpretations, but I found it quite enjoyable, with imaginative ornamentations to the arias by the soloists.

YoYo Ma has come out with a new Baroque recording with Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, "*Vivaldi's Cello*", with cello peices by Vivaldi, and Vivaldi pieces that have been transcribed for cello. This is a very enjoyable recording with good sonics and authentic interpretations.

Finally, as a musical curiosity, did you know that Ben Franklin, amongst his many accomplishments, invented a musical instrument that he called the Glass Harmonica. Do you know the sound that a wine glass makes when you rub a wetted finger around the top edge and it makes a very ethereal ringing sound? Well, Ol' Ben had glass cups of varying sizes made, arranged from big to small on a rotisserie wheel operated by a foot pedal. The soloist would play the instrument by rubbing the spinning glasses with his fingers. Thomas Jefferson claimed the Glass Harmonica was "the greatest gift offered to the musical world of this century." Many famous men composed for this instrument, including Mozart, Beethoven, and Donizetti. The sound of the instrument is both ethereal and a bit piercing, but in the way that a synthesizer, with it's pure waveforms, is piercing. The Glass Harmonica developed a bad reputation for causing madness in the men who specialized in playing it. As it turns out, instruments of the day were manufactured with leaded glass crystals, and these unfortunate musicians went mad from lead poisoning, probably from constantly licking their fingers while playing the instrument. In recognition of it's reputation, Donizetti, in the famous "Mad Scene" from his *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the Glass Harmonica plays as Lucia sings "Un armonia celeste, di', non ascolti?" (Say, can you hear a celestial harmony?)

And, finally, a small personal announcement, I have tried out for and have joined the Chicago Master Singers Choir and Chorale. The Chorale will be singing Faure's *Pavane* and Roy Harris's *Folk Song Symphony* (Len, are you reading this?) with the Lake Forest Symphony on October 30th and 31st, and the Choir will be singing two a capella works, Rachmaninov's *Vespers* and Rheinberger's *Cantus Missae* and *Abendlied* at the Divine Word Chapell in Techny on Friday, November 5th and Sunday, November 7th. We are singing the Rachmaninov in the language of Old Church Slavonic (an ancient Slavic tongue that, like Latin, is a dead language, but is the root language for the current Slavic languages). It sounds like Russian, but it is different enough that even Russian Choruses mispronounce it. I'll bring more information on Sunday for those who may want to attend either of these concerts.

Future Meetings

November-Gregg Straley is planning to demonstrate a new bass augmentation/enhancement unit from Stan Warren. This is designed to work with an existing full-range system, with or without an existing subwoofer(s). It is intended to reduce perceived room standing waves at the listening position, and increase perceived bass definition, detail, and dynamics as a result. In addition, there may be a production Stan Warren chip amp available to hear. Stan is moving away from modifications to producing his own products. **Sunday, November 21st, 2004.**

November Open House

Joe Lavrencik is hosting an Open House at his home for members **Noon-7PM on Saturday, November 20th.** Joe has developed his own isolation platforms called Critical Mass Systems. He will be demonstrating the following equipment:

Wadia 860SE CD player-Great Northern Sound modifications
Joule-Electra LA150 Preamp
Joule-Electra VZN-220 Rites of Passage Monoblocks
Martin-Logan reQuest Speakers
Elrod Power Systems AC, IC and speaker cables
Critical Mass Systems custom isolation systems

This will be a duplicate of the Joule Electra setup at 2005 CES, except they will be using Vandersteen Model 5 speakers instead of Martin Logan.

Attendance needs to be planned and you need to CONTACT JOE IN ADVANCE.

Please contact Joe Lavrencik at **630-572-0301.** The address is:
59 Windsor Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523

December-We will have our usual Holiday meeting, with extra refreshments on hand and invite you to bring along your favorite holiday music, whether it be classical, Miles Davis, the Roches, Bing Crosby or ? Rick Berta is planning to bring his custom designed cylindrical speakers using Heil drivers as well as Exemplar Audio electronics designed by John Tucker. As well as a few more surprises in SET's and vintage tubes. Please note, as usual, to avoid Holiday conflicts **we have moved the meeting up to the 2nd Sunday, December 12th, 2004.**