

Coming May 8th: ..John Tucker from eXemplar audio will demonstrate his über server...

Audioletter

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Tape is Alive and Well...



APRIL 10th MEETING RECAP Text and Photos by Bruce Brown

I'm not sure if I'm a good person to write about "The Tape Project". They always say that people close to a technology can't be objective and fair. I will do my best.

"The Tape Project" came from the minds of Dan Schmalle, Paul Stubblebine and Michael Romanowski. Filling a need for a niche group of audiophiles, they decided to offer 1/4" tape at 15ips as close to the master

tape as possible. Well it's about 2 generations close. Pretty good.

Mastering engineers don't really use tape per se. We have to be prepared if a project comes in on tape.

(Continued on page 2)



the Tape Project



Tape 001 Jacqui Naylor

Tape in the mastering business is used as an “effect”. There are hundreds of tape emulation boxes and plug-ins for software. Some are junk, some are pretty close and some are damn good. The “effect” we use tape for is the tape head saturation that we get when levels get too high. Pretty much like the effect today with the loudness wars, when levels get too high, we get digital clipping. Tape saturation is like digital clipping, but more pleasing to the ear. Drums recorded on tape have a “fat/euphoric” sound. I use the tape effect on digital recordings that sound too harsh and have been recorded “in-the-box”. If I want to fatten up the bottom end of a recording, I might run it through a tape machine.

I don’t feel tape is a good medium for recording classical either. The noise floor is too high and will

not allow enough dynamic headroom. For material where you can’t hear the noise floor, it’s great... like drums from a rock band!

Subscriptions come in 2 flavors, Selective and Charter. Selective Subscriptions are \$1200 and include 6 titles from among their ten releases of the year. If you want additional albums, they are \$200.

Charter Subscriptions are \$2000. This includes all 10 titles from that year and also a “low serial number” will be reserved for that subscriber. Subscribers will receive a certificate verifying the serial number they have been issued and have the right to first refusal for that serial if they choose to continue their subscription the next year, thus allowing a renewing charter subscriber to acquire and entire matched serial number set of all releases.

Some of the tapes that have been offered are:

- ◆ Jacqui Naylor: The Number White
- ◆ Dave Alvin: Blackjack David
- ◆ Robert Cray: False Accusations
- ◆ Bill Evans: Waltz for Debby
- ◆ Mose Allison: Creek Bank
- ◆ Sonny Rollins: Saxophone Colossus
- ◆ and many more.....

Each custom 10.5" reel is engraved with a catalog number indicating the A "side" and B "side" of the album, and a unique serial number. This custom engraving process takes nearly as long as making your album takes. It is then placed in a leather grained setup box with gold foil embellishment. Art quality pigmented ink on claycoat paper cover art is inserted between the two reel boxes. The printing process also



Dan Schmale gave a very informative description of the Tape Project tapes and playback equipment.

takes nearly as long to do as duplicating your album from the running master. Each album has several hours labor in its making.

Subscribers also have the option of acquiring a 2-track 1/4" machine on their own, or they can order one from either ATR Services or get a Bottlehead (Technics) RS1500 upgraded with a host of new parts. I

believe Otari is still producing the MX-5050 as well. The machine will set you back from a few hundred if you're lucky to find one, or North of \$10k if you want a no-compromise machine.

It's not up to the fidelity of a great 45rpm vinyl machine, but it's not supposed to be. Of course these

are just my opinions and do not reflect the opinion of the PNWAS.

All in all it's a great concept. I wish them the best of luck and want to thank Dan for his time and showing us what tape is capable of at the consumer level.



The tape heads are directly connected to an external preamp!

The Formidable Years:



AKA Discovering Music

by Jerry Pomeroy

The first record I remember buying was either *Sugar, Sugar* by *The Archies* in 1969 or *Venus* by *The Shocking Blue* when it hit the top of the charts in Feb 1970, either way it was still bubble gum. I remember going to a record store downtown Seattle.

Barely counter height I put my hands on the counter and ask for the record. Since it was in the top 40 he turned around and got it off the wall behind the counter. I don't remember what it cost, it didn't matter, I now owned music. A kid in grade school; I had no idea how a simple purchase would establish a trend that would develop into an addiction. I am compelled to tell my story in hopes of keeping others from traveling down

an ominous road of cyclical addictions of music, media formats and the most dreaded addiction of all known as TEB, The Equipment Binge.

Being the youngest in the family has its advantages. Everyone else in the family had small record collections. I could play their music on the family's 6' long console stereo. Some of my sibling's records I listened to but never bought were from *Donavan*, *The Beatles Stones*, *Tommy James*, *Eric Burdon* and *Country Joe McDonald*. I bought some 45RPM singles but soon focused my purchasing power on LPs; you got more music per dollar. I don't remember the first LP I purchased. High probability I blocked that moment out from my memory

via the mental fog of music addiction.

Playing records was fun but I often lacked enough pennies to weight the head-shell sufficiently to play past that annoying scratch that would cause the record to skip. Eventually I concluded unsecured coinage falling on the records was causing allot of the damage. Over all these years I have become increasingly attentive to the care of my LPs.

The prevalent source of music for me was the radio. AM was king in the late 60s and early 70s. The big Seattle area stations spinning the top 40 pop tunes were KJR, KOL and KTAC out of Tacoma. While in Jr. High a friend told me of a new radio station playing nonstop music from the Fab Four. Something new com-

plimented Classic KING on the FM dial; in 1974 KZOK was born. *Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, David Bowie, Edgar Winter and Thin Lizzy* soon replaced artist from the pop charts as my music of preference.

My music collection really grew when I bought a Reel-to-Reel tape deck and started recording entire albums from the radio. I had *Good by Yellow Brick Road, Dark Side of the Moon* and several others. Albums recorded from radio remained my preferred source till I finished HS. Beside albums every Sunday evening I would record songs from the Dr Demento show; these obscure and funny tunes formed the backbone of my collection on open reel.

I had long been into upgrading equipment on little to no money. That started back in grade school fixing discarded table radios. I used to put their tubes in a paper sack, when my parents drove to Burien I would take my bag of tubes to Radio Shack and test them, replacing bad tubes was effective. Using tissue paper and rubber base glue to patch torn paper drivers was cheap. By the time I graduated HS I had sold my BIC TT and pieced together a Gerard table with a ceramic cartridge. I had picked up some old Heathkit mono blocks and a matching pre-amp when a family moved out of the state. All my records sounded good to me at the time especially considering the system was nearly free.

With a job at Boeing came a JVC cassette deck, Boston Acoustic speakers and a Technics direct drive TT with a Shure cartridge. I could hear the difference in sound quality in LPs. I started buying high quality LP labels like MoFi, and Sheffield Lab to get the most out of my system. It wasn't long after this till a capacitor fried in one of the Mono blocks. I ran to Jafco and bought a Pioneer receiver, in retrospect the transistor receiver was a step backward in sound quality but it worked.

I gave the receiver to my parents and bought a NAD integrated, this

peeled back several layers of the onion. A serious TT upgrade was soon to follow, the first time I heard a Linn LP-12, I put one on Lay-away and brought it home a couple of paychecks later. After 30 years it still has the original platter, dust cover, hinges and top plate, everything else has been upgraded. Two sets of B&Ws, several amp and pre-amp changes later the alternating purchases of music and equipment continued.

Most recently I moved the LP12 onto a wall shelf, installed better tubes in the I60, moved it from a table to the floor and changed some cables. These recent changes coupled with a set of AudioMachina speakers has enabled me to discover or re-discover what my LP collection sounds like.

Re-discovering my collection means, cleaning, listen and then placing them into new Mo Fi inner sleeves to protect them. I have spent many hours over a VPI-16.5 and am accumulating a large stack of discarded record sleeves. All the records I've played sound different than I remember; most sound better. Some I may never play again and wonder why I have kept them for years. Our taste change as time marches on, the record I don't appreciate today may become one of my favorites in years to come. Ten years ago I didn't like country and bluegrass, *Allison Kraus* records are some of my favorites now.

When I originally started this article I wanted to quickly review some of the great records I have played. Time dictates I stop but I must drop some names: *Supertramp, Pink Floyd, Al Stewart, Linda Ronstadt, Paul Simon* and less known music by groups like *Klaatu and Band of Horses*. Although the music has been setting on a shelf or in a box sometimes for years, it's new to me. I have grown since the last time I heard these tunes, consequently they connect with me on a different level, this truly is the joy of music.

From *Christina Aguilera* to *ZZ Top* there are allot of artist and types of music, many I don't have and never will.

In the last few months I have found myself looking for records on line for a host of reasons; music/performance, others for the audio quality such as UHQs, others for collect ability and some primarily for album art. Awesome Saturday activities include record shopping at great records stores like Millennium Music in Portland and Bop Street in Ballard, Bop Street boast over 650,000 records.

I encourage you to play those records you have setting around. The copy I was given of *Tom Jones Live at Caesar's Palace* sounded like excessive unsecured coinage had been used on the head-shell in years past. I couldn't make it through all 4 sides but it was fun to sit and remember what his music was like before the movie *Mars Attacks*. Remember *Jefferson Starship, Louis Armstrong, The Mills Brothers* and *Fleetwood Mac*. When enjoying some of these classics I can't help but think; maybe collecting records and suffering from TEB isn't so bad.

TITLE TRACK

By Jerry Pomeroy

I consider it a privilege to have been president of the Pacific Northwest Audio Society and thank all the members and people associated with the club for many wonderful years and memories. I want to thank Bruce, Andrew, Joe, Dick and Renan for serving on the executive committee, helping me to be a better leader. It was an honor to serve as president after Bruce and now to pass the torch on to Andrew. I will continue writing for the newsletter and helping the executive committee however I can.

We will be taking a vote during the business portion of the upcoming meeting to authorize expenditure of \$400 to cover fees for IRS filing of non-profit status.

Everyone that made it to the April 18th Genesis 2.2 burn in party had a good time. Hours of great music food and drink made for an awesome experience at the Genesis warehouse in south Seattle. Gary invited the club down to help burn in amps and speakers before delivery. Listening to music in a 5,000 square foot warehouse on big speakers comes closer to a live event than listening to music in your house. It's like going to a Deep Purple or Pink Floyd concert with 20 friends and good wine. Thanks Gary, hope we can help in the future.

There is a new audio dealer in the Seattle Area. Resolution Audio and Video. One of the unique things about Resolution Audio is the large store that allows for live music in the store, there is about a two week notice on these events so don't expect to see them in the newsletter, I recommend checking their web site periodically for details. Richard Vandersteen is scheduled to be at the store on June 12th, check website for details as the event comes closer.

This is also the day of a club meeting so choose wisely.

The store is located at 5459 Leary Ave N.W. (just south of Market St.) Seattle WA. 98107 206-784-4434 <http://www.resolutionaudiovideoseattle.com/index.html>

May 8th Meeting eXemplar audio

At the May 8th meeting John Tucker, owner of eXemplar Audio and VP of Operations for LSA will be with us. I was able to do some listening at his house/showroom in the Everett area a few weeks ago. His music server was operating in fine form, his system sounded exceptionally good. I got to hear a new DAC he has been developing and the Statement LSA1 monitor speakers. eXemplar manufactures CD players, Servers, Phono pre-amps, pre-amps Amps and high efficiency horn speakers. A product of note is his server, designed from the ground up to give the best audio quality available: often better than the original CD. LSA has amplifiers and speakers. I categorize John's products as the most analog sounding digital front end I have ever heard. John has offered club members a good discount on both LSA and Exemplar products; details will be available at the meeting.

May 24-26th VSAC

Vacuum State of the Art Convention will be in Vancouver WA. Admission to several concerts is included with an event ticket. There will be lots of club members and manufactures to talk to. Fashion this as an Audiophile party you won't want to miss. <http://www.vsac2008.com/>

June 12th meeting

This will be the first general meeting of the new officers; the meeting will

start with a short discussion on club activities. The subject of the meeting is to listen to music, the goal being introducing other club members to music you enjoy. Try and bring music that is obtainable so other members can find a copy. If you have some information about your selection you would like to share, please do. Bring a pen and paper; you will probably leave with a list of music you want.

June 18th & 19th Definitive Audio Home Theater Event #16

Manufactures will be on hand in all the rooms demonstrating products. The line up hasn't been announced for this year, Manufactures represented last year were Wilson, Meridian, B&W, Runco, Anthem and many more. I usually plan spending both days at this event. <http://www.definitive.com/>

July 10th meeting

Bruce Brown will tickle our ears with some DSD/DXD mastering that evening.

Sept 6th DIY Speaker Contest

This will be our 3rd bi-annual contest. This contest is a unique event with judges listening and grading speakers blind. At the end of the day we bring out the winners and let everyone hear them. There are Always some great surprises at this event.

Please welcome new
PNWAS members:

Laura Francis-Brown
Brian Cawelti
Mark Stevens

Coming Attractions

May 8th, 2008

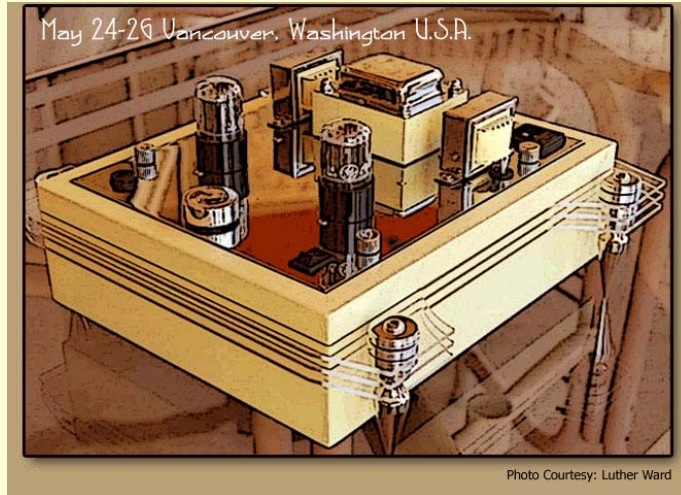
PNWAS Meeting

John Tucker with eXemplar audio will demonstrate his latest products including his awesome music server and DAC. Don't miss this!

May 24-26, 2008

VSAC

Looks like VSAC (Vacuum State of the Art Convention) is back! It will still be in the Northwest but it may not be in Silverdale. There isn't a web site yet but we will post more details as they become available.



Classified Ads

Ads are free to members and will run for three consecutive issues unless renewed. Please limit ads to make, model, short description, condition, MSRP, asking price, contact information.

|*****

Echo Buster's Room Treatment

1 pr. Absorption Panels 18x48 List \$390, Sell \$185

1 pr. Absorption Panels 24x48 List \$470, Sell \$225

1 pr. Diffusion Panels 18x48 List \$530, Sell \$250

All in excellent condition. No other improvement compares with the bargain of treating your room. Buy these and I'll help you plan it out.

Dick Mueller - dickm@HomeloanNW.com
425-450-4070

Club Discounts

Northwest Sinfonietta

The Northwest Sinfonietta (classical chamber orchestra) provides discounts to members of our club for performances of the 2007-2008 season. The regular single ticket price of \$38 will be only \$20 per person per performance at the door (or by phone or mail). Just tell them or note on your order that you are a member of the Pacific Northwest Audio Society. Information and order forms are also available at their website: www.nwsinfonietta.org.

First Impression Music

www.firstimpression.com
order through club president Jerry Pomeroy.

KOSMIC

www.kosmic.us
Contact Joe Pittman
206-878-3833

Pro Sound and Vision

Contact George H. Pro
425-889-9499
425-445-3308 (cell)

Visitors Welcome!

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at 4545 Island Crest Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

PNWAS Mission Statement

- > To bring together people with a common interest in hearing music reproduced at its best, for their mutual edification and pleasure.
- > To facilitate the exchange and dissemination of accurate data concerning audio equipment and musical recordings.
- > To promote, sponsor, and cultivate the highest quality reproduction of music in the home.
- > To encourage maintenance of high standards in the performance, recording and transmission of music.

PNWAS Objectives

1. Provide a forum for meeting other audiophiles and exchanging information on musical recordings and audio equipment.
2. Demonstrate and compare such equipment and recordings.

3. Give members opportunities to become familiar with the techniques of audio manufacturing, testing, repair, recording, broadcasting, etc.

4. Explore related avenues as the membership deems appropriate.

Club website

www.audiosociety.org

E-mail

info@audiosociety.org

U.S. Mail

Pacific Northwest Audio Society, P.O. Box 435, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Annual dues

\$60 due each January. New members pay a prorated \$5 per month for remainder of year.

Executive Committee

President: Jerry Pomeroy 253-350-3916

Vice-President: Bruce Brown

Treasurer: Andrew Kosobutsky

Editor: Joe Pittman

Equipment Committee Chair: Dick Mueller

Music Committee Chair: Renan Jeffereis

Volunteer: Leo Hrechanyk

Editorial

Editorial submissions are welcome.

Content must be audio-related or of general interest to the club. We reserve the right to edit for style, content, and length.

Editorial deadline: two weeks before meeting date.

Publishing any editorial material is contingent upon the approval of the Executive Committee.

Editor: Joe Pittman 206-878-3833
email: joe@audiosociety.org

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**Pacific Northwest
Audio Society**

Bringing Audio Enthusiasts Together Since 1978

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