

ARIZONA Audio Video Club

October 2020

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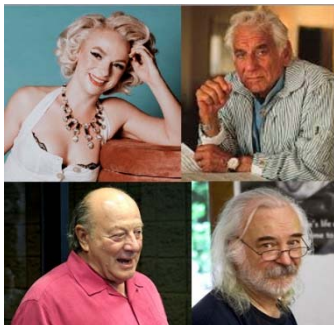
President's Message



Last Month's Meeting



Member Articles



Sundry Stuff



Dealer Area



Humor

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Paul Righello

This month we have a number of virtual events and one in person one. Kicking off the month is a product presentation by SoundSmith, makers of the strain gauge phono cartridge system. This meeting will occur on **10/10/2020 at 1:00 pm** via zoom.



Inventor, teacher, published poet and genius. Do not miss an opportunity to spend an hour with Peter Ledermann founder of Sound-Smith.

Sound-Smith supports a Pro-Children organization "Direct Grace Records". Your music purchase goes to help sponsor rescued children around the world.

I hope you all are able to enjoy this very special presentation this Saturday Afternoon!!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82562609735?pwd=cktmNHpDRVRaOEpnWVJ0EZYRklwZz09>

Meeting ID: 825 6260 9735, Passcode: 262035

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,82562609735#,,,,,0#,,262035# US (Houston)

+16699009128,,82562609735#,,,,,0#,,262035# US (San Jose)

Next up is an interview with Frank Van Alstine of Audio by Van Alstine on 10/17/2020 at 2 pm via zoom.



Something of an audio legend, or perhaps icon, Frank Van Alstine has been in the audio electronics business for over 50 years. His first company, Jensen's Stereo Shop (named for Paul Jensen, an early partner) opened in 1967 in Minnesota, with the focus of providing custom-wired (improved) Dynaco Dynakit. Paul passed away but Frank carried on, and in the mid 70's, moving beyond the limitations of the Dynaco circuits and chassis, he started coming out with his own designs. In the mid-80's, tired of fielding phone calls regarding Jensen car speakers, he incorporated Audio by Van Alstine, or AVA. Since then he has made a success of providing high fidelity electronics with his own business model; great customer service, quality construction, and amazing audio for the money. Never resting on his audio laurels, he continues to introduce new and innovative products.

Over the years he has acquired a number of patents, many positive equipment reviews, and a great number of dedicated audiophile fans. He professes to be in the business for the love of music and for fun! A genuine audio personality, Frank has definite ideas about the audio world and what makes for good engineering and what is audio snake oil, opinions he is willing to share. Join us for what will likely be an informative and interesting AAVC interview.

Topic: **Audio by Van Alstine** AVA Interview

Time: Oct 17, 2020 02:00 PM Arizona

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81929746950?pwd=TU1QK1o5T3o1V1JxTmR6WEZ1czVWdz09>



To finish the month, we are having a live performance by guitarist Chris Dorsey on 10/21/2020 at 7 pm at Faith Lutheran Church (801 E Camelback Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85014). Masks and social distancing will be in effect as usual. We plan to record the event for those who cannot make it.

I sincerely hope this is a photo of the right Chris Dorsey, it's the only one I could find. (*Ed.*)

Best,

Paul

MEMBER ARTICLES

Joe Goswami

[Why I didn't Buy/Trade Up to the PS Audio BHK Preamplifier](#)

A while back when PS Audio released the M1200 for \$6000/pair, I was a jealous but happy owner of 3x PS Audio M700's and later an S300. I'd approached PS Audio about their full value trade in but it wasn't as advertised – so to speak. They would only give me just over \$3k for the 4 Amplifiers instead of their retail worth minus a —littell bit. To spend \$3k on a Preamp after spending just over \$3k plus trade in of my beloved PS Audio Stellar Gain Cell DAC/Preamp (SGCD) for the Ted Smith designed DirectStream DAC Sr. (DSSr.) is foolish especially since we are now buying a home and won't have funds anymore for such Audio phoolishnessll.

The Music Room in Colorado to the rescue! This is where PS Audio trades in's wind up. I was thinking to trade my 4 Amplifiers for a PS Audio BHK Preamp. They had one in White and that wouldn't work in my all black aesthetic of my Rig. But there was a Balanced Audio Technology (BAT) that was just over \$3k and \$400 more would be put into my PayPal account. I did my homework and the VK-50SE is 20 years old but built like a brick shithouse! The Russian Supertubes (6H30 x8) are said to last a long long time over tradition Tubes used in Audio Gear.

From Stereophool, Dec. 1999/June 2004 - First, BAT makes use of what they dub the Super-Pak: additional power-supply capacitors double the energy storage over the standard VK-50. This results, they say, in greater dynamic authority and ease in the reproduction of complex musical passages. Then there's the Six-Pak of output capacitors. (Victor Khomenko must have had a cool beer in hand during key phases of the design process.) The VK-50SE's unusually high current delivery requires output capacitors of larger value for improved bass performance. Rather than using less expensive polypropylenes, BAT dishes up a Six-Pak of custom oil-filled capacitors for improved sonics and immunity to shock and vibration.

"Intelligent" vibration control ties down the resonant nodes on the circuit board to the ½"-thick base plate. Eliminating unsupported spans on the board "dramatically reduces" sound-degrading vibrations. BAT posits that it makes more sense to prevent resonance in key components than to apply damping materials as an afterthought.

Dual-mono construction minimizes interactions between channels from the get-go. The VK-50SE's power supply begins with a pair of toroidal transformers—one for each channel—custom-designed to handle the larger power demands of the 6H30 "SuperTube" There are eight of them!

As with all my audio purchases past and present, function/features/technology matters to me first, then sound quality.

The Goods

The 5 pairs of True Balanced XLR inputs and 3 pairs of outputs (2 fixed and one variable) are exactly what I need. My whole system is fully Balanced (XLR) and the 6dB gain as well as noise immunity has improved the sound of setup since going this route 18 months ago when I had the SGCD/Bose setup. People that say there's no improvement in XLR short runs vs RCA are F.o.S. IMHO.

Since internally Bi-Amplifying my KEF 105/3's, this Preamp worked out nicely. The fixed (tape outll) is connected to my STAX Electrostatic Headphone Amplifier and the two variable outputs feed the miniDSP/ICE & Orchard Audio Amps inside the KEF's. There is a remote control that carved out of billet Aluminum! It was a \$500 option 20 years ago.

BAT hasn't changed the aesthetics' of their Preamps in over 20 years! The latest version (the 53SE) has Transformer Coupled Outputs and costs \$16k new. No thank you. I'm good with the Paper in Oil Capacitor Packs in my 50SE.

Until I tried it, I'd have never believed that a Preamp placed in between my DSSr. And my Amplifiers could make a difference. It's variable Transformer Coupled outputs have fed my previous PS Audio Stellar Amps, and using an XLR Y adapter, my Bi-Amped KEF's. The midrange has more Clarity and the highs are sweeter than ever both through my KEF Speakers and my KOSS ESP/95X Electrostatic Headphones. Running the

Cavity Coupled Bass Drivers (and in Stereo of course) using the all Tube fixed —tape outputll is a bit overkill but what the hell. It's there doing nothing, so I might as well use it...LOL.



BHK : Equal number of inputs but only one pair of outputs – useless to me



BAT : 3 pair of outputs (two variable/1 fixed) – Perfect for Bi-Amping !
The fixed output is for my STAX Headphone Amp



Inside the PS Audio BHK Signature Preamplifier



Inside the Balanced Audio (BAT)Technology Preamplifier

The internals are very different between the two all Tube Preamps. Design philosophy's are unique to Engineer's Bascom H King & Victor Khomenko. Understand that I have never listened to a BHK Preamplifier so audibly, I have no opinion on it's sound quality. There's a lot going on under the hood of the BAT whereas the BHK seems a bit empty in there (PS Audio used a common chassis amongst all there —2RU high equipment. That doesn't necessarily that one is better than the other just because there's more —Stuffll (to quote George Carlin...again).

In Conclusion

Between my severely modified KEF 105/3's, the DSSr., the BAT Preamp, and the ICE & Orchard Power Amplifiers. This is the most resolving Stereo Rig I've ever owned. So I'm good for may years to come. No choice since we are about to become Homeowners again. I'll finally have a place to put all my —Stuffll.

References:

[Balanced Audio Technology VK-50SE](#)

[Stereophile Issue Dec. 1999](#)

[BATmen: Victor Khomenko & Steve Bednarski](#)

[Stereophile - PS Audio BHK Signature Preamplifier](#)

LAST MONTH'S MEETING RECAP

Paul Righello

Speaker Shootout:

Our last meeting was great fun, we listened to a number of lovely stand mount speakers, two of which were kindly provided by Paul of LMC Tempe (Sonus Faber & Totem). A big thank you to Paul for joining us and supporting the event. AZ HiFi was also kind enough to loan us a pair of the new Golden Ear BRXs; thank you Glen! We listened to an assortment of tracks from jazz to pop to instrumental to folk music. Our source was a CD mix playing redbook files on a Sony Blu-Ray player used as a transport into a Benchmark DAC3 driving a Class D Audio SDS-470C power amp. Cabling was from Kimber, Mogami, and VH Audio.

Opinions will differ, but generally the sound got better as we moved up in price. That said, the Totem Skylight was quite a surprise with a nice clean, clear sound. The Kef LS50 remained a solid performer, with a large sweet spot due to its wide dispersion design. I am biased here as I own these speakers; I can't wait to hear the new Meta version.

The two real stand outs in my opinion were the JA Pulsars and SF Electa Amator. I have had the pleasure of hearing both these speakers several times now. This latest session just reinforced my opinion that in the stand mount world these two stand out. The Pulsars have an incredible clarity and realism to them with solid range that rivals many mid-tower speakers. They convey the emotion of a recording like no other speaker I have heard. The Electa Amator is a different animal, with a robust and holographic sound. This speaker nails the attack on percussion instruments and has a rich tonal signature. For me it's a toss-up, they bring different things to the table, but I would be hard pressed to choose between them. General concensus at the event gave the nod to the SF Electa Amators. We all have our preferences.

Speakers at the shootout:

NHT Classic 3 (\$900)
Totem Skylights (\$1,000)
Ohm Walsh Satellites (\$1,400)
Kef LS50 (\$1,500)
Golden Ear BRX (\$1,600)
LSA-10 Signature (\$1,800)
Joseph Audio Pulsar (\$8,000)
Sonus Faber Electa Amator (\$10,000)

DEALER'S AREA

Dealers Corner

Jeff Kalina

As always we want to recognize and thank all the local retailers who support our club so graciously

DEALERS:

Acoustic Designs Group -- <https://www.adgroupaz.com/>

Dedicated Audio -- <https://www.dedicatedaudio.com/>

USA Tube Audio -- <https://www.usatubeaudio.com/>

LMC Entertainment -- <https://www.lmche.com/>

Woolson Audio -- <https://www.woolsonaudio.com/>

Arizona HiFi -- <http://tubeaudio.com/>

Audio Video Excellence -- <https://www.audiovideoexcellence.com/index.html>

Big Ear Stereo -- <https://bigearstereo.com/>

(There are some good items on sale right now from Big Ear Stereo – That Pear Audio Turntable is calling out to me –Ed.)

VINYL:

Record High in Phoenix -- <https://www.facebook.com/Record-High-in-Phoenix-225931417539924/>

In Groove Records -- <https://www.theingroove.com/>

REPAIR WORK:

James Koch

james@highendrepair.com

Audio Doctor

<http://www.audiodoctor.biz/>

SUNDRY STUFF

Apparently everyone knows that Sam Fish is my favorite female blues guitarist.

HUMOR

More silly stuff.

made a mask that keeps
people six feet away



Interesting what young children say:

1) **NUDITY** I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evening when a woman in the convertible ahead of us stood up and waved. She was stark naked! As I was reeling from the shock, I heard my 5-year-old shout from the back seat, 'Mom, that lady isn't wearing a seat belt!'

2) **OPINIONS** On the first day of school, a first-grader handed his teacher a note from his mother. The note read, 'The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents.'

3) **KETCHUP** A woman was trying hard to get the ketchup out of the jar. During her struggle the phone rang so she asked her 4-year-old daughter to answer the phone. 'Mommy can't come to the phone to talk to you right now. She's hitting the bottle.'

4) **MORE NUDITY** A little boy got lost at the YMCA and found himself in the women's locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover. The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, 'What's the matter, haven't you ever seen a little boy before?'

5) **POLICE # 1** While taking a routine vandalism report at an elementary school, I was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old. Looking up and down at my uniform, she asked, 'Are you a cop?'

Yes,' I answered and continued writing the report.

'My mother said if I ever needed help I should ask the police. Is that right?'

'Yes, that's right,' I told her.

'Well, then,' she said as she extended her foot toward me, 'would you please tie my shoe?'

6) **POLICE # 2** It was the end of the day when I parked my police van in front of the station. As I gathered my equipment, my K-9 partner, Jake, was barking, and I saw a little boy staring in at me.

'Is that a dog you got back there?' he asked.

'It sure is,' I replied.

Puzzled, the boy looked at me and then towards the back of the van. Finally, he said, 'What'd he do?'

7) **ELDERLY** While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, 'The tooth fairy will never believe this!'

8) **DRESS-UP** A little girl was watching her parents dress for a party. When she saw her dad donning his tuxedo, she warned, 'Daddy, you shouldn't wear that suit.'

'And why not, darling?'

'You know that it always gives you a headache the next morning.'

9) **DEATH** While walking along the sidewalk in front of his church, our minister heard the intoning of a prayer that nearly made his collar wilt. Apparently, his 5-year-old son and his playmates had found a dead robin. Feeling that proper burial should be performed, they had secured a small box and cotton-wool, then dug a hole and made ready for the disposal of the deceased

The minister's son was chosen to say the appropriate prayers and with sonorous dignity intoned his version of what he thought his father always said: 'Glory be unto the Faaather, and unto the Sonnn, and into the hole he goooes.' (I want this line used at my funeral!)

10) **SCHOOL** A little girl had just finished her first week of school. 'I'm just wasting my time,' she said to her mother. 'I can't read, I can't write, and they won't let me talk!'

11) **BIBLE** A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

'Mama, look what I found,' the boy called out.

'What have you got there, dear?'

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, 'I think it's Adam's underwear!'

