



Newsletter

April 2025

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President's Message

By AAVC President John Harvell

Here is some quick information about the AAVC club and upcoming events.

There have been a few changes in club leadership positions:

- New Vice President – Paul Johnson
- New Secretary – David Snyder
- New Treasurer – Paul Johnson

Please thank Paul and David for volunteering to fill these important roles if you see them.

Coming Events:

- **Saturday, April 26:** Setup 10-12 -- Music 12-4 pm -- **Amplifier Comparison @ Faith Lutheran Church (Parish Hall).** The amps involved: Coda Model 8 (high current, low noise), Benchmark AHB2 (Low noise Monoblock Configuration), Burmester 911 Mk3. The amps will use speakers of Final Model 35 (their flagship full-range electrostatic system). ***We need your help:*** If you have a full-sized van or truck with an 8ft bed and are willing to help us move the Final Model 35 Speakers.. Please contact Ravi at cell # 248-520-8628
- **TBD May Saturday – Club Swap Meet** (10 am – 4 pm) @ Faith Lutheran Church (Parish Hall). There has been a lot of interest in this event, with 8-10 people who

will bring in a wide range of gear. A separate mailing will provide a listing of some of the gear that will be available. A casual music system will be set up for background listening and to help verify that the equipment is functional. See a preliminary list of equipment available at the end of the newsletter.

- **Saturday, June 14 Final Speaker Product Line by Marten Smits** Saturday Setup 10-12, Presentation/Music 12 – 4 pm – @ Faith Lutheran Church (Parish Hall). Maarten is the founder and part-owner of the Final Speaker Product Line. He will discuss the design objectives, tradeoffs, and speaker capabilities. Many of the elements of the product line will be demonstrated during this meeting.

There are indications that the club would like to host **another Speakerfest event**. To be successful, we will need a lot of support to organize, set up, and carry out the event. Event tasks cover a wide range of activities, including: communicating with vendors to acquire speakers, completing speaker break-in, getting equipment to the event, helping at the event greeting table, setting up the rooms, helping to demonstrate speakers in the various rooms, tearing down, and cleaning up, etc.. The steering committee needs a show of support from you, the club members, to show that we have the manpower to conduct/host Speakerfest this year. Reach out to a club officer (John, David, or Paul) and tell them a) you want to see another Speakerfest and b) that you are willing to help support the event. Target Time Frame would be Sept 2025.

Please contact me with your feedback to this update (there was also an email from me) by emailing (jharvell_1@cox.net) or by calling me at 602-790-5339 (please leave a message, I will call back).

All the best and happy listening, John.

Future Meetings - see President's message above

AXPONA 2025 - Several club members attended this years AXPONA, the global gathering of manufacturers, dealers, distributors, audio enthusiasts, music lovers, and media, fostering the growth of the high-end audio industry and cultivating the enjoyment of high-fidelity sound. Next years event is already scheduled:

April 10 – 12, 2026
Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel & Convention Center
Schaumburg, IL (Chicago suburb)

Club member David Snyder is sharing his photos from AXPONA - click on [this link](#) to access them.

If any member is willing to write up their AXPONA 2025 experience, please contact the AAVC Newsletter editor Jim Welby at 651-769-7284 or catchgroove@gmail.com

FINAL M5 Hybrid Electrostatic Speaker Demo Event

Review by David Das

I had the pleasure of attending the FINAL M5 Hybrid Electrostatic Speaker Demo Event on Saturday, March 22nd, 2005. **Greg Wann** was gracious enough to host this club event in his dedicated 30' x 20' audio room, which he built with his wife and brother-in-law.



Greg ordered this prefab kit from Amazon and has since spent thousands of dollars setting up his Multi-Channel home theater with Joe Goswami's technical guidance.

As the following photos show, this is still a work in progress. Once completed, Greg's Audio Shrine could become a great alternative to renting space at the Faith Lutheran Church. It certainly has better acoustics.

This is located at: 9838 N 112th Ave, Sun City, AZ 85351



Joe Goswami and **Ravi Velnati** drove down the night before, transferring the speakers and associated electronics. When I arrived at noon on Saturday, everything was properly set up and ready to go.



The [M5 Hybrid](#) Speakers look sleek and elegant.

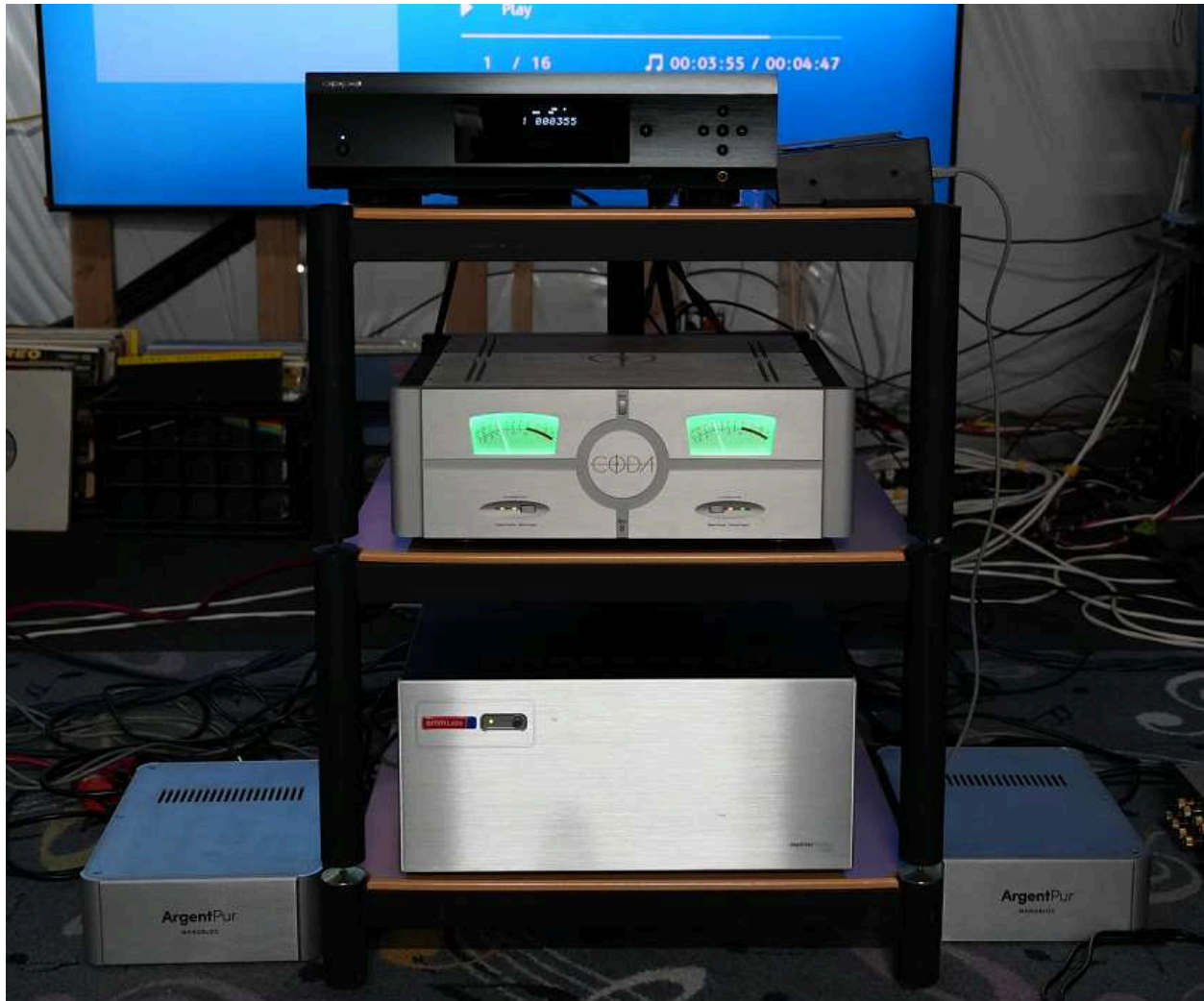


These slender panels are 11 inches wide and stand 54 inches tall. A passive 10-inch sealed sub conspicuously hidden behind the panel helps to lower the frequency response down to 45Hz.



Each panel with the sub weighs 44 lbs, making it easy to move them around.

Ravi used his OPPO UPD-205 Ultra HD Blu-Ray Disc Player for playing SACD tracks.



Ravi used a [CODA No.8](#) Stereo Power Amp to drive the electrostatic panels. This delivers the first 18 watts in pure Class A mode and operates in Class AB mode up to 150 watts into 8 ohms.

It doubles the power at 4 ohms, doubles again at 2 ohms, and doubles again into a 1 ohm load.

Although the nominal impedance of a typical Electrostat is easy to drive at 4 ohms, the panels dip to *less than 1 ohm at 20kHz*. If one desires the best and most extended high frequency performance that electrostats are capable of, the best option is a power amp that is stable into an impedance of less than 1 ohm. The CODA No.8 is one of the few options, and it has a massive 3kVA toroidal transformer with a massive output stage comprising 20 high-output transistors per channel, which makes it stable down to 0.3 ohms without a protection circuit. It drives the Model M5s effortlessly. This is the reason why Ravi uses this power amp.

When lesser amps are paired with electrostatic panels, the high frequencies are attenuated, and the brilliance (magic) associated with electrostatic speakers is lost. Amp matching is crucial when setting up electrostatic speakers.

On Saturday, April 26th, the effect of using different power amps with FINAL M35 electrostatic speakers will be demonstrated. I am curious to hear how much more refined Joe Robert's Burmester power amp sounds compared to the CODA No. 8. Do not miss this event!

Ravi switched sources using his EMM Labs/Meitner DesignSWM3 preamp. This ultra-clean transparent preamp was specifically designed for Sony's DSD mastering facility.

This is the Switchman Mk2 remote switch box. You can select 4 sets of 6 channel inputs with independent gain settings.



Ravi began the demo by briefly introducing the [FINAL](#) line of electrostatic speakers.



Ravi Velnati

These panels come in seven different sizes (M1, M3, M5, M7, M12, M15, M35), with M1 being the smallest, measuring 25" x 9" x 1", making it suitable for Dolby ATMOS Height speakers.

The [M35](#) is the flagship and the latest addition to the FINAL family, celebrating its 35th anniversary.

Models 3, 5, and 7's bass response can be augmented by attaching a sealed 8" or 10" subwoofer unit, which comes in both active and passive Hybrid versions. The higher-end models are Full-Range and do not need a sub.

Final Sound was founded in 1989 by two Dutch brothers, Maarten and Michiel Smits. Philips bought their company and later sold their entire audio visual business in 2013. Maarten Smits decided to relaunch his FINAL line of electrostatic speakers in 2014 under the FINAL AUDIO brand with all new designs that solve the shortcomings of traditional electrostats. Here is a [video](#) from FINAL/Smits:



We will meet Maarten in person on Saturday, June 14th, at the Faith Lutheran Church. He will discuss the story behind the development of electrostatic speakers and give a full demo of a multi-channel setup using an assortment of FINAL speakers.

Ravi began his demo of the M5 Hybrids with the well-recorded relaxing track “*Why Worry*” by Dire Straits. Immediately, I sensed the wide, expansive sound stage projected by the M5 Hybrids. The delicate textures of the electric guitar filled up the entire room. These speakers were perfectly matched for Greg’s 30’ x 20’ audio room. They sounded way better than what I heard at Ravi’s expansive living space with 25 foot high ceilings.

Matching the size of the electrostatic panels to the size of the room plays an important role. The electrostatic panels need sufficient space (at least 3’, ideally 5’) between the back wall behind the speakers and the speakers to make the Dipolar radiating sound come to life.

These line sources are designed to energize the entire space where you are no longer confined to a single sweet spot.

Here were some other notable tracks that sounded wonderful on the M5 Hybrids.

- *Avalon* – Roxy Music
- *Exodus* – Bob Marley & The Wailers
- *Woodstock* – Tierney Sutton
- *Welcome to the Pleasuredome* – Frankie Goes to Hollywood
- *From the Beginning* – Emerson, Lake & Palmer
- *Chopsticks* – Jeff Lorber

Electrostatic speakers sound different from conventional cone drivers. According to Ravi, a good analogy would be a floodlight compared to a spot light. Dipole and Bipolar speakers sound different from open baffle designs.

It takes a while for someone accustomed to hearing front-firing cone drivers to get comfortable with the sonic signature of electrostatic line sources. To get the best imaging and soundstage, one must experiment with adjusting the toe-in and the distance from the back wall.

The M5 Hybrids offer stunning clarity, resolution, and spaciousness all throughout the stated frequency range of 45Hz to 40kHz and beyond. I did not feel any need for additional bass. They are a steal of a deal for \$5,500 a pair with passive subs and would work in rooms sized between 15' x 20' and 20' x 30'.

Ravi, as the sole distributor of FINAL speakers in the US, can offer these panels at an extremely competitive price. There is no dealer markup. They cost much more in Europe. The M5 Hybrid is the best-selling speaker in the FINAL family.

To get the best performance, you must pair them with a power amp capable of handling impedances down to less than 1 ohm. Tube amps and receivers could drive them, but all the high-frequency air would be lost.

The Coda Continuum No.8 Stereo Amp costs [\\$6,800](#). There are even more affordable power amps that are stable down to 1 ohm such as the [Emotiva XPA HC-1](#) High Current Monoblock Amplifier that retails for \$899.

Electrostatic speakers need dedicated power amps specially designed to handle the low impedances when playing frequencies at 20kHz and above.

I remember listening to the [Sanders Model 10E](#) electrostatic speakers at the 2019 Rocky Mountain Audio Fest in Denver. They sounded pristine, clear, and lifelike with lots of air. Their own [Magtech Power Amps were driving them](#).

I learned from Ravi that these Magtech Amps were designed by CODA to drive the Sanders Model 10E. Typical power amps have a protection circuit in series to prevent clipping below 1 ohm, which degrades the purity of the sound. The Magtech Amps do not need one, as stated in their [White Paper](#). They have an enormous power reserve thanks to their 40 output devices in series, allowing them to play clean under low impedance loads.

We had a special guest for the evening. Daryl Sansevero, VP of Sales and Exhibitor Experience for [T.H.E. Show](#), joined us. Daryl hosts the popular Hi-End Audio Shows across many States.



Daryl Sansevero

Here are some of his upcoming shows:

- Southern California – THE SHOW, June 2025
- New York Show – October, 2025
- Las Vegas Show – January 26, 2026

Daryl was curious to hear the [LC1 Bookshelf Monitors](#) designed by Lucca Chesky. Joe hooked them up at the end of the M5 Hybrid demo.



You could hear the immediate collapse of the wide soundstage we experienced with the FINAL M5 Hybrids. After our ears adjusted to the cone drivers, the LC1 speakers held their own. At \$1000 a pair, they are quite an engineering feat and would be perfect in a small bedroom.

Daryl was impressed with the sound emanating from these tiny boxes and could see why they are getting rave reviews in the audio circles.

Ravi will bring the entire lineup of FINAL speakers to the California Audio Show on June 6-8, 2025. If you wish to listen to them at his home in Ahwatukee Foothills, you can reach him at (248) 520-8628 or via his email highreshifi@gmail.com

This was a fun afternoon. The performance of the M5 Hybrids exceeded my expectations. Thanks to Greg Wann for hosting this event at his custom-built audio listening room. We hope to have many more enjoyable visits to Greg's Audio Shrine.

Dave's Record Reviews

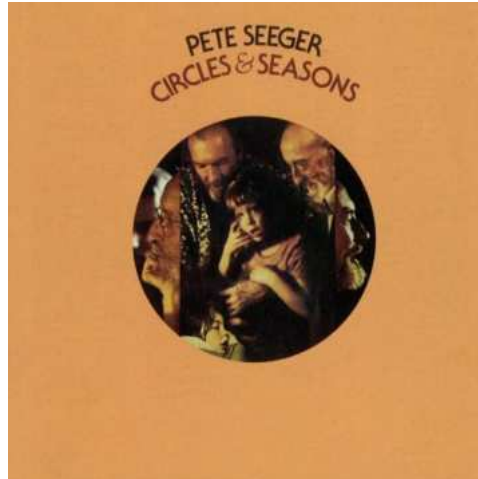
Championing worthy albums from the past that should not be forgotten...

By Dave Hjortland for the AZ Audio Club

#26

Pete Seeger – **Circles & Seasons**

(LP & CD, Warner Bros, 1979)



Pete Seeger (1919 – 2014) was an icon of American folk music. A singer, songwriter, musician, and social activist, his career spanned over 70 years. Most (all?) of us know some of his songs, such as *"Where Have All the Flowers Gone?"*, *"If I Had a Hammer,"* *"Kisses Sweeter Than Wine,"* and *"Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is a Season)."* Perhaps his most recent appearance in popular culture is as the on-again, off-again mentor of Bob Dylan in the movie **"A Complete Unknown."**

It's sorely tempting to go into some overview here of the man's long history and many awards and accomplishments. However, that would be quite beyond the purview of this humble review, so I will nobly refrain. But I will say that, according to Wikipedia,

his discography consists of 52 studio albums, 23 compilation albums, and 22 live albums. And I don't think Wikipedia includes the 3 albums he did jointly with Arlo Guthrie, which are very good.

From that substantial and worthwhile catalog, I would lift up this excellent album he did in 1979 for Warner Brothers. It was produced by Fred Hellerman, a member of the classic folk group the Weavers, along with Seeger. I have to say that the production does seem to be better than much of Seeger's previous work, which often seemed somewhat more spartan in approach. Hellerman also capably accompanies on a number of the songs, only some of which were written by Seeger. Of the other credits, the only name I recognize is Ronnie Gilbert, another Weavers alumnus, who sings backup on the final cut.

The songs here present a varied tapestry of Seeger's beliefs and orientations. While it mostly remains true to his basic folk music roots, at times he *almost* seems to slip into more of a popular mode. "*Sailing Down This Golden River*" is a ballad about the joys of sailing on a river on the face of it, but was written as part of a campaign to clean up the Hudson River. "*I'm Gonna Be an Engineer*" is a meaningful, even inspiring song written by Seeger's younger sister, about a girl determined to succeed in a man's field of work.

"*Sour Cream*" is a brief, whimsical song about just that. "*Harry Simms*" is a moving ode to a 19-year-old boy who was killed trying to organize a mining union in 1932. "*Maple Syrup Time*" has a Caribbean-flavored melody about the joys of harvesting maple syrup in Maine, which many reviewers have cited as a favorite song. Then... then there is "*Viva La Quince Brigada*," one I could *really* do without. Sung in Spanish, it's a 1940s song about anti-fascism fighters. Why, Pete...?

But there truly are a number of very good, excellent songs on this album. Some of them are simple, many of them are thought-provoking. All of them are well done. My favorite, both musically and thematically, is the one that opens the album, "*Garbage*." It's an absolutely *wonderful* song about waste and pollution, sung with feeling and with interesting backing and even sound effects. I love it.

As mentioned, the production is good, as is the accompaniment. And ah, that great baritone voice Seeger had! I had the joy of hearing Seeger in concert a couple of times. (And when I did, I was kind of irritated occasionally, because he often would invite the audience to sing along on his songs – and I wanted to hear *him* sing!)

When this album came out in 1979, it was well received by critics and fans of Seeger and folk music. By the general public – not so much. It failed to chart on Billboard, which is admittedly one measure of an album's success or failure. However, it is merely one measure, and this album is a gem, one that should not be forgotten. It is a part of the legacy of a man whose impact on American music and culture will live on.

A CD of this album of this album was apparently released in 2010 and has become just a little bit rare. Pah! Who needs it anyway? The LP is available on Discogs for embarrassingly cheap. Go for it. The album is on streaming services too.

Legacy Focus XD Speaker Demo at David Snyder's home

Review by David Das

I had the opportunity to listen to AAVC member and club secretary David Snyder's 2-channel setup using a pair of Legacy Audio Focus XD speakers in his large, expansive listening space.

It was nothing short of a religious experience. It completely changed my frame of reference on what a pair of well-designed floor-standing speakers can sound within a listening space optimized for their size and digitally corrected to produce an even response across the frequency range.

This was the SPL plot shared by David that piqued my curiosity. I wanted to know how he got the frequency response curves from his left and right speakers to be almost ruler flat, closely hugging his target curve, as shown in green.



The differences between the before and after measurements were significant. How does this translate to a real-world listening test?

David was kind enough to invite me over for a demo session at his new home located in one of the Vistancia neighborhoods in Peoria. Getting there was a 20-minute scenic drive on Loop 303 off I-17N.



David's home has an open plan with 20-foot high ceilings. Most of us struggle to fit our dream speakers into the room we already have. David, being a passionate audiophile, took the opposite approach. He went house hunting to find a listening area that would maximize the performance of his floor standers. He has certainly lucked out!

As I walked up the stairs to the second level, I was greeted by this gorgeous array of Legacy Audio speakers in a premium rosewood finish.



This is the view from another angle.



Here is how the tall and slender main speakers look with the grills in place.



This rectangular listening room is 16'4" wide by 19'10" deep and has a 9' high ceiling.

The rear of the room has a large cutout and door opening to the balcony with a view to the opposite wall in the family room. This effectively allows the bass frequencies to travel a distance of 46' 8", which David calculated to be equivalent to about 24Hz. This plays an important factor since the lowest possible bass frequency is limited to the largest diagonal within your room.



I was pleasantly surprised at the simplicity of David's 2-channel audio setup. All the music was being fed from his Roon Server via an Ethernet cable connected to the Orchard Audio [PecanPi Streaming DAC](#) module.



The balanced XLR outputs from this tiny box conveyed the analog audio signals to the Focus XD Active Speakers.



There was no power amp or pre-amp in the chain. The volume control knob was on the front of the DAC unit. There was no need for speaker cables. It does not get any simpler.

David began the demo session by playing the mono recording of the jazz classic “*Can’t We Be Friends*” by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong. A good mono recording is always the first step in evaluating speakers and getting your ears adjusted to the tonality.

Next, we heard “*The Ballad of Bill Hubbard*” from Roger Waters's album ***Amused to Death***. Instantly, I sensed the soundstage expand way beyond the physical boundaries of the speakers. At the 11-second mark, I distinctly heard a dog barking. This sound appeared to originate from a point far away to my right. I have heard this trick play out in other high-end systems, but never as pronounced as David’s setup.

I was completely enveloped in a sound stage that stretched a full 180 degrees in front of me. The speakers simply melted away. I knew my mind was playing tricks, but I enjoyed every minute of this audio illusion.

Next, David cued up “*Nice ‘n’ Easy (2020 Mix)*” by Frank Sinatra. This is a great track to evaluate the texture of male vocals, and it sounded outstanding on the Focus XDs.

David then handed me his tablet to play my own song selections. The Roon Interface makes it very easy to select any song by Artist, Discography, and Song Title. It consolidates your entire music library on your hard drive along with streaming services like Qobuz and Tidal, both of which David subscribes to.

I played these 7 tracks, which I am intimately familiar with. I use them as a reference to evaluate the resolution and clarity of 2-channel setups.

- *A New Day Has Come (Radio Remix)* – Celine Dion
- *Do You Hear What I Hear* – Vanessa Williams
- *Angel* – Sarah McLachlan
- *Hallelujah* – Lucy Thomas
- *Isle of Innisfree* – Celtic Woman
- *Music Box* – Mariah Carey
- *Liberty* – Anette Askvik

What I heard from David's system blew my mind. The Legacy Focus XDs had breathtaking delicacy, transparency, resolution, and finesse that rivaled the best electrostatic panels I had heard before.

The clarity of the harp strings on "*Isle of Innisfree*" was stunning. I could hear every harmonizing vocal by Lucy Thomas on "*Hallelujah*." The presentation felt so lifelike and natural. You could close your eyes and feel Lucy standing right in front of you. The illusion was perfect.

There is a low bass note that kicks in precisely at the 1 minute 48 second mark in Mariah Carey's "*Music Box*." This shook up the room.

The Focus XDs reproduced the sax sound with all its brassiness, grit, power, and texture towards the end of Anette Askvik's track "*Liberty*."

After enjoying the smoothness, clarity and brilliance of David's setup, I decided to test out the dynamics. I played "*Fanfare for the Common Man*" by the Minnesota Orchestra. The bass drums were reproduced effortlessly. The Focus XDs played them clean with no hint of any compression or overhang and never ran out of steam.

Next, David played "*Vogue (Q-Sound Mix)*" by Madonna to show how a 2-channel system can fool you into believing you are hearing a multi-channel setup. The producers deployed phase shifts in the mix to make certain vocals and instruments appear to your extreme left or right and even behind your ears. After hearing how the Focal XDs rendered this track, I am adding this to my reference list.

I wanted to see how well the Focal XDs could reproduce the low octaves of a male voice. So I cued up "*Hoist The Colours*" by The Wellermen. I know how this sounds on the Wilson Audio [ALEXX Vs](#) driven by Dan D'Agostino [Momentum M400 MxV](#) monoblocks.



From the Dan D'Agostino Master Audio Systems Factory Tour Club Event
on October 17, 2024.

The Focus XDs passed this test with flying colors, which left me wondering if buying a \$282k system makes any financial sense.

For the last test track, I played “*Keith Don’t Go (Live)*” by Nils Lofgren. This is the ideal track to evaluate the transient response of your speakers. The guitar harmonics and overtones were rendered with power and precision, and I was captivated.

David proceeded to play a few of his favorite tracks to further showcase the capabilities of his system.

After this two-hour listening session, what stood out right away was the uniformity of the tonal balance across the frequency spectrum. You did not need a measurement plot to verify this. It was readily apparent. Since no frequency stood out, the presentation appeared relaxed at all listening levels. You could enjoy the music from whisper-quiet levels to rock music levels without losing any details or ear fatigue. This only happens when the amp can pump out clean power without clipping at all impedances. There was no distortion.

After realizing the extreme resolution and micro-dynamics of this system, the next thing that catches your attention is the bass response. It is fast, tight, deep, and precise. It kicks in only when called for. There is no overhang. The bass never blurs out the midrange. The Legacy Audio Subwoofers flanking the towers were turned off. You do not need subs to augment the Focus XDs for two-channel music.

The [Focus XD](#) active speakers are a 6-driver 4-way design crossed over at 8kHz, 2.8kHz, and 120Hz. They feature the Legacy Dual Air Motion Tweeter System (AMT). The 4” AMT Tweeter takes over at 2.8kHz and hands over to the 1” AMT Super Tweeter at 8kHz, which extends the frequency response to 30kHz, generating fast attacks and a sense of air. The mid-range from 120Hz to 2.8kHz is handled by dual 7” midwoofers coated with silver graphite diaphragms for extra rigidity. Two 12 " ultra-linear subwoofers with 15 lb motors handle the bass response from 120Hz to 18Hz. They have a relatively high sensitivity rating of 95.4dB with a nominal impedance of 4 ohms.

Each speaker is internally powered by a 750-watt ICEpower amp. The signal from the amplifier passes through a passive 4-way crossover. Switches on the back of the amplifier allow for bi-amping by adding an external amplifier of your choice to drive the top section (from 120 Hz up), dedicating all 750 watts of the internal amplifier to the 12-inch drivers. Legacy Audio recommends their Wavelet II processor to serve as an external active crossover; however, this is not required.

The cabinet is made out of 1 1/8" MDF with heavy internal bracing. Each tower measures 55" H x 14" W x 15" D and weighs 141 lbs.

I was shocked when I found out how affordable they were. Depending on the finish, the price could range from \$15,200 to \$17,590 per pair. David's premium rosewood finish lists for \$16,380 a pair.

Legacy Audio was founded by [Bill Dudleston](#) in 1983. In this YouTube demo, you can watch how he improved his midrange driver design. The Legacy Audio [YouTube channel](#) has many more product videos.

After hearing the Legacy Audio Focus XD speakers for the first time in an optimized setting, I could see why the [reviewers](#) have universally praised this masterpiece creation from Bill.

This is a knockout success. I cannot name any other speaker that exhibits this level of performance at this price point. The Focus XDs easily outperform established high-end brands costing five times more. It is unfortunate there are not enough dealers across the nation where potential clients can test drive them and compare them against higher-priced Focal, Sonus Faber, Magico, and Wilson Audio brands.

Keep in mind that these are active speakers. You would never have to worry about allocating extra funds for matching power amps or fancy speaker cables. The \$15,200 price tag includes everything.

Do not discount the Focus XD speakers because they have Class D amplification. Once you hear them, you will no longer have any reservations. It all depends on the implementation. There is a reason why it is standard practice to use active studio monitors from Genelec, Adam Audio, Focal, ATC, and PMC, including Focus XDs, in mastering studios. They all use internal Class D amps.

Of course, you can always purchase the passive model [Focus SE](#) and mate it with your favorite power amp.

If I were to start from scratch today on this audiophile journey, I would buy the Focus XDs in a heartbeat. It would be an easy decision. They have exceeded all my expectations on what a \$15,200 package can deliver.

Next, I would find a space large enough for them to breathe. Finally, I would apply all the necessary room treatments and have David come over to add the room correction profiles.

The room's acoustics are 50% of the equation. A properly acoustically treated room can make a good speaker sound extraordinary.

David is using acoustic panels from [ATS Acoustics](#). The cylindrical diffusers at the front are from [GIK Acoustics](#).

Here is a convincing [demo](#) of a treated vs. an untreated listening room.

David shared an article he wrote on [Digital Room Correction](#) explaining how he used the [Room EQ Wizard](#) to verify the amplitude and time-domain corrections resulting from his FIR filters. He created the filters using [Acourate](#) from AudioVero and uploaded them to his Roon Server for implementation.

I would encourage everyone to read David's highly technical essay. It made me realize the amount of work it took him to achieve perfection in his living space with these Focus XD speakers. The results are simply stunning. I can see why David was chosen to speak on this topic at the AXPONA show in April. We can all learn from his technical wizardry.

What I heard at David's home was pure audio magic. It made me recalibrate my frame of reference. He has implemented the best 2-channel audio setup within our members' circle. This system is my new reference.

If any of you are thinking of upgrading your system, I strongly encourage you to listen to this simple setup first. Why keep wasting money constantly upgrading speakers, power amps, preamps, cables, and DACs and chasing after that elusive holy grail of high-end audio when we have a working example that brings it all together at an affordable system price?

David made me realize the value of subscribing to Roon. Besides presenting a simple interface to search and play your music content, the Roon server is powerful enough to handle multiple profiles for all your 2-channel setups throughout your home. These profiles correct the amplitude across different bands and make critical time domain adjustments.

Time-aligned speakers make music come alive. They make music sound natural, real, and engaging. Time-domain corrections restore the phase relationships among harmonics, resulting in a convincing reproduction of each instrument's unique timbres.

I like the simplicity of not having to deal with a rack full of power amps, preamps, digital transports, and turntables. All you need is a Roon Server running on an inexpensive MiniPC in your basement, freeing you to select any song of your choice from your tablet.

The system was so perfect that I didn't want the listening session to end. I forgot about the speakers. I got lost in the glorious music that enveloped my senses all around me.

This was an unforgettable magical experience. This captures the essence of high-end audio.

For a demo of this extraordinary 2-channel system, you can email David Snyder at dsnyder0cnn@gmail.com or call him at (678)-231-0568.

Member Playlist

By Paul Johnson

Judith Hill – Letters From A Black Widow | Golden Child

Sunny War – With The Sun | Armageddon In A Summer Dress

Danish National Symphony – The Morricone Duel: The Most Dangerous Concert Ever (Live)

The Harlem Quartet – Visionary | Cross Pollination

Peter Erskine – Transition | In Praise Of Shadows

Taj Mahal / Keb Mo – TajMo

Ahmad Jamal – Emerald City Nights: Live At The Penthouse | 1963 - 1964 | 1965 - 1966 | 1966 - 1968

Charlie Parker – Bird In LA | Chasin’ The Bird

Charles Mingus – Mingus At Carnegie Hall | Mingus, Mingus, Mingus

Ella Fitzgerald – Twelve Nights In Hollywood | The Complete Piano Duets | Ella And Louis

Sonny Rollins – Go West (Complete Recordings) | Rollins In Holland | Alfie

Billie Holiday – The Great American Songbook | Lady Day: The Complete Billie Holiday On Columbia

Dave Brubeck – For All Time | 25th Anniversary Reunion | Jazz At Oberlin | At Carnegie Hall | Time Outtakes

John Coltrane – Blue World | Evenings At The Village Gate | A Love Supreme: Live in Seattle | Blue Train

Duke Ellington – Live At The Whitney | After Midnight | Duke Ellington & John Coltrane

Bill Evans – Treasures | Jazz 625 | You Must Believe In Spring

Thelonious Monk – Live At The It Club | Live At The Jazz Workshop | Monk & Coltrane | Palo Alto

Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers – First Flight To Tokyo: The Lost Recordings

Sam Cooke – Portrait Of A Legend 1951 - 1964

Vanessa Fernandez – Use Me | I Want You | When The Levee Breaks

Passengers – S/T

Bird Man – S/T

They Live – S/T

The Godfather – The Godfather Part 2 | 50th Anniversary Editions – S/T

Don Davis – The Matrix | The Matrix Symphony -- S/T

Standing In The Shadows Of Motown – S/T
Animusic & Animusic 2 – S/T (The DVDs Are Amazing)

Phil Tippett – Mad God – S /T

Nakoi Sato – Godzilla Minus One – S/T

Ennio Morricone -- Greatest Hits 2017 | Morricone at the Oscars | Greatest Western Themes Of All Time

Prague Philharmonic Orchestra – John Williams: The Definitive Collection

Prague Philharmonic Orchestra – The Ultimate James Bond Collection

Alfred Hitchcock – The Classic Soundtrack Collection | Presents: Signatures In Suspense

Phillip Glass – Koyanisqatsi | Powaqatsi | Naqoyqatsi | Solo | Études pour piano – Intégrale

Seiji Ozawa – A Celebration | Mozart: The Complete Horn Concertos | Conducts Tchaikovsky

Aaron Copeland – Copeland Conducts Copeland | Fanfare for the Common Man (Recorded 1997) (Live)

Leopold Stokowski -- Conducts Holst, Debussy & Gould | Stokowski Edition: Vol's 1 – 9 | Conductor's Baton

Leonard Bernstein -- Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition | Conducts The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra

Yo Yo Ma -- Hope Amid Tears | Bach Trios Strauss: Don Quixote, Op. 35... | Beethoven for Three

Ruby Theater Demo Event at LMC Tempe

Review by David Das

I had the pleasure of attending the Ruby Theater Demo Event at the LMC Tempe Showroom on Thursday, March 27, 2025. This is at 1705 W Ruby Drive, Suite 109, Tempe, AZ 85284.



Paul Henningsen and his wife were the hosts for this evening. Paul manages this Showroom with his support team Monday through Saturday.

This was a highly anticipated event for me as it gave me an opportunity to compare Paul's Ruby Theater with competitor John Akers' Cinematic Home AV Theater that I attended on January 16, 2025.

At the very start of the demo, Paul explained his design philosophy behind building this system.

Ideally, one needs two rooms, one dedicated to 2-channel audio listening and the other designed as a Home Theater for enjoying immersive multi-channel audio and movies.

The acoustic treatment is different in each scenario. Some reflections are desirable for a 2-channel audio setup to add the extra ambience, whereas you need a dead room free of all reflections to accurately pinpoint the audio signals moving from speaker to speaker all around you in a well-designed home theater.

What about clients who do not have an extra room? Can a high-end 2-channel audio system be integrated within a multi-channel home theater that shares the same room?

Paul designed his Ruby Theater to showcase how this can be accomplished without breaking the budget.

The Ruby Theater measures 17'4" wide by 24'4" long and has 12' high ceilings, slightly larger than the 16' x 20' x 7' Cinematic Home AV Theater.



This luxurious interior with polished wood comfortably seats eight people.

Paul began his demo by showing the extra picture clarity you get with Kaleidescape Movies encoded at 65Mb/sec. Streaming videos, on the other hand, suffer from a lack of detail, color accuracy,, and added noise.

Kaleidescape is the only product that offers visually lossless video quality with no perceptible difference from the master copies released by the movie studios. This makes a big difference when watching movies on a large projection screen with true multi-channel lossless audio.



Paul then demonstrated what a well-executed Dolby ATMOS surround system can sound like.




You are looking at the \$800 TRINNOV measurement microphone for calibrating the multi-channel setup.

The TRINNOV engineers put this together. You immediately felt immersed in a 360-degree sound field with precise imaging. In the 3rd demo clip, Paul played a scene from the action movie Unbroken.



You can see the amazing sharpness of the text on the projection screen.

UNBROKEN
THE UNBELIEVABLE TRUE STORY



Rated PG-13 for war violence including intense sequences of brutality, and for brief language; 2 hours 18 minutes, HD download, 2.40 aspect ratio, Color, USA, 2014

Synopsis
After a near-fatal crash, a WWII pilot survives 47 days at sea when he's picked up by the Japanese and sent to a POW camp.

Genres Drama, War, Biography

Cast Jack O'Connell, Domhnall Gleeson, Takamasa Ishihara, Garrett Hedlund, Finn Wittrock, Jai Courtney

Director Angelina Jolie

Return
Resume Movie
Play Movie

What stood out immediately was the excellent contrast and black levels, which gave the picture a cinematic quality.



After watching Paul's 9.2.6 Dolby ATMOS Ruby Theater, you would have no reason to visit your local multiplex.

In the second half of the demo, Paul demonstrated his system's capabilities in a strict 2-channel audio mode.

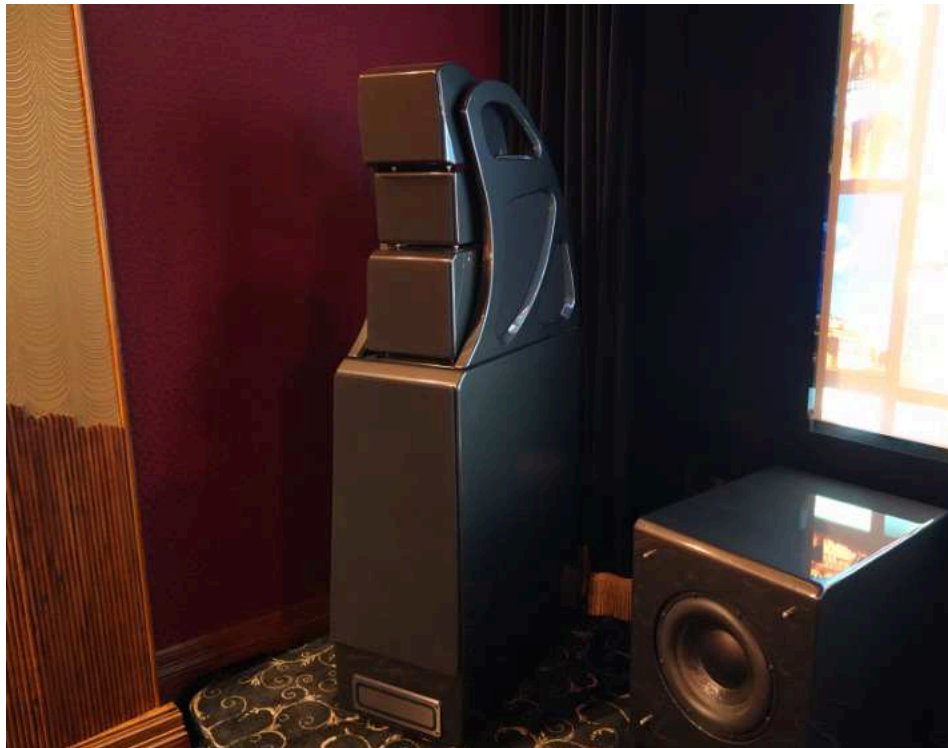
He played our club favorite audiophile demo track, "*Keith Don't Go*" by Nils Lofgren. The breathtaking transparency, smoothness, imaging, resolution, transients, and bass control on the Wilson Audio ALEXX Vs completely outclassed the Wisdom Audio [Sage Cinema Line 2](#) main speakers at Cinematic AV. You must have free standing speakers to achieve this level of performance. In-wall speakers cannot compete. It is a matter of physics.

Paul surprised us with a demo of what a high-end 2-channel setup can sound like on a Q Sound Mix recording with clever phase shifts. He played "**Vogue**" by Madonna. I was startled to hear voices coming from my hard left and right and even behind my ears, far away from the physical boundaries of the main speakers. When a speaker is accurately time aligned like these ALEXX Vs, these intentional phase shifts in the mix can fool your brain into believing you are hearing a full-blown multi-channel speaker system.

"*Nightshift*" from The Commodores was another demo track that impressed me.

The Wilson Audio ALEXX Vs absolutely aced it when handling 2-channel audio.

This is the left main speaker with a Wilson Audio WATCH Dog Subwoofer next to it.



This is the right main speaker with the second Wilson Audio WATCH Dog Subwoofer.



The Wilson Audio ALEXX Vs are end-game speakers for most audiophiles. You would not find many being used in a home theater setting.

Paul decided to use them to demonstrate how one can enjoy a state-of-the-art 2-channel audio system within a Home Theater build.

The ALEXX Vs have a high sensitivity rating of 92dB with a nominal impedance of 4 ohms. They stand 63" tall and weigh 500 lbs each. They can play down to 20 Hz.

The Wilson Audio WATCH Dog subwoofers, sporting a single 12" bass driver, weigh 281 lbs and bring the bass response of the system down to 15Hz. The extra bass reinforcement helps in a home theater setup.

Paul is using a Wilson Audio Mezzo CSC speaker for his center channel.



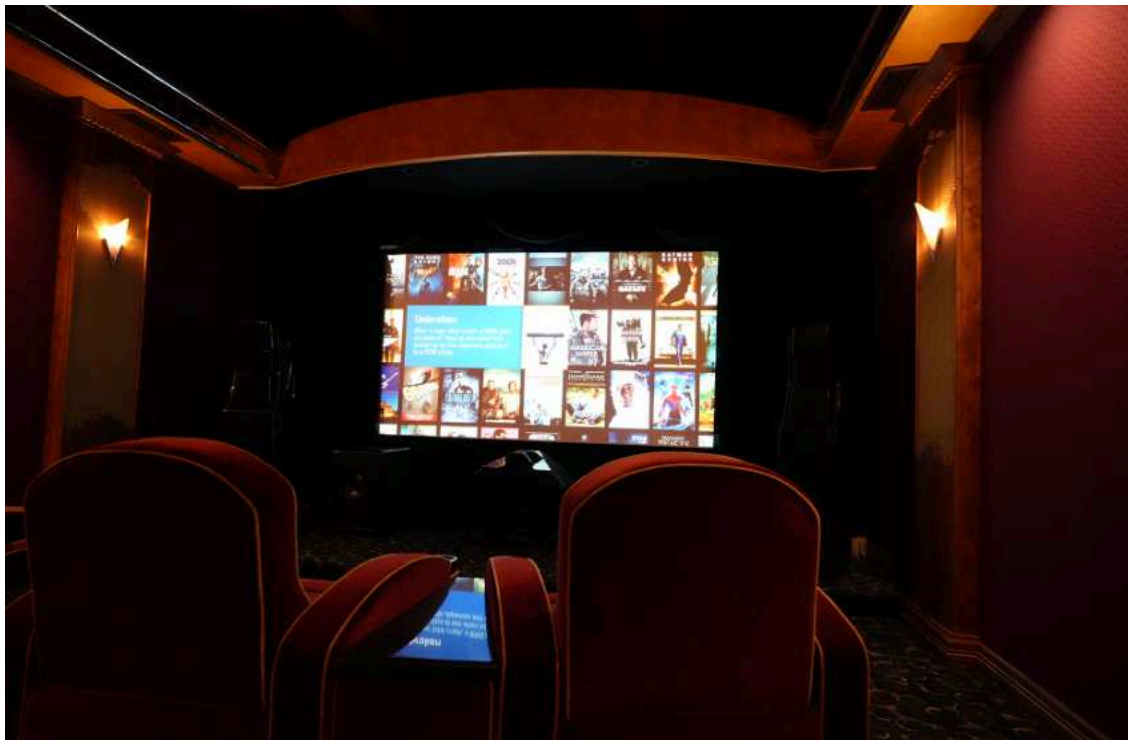
The polished surfaces generate some unwanted reflections during movie playback.



The in-wall Focal Surround Speakers are hidden behind the side panels.

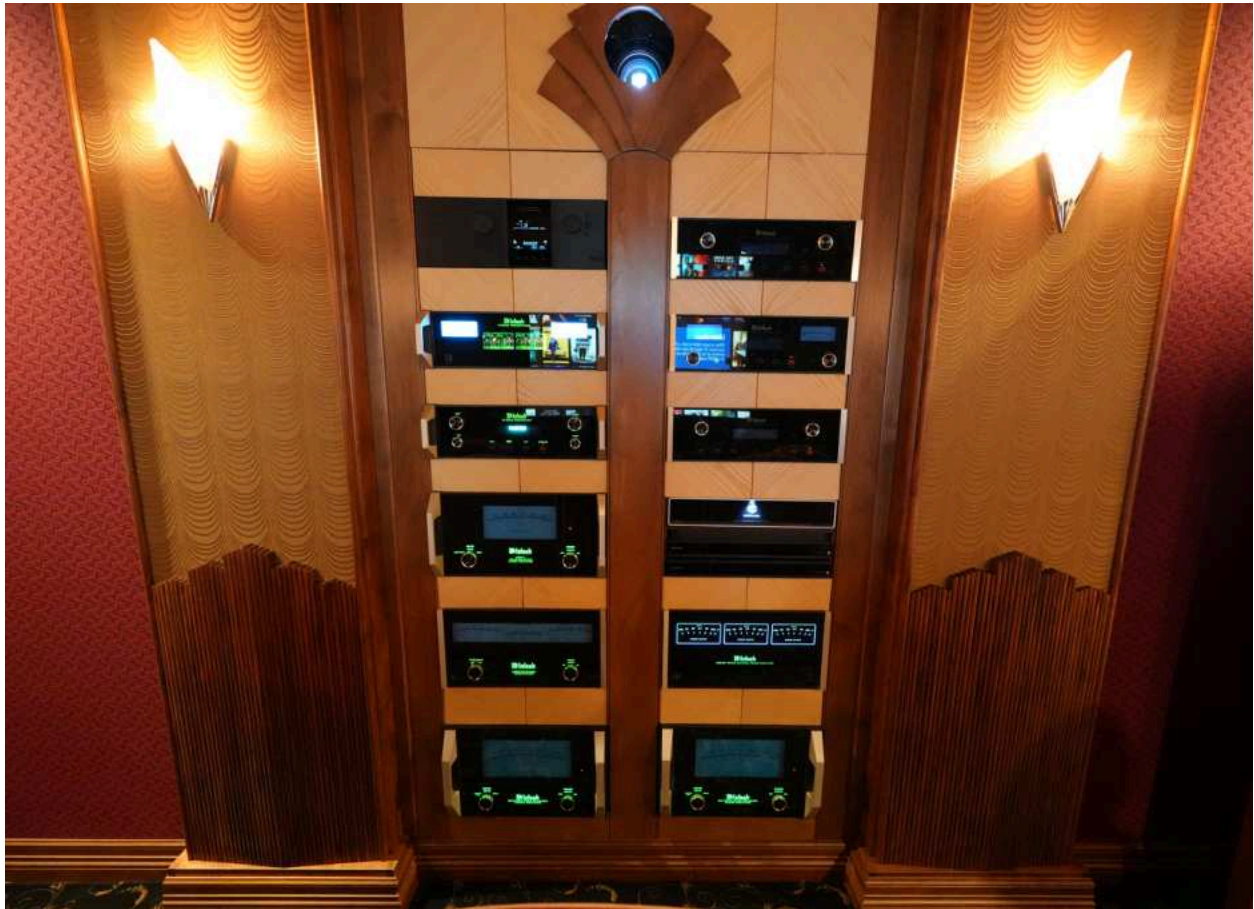


There are two surround speakers mounted on each side wall, and two more on the back wall.



All the electronics are neatly arranged in a 2-column stack on the back wall with easy access to all the controls.

Paul designed the ornamental wooden panels to accentuate the Projector Lens.



Here is a close-up of the Trinnov Audio Altitude 32-24 multi-channel processor and the McIntosh C12000 Pre Amplifier, McIntosh C12000 Controller, McIntosh MC611 Quad Balanced Power Amplifier, and McIntosh MC255 Five Channel Power Amplifier.



Here is a close-up of the Kaleidescape Movie Player and Sony 4K Blu-ray player. Below that, you see the McIntosh MC8207 Seven Channel Power Amplifier.



At the very bottom of the rack, two massive McIntosh MC1.2KW Quad Balanced Power Amplifiers rest. They power the two ALEXX V Main Speakers.



EQUIPMENT LIST

PROJECTOR

Paul uses a [Sony VPL-VW995ES](#) native 4K projector that outputs 2,200 Lumens. The [Barco Residential Njord Cinemascope Projector](#) is capable of a scorching bright 9,000 Lumens. John Akers was running that Barco projector at 60% brightness.

I felt the Sony Projector had better contrast and deeper blacks, although not quite as bright as the much more expensive Barco Projector.

The text was razor sharp. This is how the Kaleidescape home page appeared on the screen.



SCREEN

This was a Stewart 175" Diagonal 2.40:1 Masking Screen.

Since Paul is not using the madVR Video Processor, the aspect ratio changes from 2.40:1 to 16:9, which needed to be handled by mechanically sliding the masks to prevent black bars along the sides.

Including a \$6,000 madVR [Envy Core](#) would make it ideal for aspect ratio management.

MAIN SPEAKERS

Paul designed this theater with the audiophile in mind. He did not cut corners. The [Wilson Audio ALEXX Vs](#) were the stars of the show. They retail for \$157,000 a pair.

CENTER CHANNEL SPEAKER

Paul chose the [Wilson Audio Mezzo CSC](#). They are the best Center Channel speaker Wilson makes. They retail for \$21,250.

SURROUND SPEAKERS

The Ruby Theater has 6 [Focal Electra IW1003 BE](#) 3-way In-Wall speakers. They are not in production any more. They can be purchased for \$4,000 each.

DOLBY HEIGHT SPEAKERS

There are 4 Wisdom Audio [Sage Series ICS7a](#) In-Ceiling speakers. They are priced at \$3,600 each.

SUBWOOFERS

There are 2 [Wilson Audio WATCH Dog](#) subwoofers priced at \$5,000 each.

This brings the costs of all 15 speakers to a grand total of \$226 K.

VIDEO PROCESSOR

Paul is using the [Trinnov Audio Altitude 32-24](#) unit. This retails for \$42,000.

AUDIO PROCESSOR

McIntosh [C-12000 Hybrid Preamplifier](#) comprising the C12000 Controller Module and the C12000 Preamplifier Module. This combo retails for \$16,000.

MOVIE PLAYER

A Kaleidescape [Stato V Movie Player](#) provides 4K Dolby Vision, HDR10, and SDR playback with lossless audio decoding of Dolby Atmos, DTS:X, Dolby TrueHD, and DTS-HD Master Audio.

The internal storage can fit about 10 reference-quality 4K movies in standalone mode.



This is the only digital movie player that offers lossless audio with full reference video quality.
It retails for \$3995.

MOVIE SERVER

A Kaleidescape [Terra Prime 8TB Movie Server](#) is used for additional storage. This retails for \$4,995.

BLU-RAY PLAYER

There is a Sony 4K Blu-ray Player.

POWER AMPS FOR MAIN SPEAKERS

McIntosh [MC1.25KW](#) Solid State Monoblocks x2



POWER AMP FOR SURROUND SPEAKERS

McIntosh [MC255](#) 5-channel Solid State Amplifier.



POWER AMPS FOR DOLBY HEIGHT SPEAKERS

McIntosh [MC8207](#) 7-channel Solid State Amplifier.



POWER AMP FOR SUBWOOFERS

Procella Audio [DA5000-DSP](#)



Paul mentioned that building the Ruby Theater cost him around \$485K. He talked about the special room treatment he had to apply to make it work for both music and movies.

The cost of this setup is comparable to the Cinematic Home AV Reference Theater. However, while John's objective was to build a no-compromise dedicated Home Theater, Paul was able to include a reference 2-channel audio system in the mix that

would appeal to audiophiles. John's in-wall Wisdom Audio speakers cannot compete with the Wilson Audio ALEXX Vs for 2-channel music. The matching array of Wisdom Speakers does a brilliant job of providing that seamless immersive experience while watching movies.

Paul acknowledged that if he were to start from scratch, he would utilize the [WaveForming](#) technology from Trinnov Audio. This gives the listener the most immersive experience, and he has used WaveForming in several customer projects.

Building a multi-channel home theater around a reference 2-channel audio setup always results in making compromises. The free-standing front main speakers, center channel, and exposed subwoofers appear distracting while watching a movie. There are unwanted reflections around brightly lit scenes. Ideally, one would want all these speakers hidden behind an acoustically transparent screen like John has done. However, you sacrifice sound quality in 2-channel listening mode.

There is no right or wrong way to approach your dream theater build. An audiophile will adopt Paul's approach. A movie lover would appreciate the cleaner look and immersive sound of John's reference Home Theater.

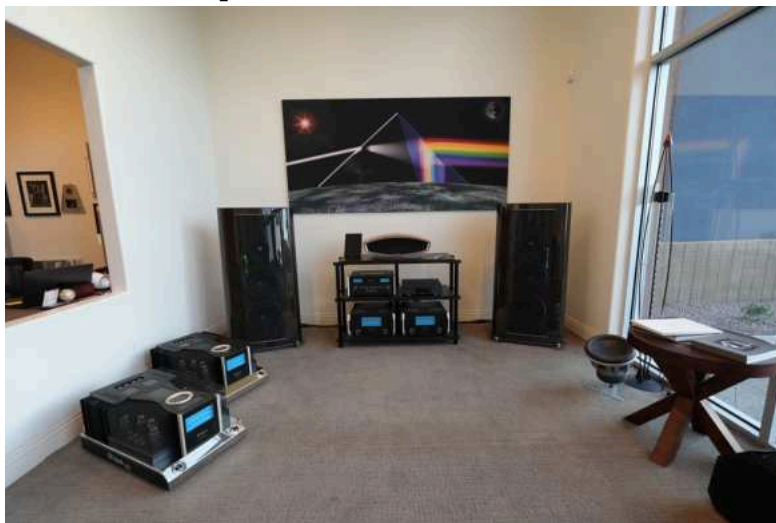
A person with enough resources and passion would enjoy both in separate dedicated rooms.

As members of the Arizona Audio Video Club,, we feel very fortunate to have access to such high-end showrooms that utilize the latest audio and video technology.

A Tour of LMC Tempe Showroom

Paul has packed his Tempe Showroom with products from several high-end brands.

As you enter the showroom, you are greeted with a gorgeous set of Sonus Faber floorstanders and McIntosh amplifiers.



Along the hallway, you see McIntosh, Wilson Audio, Martin Logan, and Magnepan speakers.



I call this the Sonus Faber display room.



Here is a close-up of the Sonus Faber towers powered by McIntosh amplifiers.



Here you see a pair of massive McIntosh mono blocks against the side wall.



Paul carries the entire line of Sonus Faber speakers.



LMC carries the entire line of Wilson Audio speakers. They can be ordered in any custom finish. Here are some samples.



This is one of their cheaper Wilson Audio setups.



This is the Wilson Audio display room featuring the [AlexiaV](#) speakers.



They are paired with Dan D'Agostino amplifiers.



This is the rear view of the Wilson Audio AlexiaV.



Here is a pair of Wilson Audio [SashaV](#) speakers powered by Burmester amps.



This is the rear view of the Wilson Audio SashaV.



All speakers are connected with Transparent Audio speaker cables.

These are the Wilson Audio [TuneTot](#) bookshelf speakers in Crimson Satin resting on the matching TuneTod Stands.



This is the second Sonus Faber display room.





Paul and his wife were gracious hosts for the evening and had lots of refreshments and drinks.



Nobody wanted to leave, and we stayed till 10 pm, way past their normal closing time.

Paul is always welcoming to all our club members. We should make this into a yearly event to explore and learn from all the advancements in this industry.

On behalf of all club members, I wish to thank Paul and his wife for their time and hospitality.

Should you wish to plan a visit, you can contact Paul at paul@lmche.com or call him at (480) 403-0010.

Swap Meet - below is a preliminary list of items available at the club swap meet. If you would like to list equipment, please contact Paul Johnson at tachyon2go@gmail.com

SELLER	PRODUCT	PRICE	CONDITION NOTES
TODD KRIEGER			
	JBL L65 Speakers	150 OBO	(bad shape, needs new drivers, refinishing 2/10)
	Polk 7 Speakers	150 OBO	(6/10)
	Decware HDT Speakers	150 OBO	(Grilles missing 4/10)
	Harman/Kardon HK670 Receiver	\$200 OBO	(5/10)
	VooDoo Black Magic Power Cord	\$200 OBO	(2 available)
	Fritz mini full-range driver speakers	\$100 OBO	(4/10 one cabinet damaged)
	Ultrasonic Record Cleaning Machine and Apparatus	\$200 OBO	(Generic, 7/10)
	Micca RB42 speakers	\$100 OBO	(8/10)
	Topping D90 "Discrete" DAC	\$550 OBO	(8/10)
	Various acrylic platter mats	\$10 each	
	Sennheiser HD6XX Headphones	\$125.00	(7/10)
	SMSL "Cheap" DACs.	\$30 each	MULTIPLE DEVICES
	Geshelli J2 DAC	\$150 OBO	(7/10), original
	Geshelli J2S DAC	\$250 OBO	(7/10), AKM4499 DAC chipset, Sparkos op-amps
	Various interconnect cables	\$50/pr	

	Various power cords	\$25 to \$50	
	Various computer gaming keyboards	\$50.00	
	Various inexpensive Class D amps	\$50.00	(Fosi, Aiyama, etc.)
JOHN HARVELL			
	Adcom GFA 555 Amplifier	??	7 of 10
	Oppo BDP-95	??	with associated esata drive with music, Original Box and Packing Material Available
	Thorens TD160C	??	need some TLC (at least a new drive band and a new cartridge). Damaged pivot catch for cover. Original Box and Packing Available.
CHARLES RIGGIO			
	Luxman L400 integrated amplifier	\$450.00	upgraded with modern speaker posts
DENNIS KETTERER			
	Digital Amplifier Co. MEGAschino MK2 stereo amp	??	
	Acoustimac 2Ft x 3Ft x 2in	??	Burgundy acoustic panels (1 PR)
	Shelf equipment racks	??	QTY 3
SCOTT COHEN			SEE WORD ATTACHMENT
	Denon AVR-1913 AV receiver w/remote \$35	\$35.00	See photos below
	Radio Shack Minimus 7 Speakers	\$25.00	See photos below
	Onkyo TX-SR313 AV receiver w/remote	\$25.00	See photos below
	Pyle USB TT	\$10.00	See photos below
	NAD 3130 Integrated Amp	\$40.00	See photos below (works but front faceplate is shot)
PAUL JOHNSON			
	WYRED 4 SOUND DAC2-SE	\$750.00	BOX, MANUAL, ETC / VISHAY FOIL RESISTORS / RELAY STEP ATTENUATOR (8/10)
	GREAT AMERICAN SOUND THAEDRA PREAMP	\$700.00	(7/10)
	PLACETTE ACTIVE LINE STAGE	\$4,200.	REMOTE, MANUAL, NEW SORBOTHANE

		00	FEET (8/10)
	DSPEAKER ANTI-MODE 8033	\$300.00	DSP BASS CORRECTION W/ MICROPHONE (NEW) (2 UNITS)
	WYRED 4 SOUND STP PRE SE	\$2,400.00	MANUAL, BOX, REMOTE (STAGE 2)
	WYRED 4 SOUND REMEDY RECLOCKER	\$250.00	(NEW)
	OPPO BDP-95 BLU-RAY PLAYER	\$475.00	BOX, MANUAL, REMOTE (HARDWARE MODIFIED 2 B REGION FREE) (8/10)
	OPPO BDP-83SE	\$275.00	BOX, MANUAL, REMOTE (8/10)
	SONY SCD-XA777ES SACD PLAYER	\$800.00	MANUAL, REMOTE. DRAWER NEEDS BELT (HAVE NEW BELT) (8/10)

Scott Cohn also provided photos for his equipment listed above:

Items for the swap meet



Denon AVR-1913 AV receiver w/remote \$35



Minimus 7 Speakers \$25



Onkyo TX-SR313 AV receiver w/remote \$25



Pyle USB TT \$10



NAD 3130 Integrated Amp \$40 (works but front faceplate is shot)

Dealers Corner

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

Equipment Dealers:

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

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

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

Cinematic Home AV <https://www.cinematichomeav.com/>

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

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

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

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

Mythic Home Theater <https://mythicsls.com/>

Vinyl/CDs:

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

They also sell audio equipment per the store's website.

Zia Records <https://www.ziarecords.com/> Zia has several stores throughout The Valley.

Stinkweeds <https://www.stinkweeds.com/>

Repair Work: The editor recently contacted these repair providers to confirm they are still in business. As of the newsletter's publication, he has not heard back from all the companies.

James Koch - confirmed James is still in business

james@highendrepair.com

480-398-7362

Audio Doctor - active website

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

602-741-0730

Jeff's Professional Audio Repair [602-274-0794](tel:602-274-0794) - Also, Car Stereo work was emailed on 9/9/24 jparepair@yahoo.com

Re-foaming Speaker Surround Service:
Michael Mitchell 480-749-7003
mmiller43228@yahoo.com emailed on 9/9/24

Turntable Set-up and record cleaning:
Richard Jensen confirmed still in business
[602 717 2399](tel:6027172399) | worksbau@gmail.com