



Newsletter

April 2026

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President's Message

By John Harvell

I find myself wondering whether there is more we can do to make this club even more useful and enjoyable for the members.

1. We have members who are currently interested in room treatment: how to decide what treatment you need, where it should be located, and, for those who are captured by the DIY bug, how to build room treatment panels that work for a reasonable price but look and perform like professional gear.
2. We have members who are speaker-builder enthusiasts and have constructed some well-designed, extremely attractive speaker systems.
3. We have members who are electronics enthusiasts with the skills and knowledge to design or at least build their own amplifiers, preamplifiers, and turntable conversions, from single-ended designs to balanced systems.

4. We have a reasonable number of vinyl audiophiles who have all figured out where and how to find high-quality recordings in superior condition and have generally evaluated good combinations of turntables, isolators, tone arms, and cartridges.

So, how do we all benefit from this wealth of interest and experience? In each of these categories, if one of you is willing to make a small commitment to lead a subgroup, we can begin sharing information within that subgroup and spread the knowledge to more interested members. Yes, it requires a bit of effort and support, but the payback is likely to be greater than any one individual's efforts. Subgroups like this can advance your knowledge, reduce the effort required to learn a new topic, and save you a lot of time and money compared to doing things on your own.

Reach out to a club officer or steering committee member, volunteer to head up an audio club subgroup, and let's share the wealth among other interested club members. The rewards will likely be much more than any effort you put into it, and will likely build even stronger friendships.

Attending AXPONA is a significant investment of time, flights, and hotel stays that many members simply cannot afford. By bringing a curated, firsthand report back to Arizona, we deliver the premier North American audio show directly to our membership. The presentation will feature high-quality photos, emerging industry trends, and honest, unfiltered listening impressions of the newest gear. This provides tremendous surrogate value, making members feel plugged into the broader audiophile industry without the travel expenses. It's a relaxed, conversational evening designed to spark debate, inspire future system upgrades, and reinforce the club as the primary hub for audio news.

March AAVC Event Review: A New Dimension in Listening: Experience the Trinaural Processor

By David Das

I had the pleasure of attending the SST Trinaural Processor Event on March 25, 2026, at the Faith Place, Faith Lutheran Church.

What is the Trinaural Processor?

The Trinaural Processor is a fully analog device that re-vectorizes a regular 2-channel stereo signal into 3 channels – Left, Center, and Right. The result is a dramatically wider soundstage with enhanced depth, clarity, and level of realism that traditional 2-channel systems simply cannot match.

Trinaural processing was invented by the legendary [James Bongiorno](#). It addresses a fundamental limitation in traditional stereo. Bongiorno's research suggested that because real-world sounds rarely come from the absolute left or right positions, a 3-channel front stage is essential for true "live" acoustic emulation.

The [SST Trinaural Processor](#) can be purchased for \$3,000.





The Equipment

Club Treasurer **Paul Johnson** was kind enough to loan his SST Trinaural Processor for the event. He came in early, around 4 pm, and began setting up the equipment.

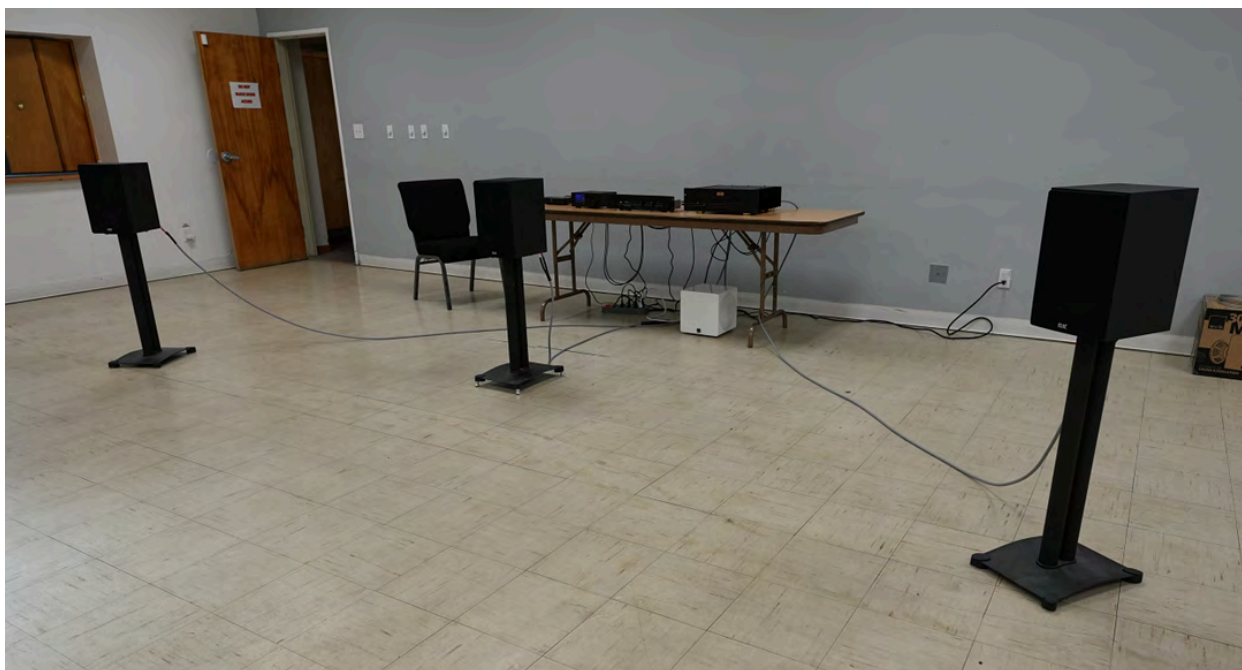


Paul also provided his [Benchmark HPA4](#) Headphone Amplifier and Preamp, [Bluesound Node](#) device for streaming music, and his [Parasound HCA-806](#) 6-channel High Current Amplifier to power the 3 speakers.

A matching trio of [ELAC B6](#) stand-mount speakers was provided by former Club President **Jeffrey Behr**.



The speaker's stand was provided by Club Secretary **David Snyder**.



Paul played a series of audiophile test tracks for the next two hours and accommodated member suggestions. In almost every instance, I felt the center channel speaker enhanced the soundstage by physically anchoring the singer's voice dead center, while the left and right speakers broadened the sense of width by placing the individual instruments precisely positioned relative to the singer. This conveyed an added layer of realism. My brain was no longer trying to imagine the missing center channel. It was physically present.

Yes, the SST Trinural Processor using 3 speakers is an absolute improvement over 2-channel stereo. The difference is audible the moment you play any audiophile test track that you are familiar with.

Why did 2 channels become the standard for recreating the width of a soundstage?

In the early days, since the invention of the phonograph in 1877, vinyl records could only play back a mono recording. All you needed was a single speaker to feature a single, centered audio image.

Later, when recording engineers began researching ways to recreate the spatial width of a soundstage, they found the best way to achieve this was to add additional left and right speakers while keeping the existing center speaker. This needed 3 distinct audio channels to be recorded. This was not possible on vinyl. The best they could do was to encode 2 channels on a V-shaped groove tracked by the stylus. Stereo vinyl albums were released in 1957.

It was the limitations of the vinyl format that led to the establishment of commercial stereo.

The stereo format was always a compromise. The center channel had to be left out of the equation. It required two perfectly timbre-matched, high-quality transducers, with the listener seated exactly at the apex of a triangle, to perceive the phantom center channel and experience the illusion of a 3D holographic soundstage with depth. The moment you deviated even slightly from the sweet spot, the center image suffered. This characteristic is most audible on Electrostatic speakers. You need to be seated exactly on axis, or else the magic falls apart. Omni-directional and bi-polar speakers are a bit more forgiving.

Since the invention of the stereo format, the number-one desire of audiophiles has been to restore the missing center channel. The SST Trinural Processor offers an affordable way to realize center-channel information by processing any stereo signal, all in the analog domain, without signal degradation from DSP.

To learn about a few practical examples of setting up a 3-speaker system, and a competing [BACCH](#) 3D Spatial Audio Processing system using 2 speakers, please read my [full 22-page review](#).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Paul Johnson for loaning all his electronics, setting up his equipment, and allowing us to experience the magic of the SST Trinaural Processor.

This event was a revelation for me. For any serious audiophile wishing to extract the ultimate soundstage information from a stereo source, including a center channel, the SST Trinaural Processor is your ticket to heaven. Once you have heard the difference it makes, there is no going back.

We all had a terrific time. Events like these take a lot of planning and patience. The more members we have in the audience, the more worthwhile all this effort becomes.

Dave's Record Reviews

Usually (but not always) championing worthy albums from the past...

For the AZ Audio Club ~ April 2026

#38

Molly Tuttle – **So Long Little Miss Sunshine** (Nonesuch, LP & CD, 2025)



Yeah, I know – as a 2025 release, this isn't exactly an album that falls conveniently into my proclaimed mission of "Championing worthy albums from the past." However, it is one that I almost feel compelled to write about. I've

been aware of Molly Tuttle as a bluegrass artist of rising stardom for the last few years, and though I've been interested in her music, I haven't taken the time to pursue it. Until now.

Tuttle has been achieving ever-greater recognition and accumulating numerous awards since spending a stint with her family's band at age 15. (She is now 33.) She is a singer, songwriter, and virtuoso guitar player, all talents of which are very much in evidence on this album. Her previous two albums, 2022's ***Crooked Tree*** and 2023's ***City of Gold***, both topped the bluegrass charts and won Grammys for best Bluegrass album. This album, ***So Long Little Miss Sunshine***, was a 2025 Grammy nominee for Best Americana Album.

Club members who subscribe to **Stereophile** (many of you, probably even most) will be aware of their annual **R2L4** (Records to Live For) feature, in which the magazine's writers share albums they have found to be of particular merit. In this February's issue, music editor/writer Robert Baird called this album, "A masterpiece from start to finish." Well, that caught my attention right enough. Being an opinionated type myself, I don't always agree with their writers' judgment calls, but I checked out this album via Spotify, decided it sounded promising, and procured the LP.

What we have here... well, there are bluegrass influences, to be sure, but it is not, and cannot be, called a bluegrass album. Some reviewers have criticized Tuttle for seemingly abandoning the style of music that brought her to prominence. Perhaps she felt the need to move on from her bluegrass audience into a broader, popular music arena, and the album title *may* be an indication of that. But at least as prominent here are elements of pop, rock, country, and even folk. If classifying must be done, that broad category called Americana is doubtless the closest we will come to labeling it. Tuttle co-wrote all the songs, sings, and plays acoustic guitar on all cuts as well. It was recorded in Nashville, and though the side people are not big-name, well-known players, they are obviously most capable. I wouldn't say that the production is of "audiophile" caliber, but it is very good.

There are indeed many fine songs here, and they vary from impressive, high-octane numbers to beautiful, thoughtful ballads. The album leads off with an example of the former, "*Everything Burns*," a high-octane song which is, on the face of it, about an arsonist. "*I Love It*" is an example of the latter, a captivating, haunting song about the singer's disaffection with her lover and apparently with life. I can't yet decide what might be my favorite cut on the album, but this might be it.

"*That's Gonna Leave a Mark*" is what I would call an easy-rocking song that was released as a successful single from the album:

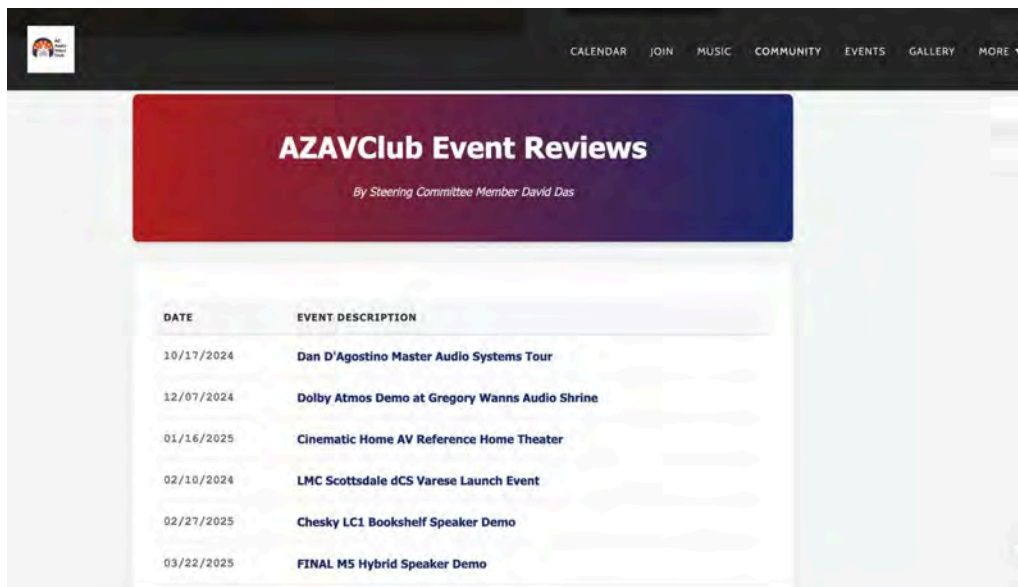
*“But you're good in all the bad ways, don't try to fix it when you break my heart
Knew when you hit me with your poison dart, that's gonna leave a mark.”*

I will let that suffice, and won't go into discussing more of the songs on the album. But I will go so far as to say that there is not a truly bad song among the twelve to be found here. So – do I agree that this is “A masterpiece from start to finish”? Well.. I might not be quite that effusive, but it comes darn close enough.

Molly Tuttle is unquestionably an extremely talented artist and will be good at whatever music she chooses to produce. If she tours, coming to a location anywhere near where I can reasonably get to, I will be there. If you might possibly have any feeling at all for this sort of pop/rock/bluegrass infused music – which I suppose is not a given – by all means do give this album a try. I'm guessing that it will not disappoint.

David Das AAVC Reviews/Recaps on Club Website

Thanks to David Snyder, 23 of David Das' reviews/recaps of club events are on the club website. It is under the [COMMUNITY tab](#).



DATE	EVENT DESCRIPTION
10/17/2024	Dan D'Agostino Master Audio Systems Tour
12/07/2024	Dolby Atmos Demo at Gregory Wanns Audio Shrine
01/16/2025	Cinematic Home AV Reference Home Theater
02/10/2024	LMC Scottsdale dCS Varese Launch Event
02/27/2025	Chesky LC1 Bookshelf Speaker Demo
03/22/2025	FINAL M5 Hybrid Speaker Demo

Review of AAVC Member Jim Welby's Audio System

By David Das

I had the pleasure of auditioning Club Newsletter Editor Jim Welby's Audio System on March 10, 2026, at his home in Phoenix, Arizona.

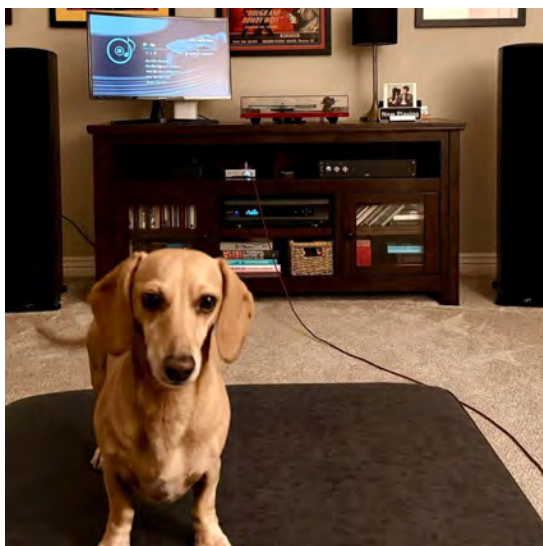


Jim is a true music lover. Between his winter home in Phoenix and his summer escape in Minneapolis, he has amassed over 4000 LPs, thousands of CDs, SACDs, and HDCDs in his massive music library.

When you walk into his spacious home, you immediately notice how James and his lovely wife Laura have meticulously decorated every square inch of this property with matching furniture, music posters, and souvenirs that convey a sense of warmth and coziness. I can only imagine the amount of effort and dedication it takes to keep everything so organized and spotless. It looks like a picture from a magazine. Everything blends in. Nothing stands out of place.

This is a music aficionado's dream cave.

You will be greeted by Margo, the friendly dachshund, the moment you walk in. She enjoys music like the rest of us. A few treats are all that it takes to get her over her initial shyness.



Jim's music room measures 13' x 14' with a 10' high ceiling. Besides the carpeting and the leather couch, it has no room treatment. The left side of the room opens into a massive living space that flows into the kitchen and dining room.

Jim's system is:

- A pair of [Paradigm Premium 800F](#) 4-driver, 3-way bass reflex speakers
- [Rega Planar 3 Turntable](#) using the stock cartridge
- [Croft Acoustics Phono Integrated Amplifier](#)
- [Oppo BDP-105D](#) (Darbee Edition) multi-format Blu-ray Disc Player for CDs, SACDs, DVD-As, and HDCDs
- [Bluesound Node](#) streamer
- [Schitt Vali 2](#) Tube Hybrid headphone amp with a vintage [1975 Amperex ECC88 tube](#) with an A-frame and dimple disc getter from Holland
- [HiFiMan HE5XX](#) Planar Magnetic Headphones

Jim uses his Bluesound Node streamer to access music from TIDAL outside his music library. He uses the DAC on his Oppo BDP-105D Blu-ray Disc Player. He finds it superior to the built-in DAC on his Bluesound Node Streamer.

Editor's note: Since David auditioned my system, I learned that the coax DAC input on the Oppo can't handle greater than 96 kHz. The USB input does, but the Bluesound does not have a USB output (newer models do). So I am using an old DAC for the Bluesound. I call that DAC my Joey G DAC, as it was given to me by former club member Joe Goswami. It is an [Orchard Audio Pecan-Pi \(revision 3.0\)](#). It uses dual Burr-Brown (TI) PCM1794A DAC chips. It was wired with AgentPur silver wire on the analog side, which gives the DAC additional warmth to its sound.

We began our listening session with “*Aja*” on vinyl by **Steely Dan**. I am very familiar with this 24-bit/96kHz track on Qobuz. I could immediately hear the extra warmth, liquidity, smoothness, and emotional connection conveyed through the vinyl source.

Next, we heard “*Jokerman*” by **Bob Dylan** on vinyl, followed by the CD, SACD, and TIDAL (24-bit/96kHz) versions. The vinyl version sounded the absolute best. No contest. The CD sounded the worst in this comparison. SACD was significantly better than CD. Surprisingly, the TIDAL streaming version sounded the closest to vinyl.

Next, we heard “*Gild the Lily*” by **Billy Strings** on vinyl and then on TIDAL (24-bit/96kHz). The vinyl version sounded more relaxed and musical than the TIDAL version.

Next, we heard “*Once Upon a Time in the West*” by **Dire Straits** on vinyl. I am very familiar with this track on Qobuz. The vinyl version was pure magic.

We continued our listening session with a few more tracks:

- “*Bloom*” by **Larkin Poe** on vinyl.
- “*No One Gets Out Alive*” by **Maggie Rose** on vinyl sounded ethereal.
- “*You’re No Good*” by **Linda Ronstadt** on vinyl.
- “*Good Morning*” by **Norah Jones** on vinyl (a unique live Record Store Day version that is not available on streaming or CD)
- “*Coyote*” by **Joni Mitchell** on CD and HDCD.
- “*So What*” by **Miles Davis** on mono vinyl (reissue)
- “*Woman in Love*” by **Lucy Thomas** on CD and TIDAL (24-bit/96kHz). The TIDAL version sounded richer and fuller than the CD version.

What became readily apparent to me was that vinyl was the best medium for enjoying music, despite its shortcomings, such as surface noise, limited stereo separation, and dynamic range.

The vinyl version always sounded more musical, relaxed, natural, and engaging. It conveyed a sense of richness, softness, and delicacy on female vocals that was missing from the digital copies. String and horn instruments sounded more real on vinyl, where you simply got mesmerized by the music and forgot all about the gear reproducing it. This is, in essence, what music is all about. It creates the illusion of transporting you to the venue where the musicians performed. You could close your eyes and sense the artist performing in front of you.

Can a digital version recreate the same feeling?

I think something gets lost when you digitize an analog signal. It is never as smooth and liquid as the original analog waveform. It misses the soul. It sounds hard and flat. If all you had was access to a CD recording, you would be perfectly happy until you got an opportunity to compare it side by side to the vinyl version. The difference will be felt immediately, and you do not need a super-expensive rig to reach that conclusion.

The listening comparisons revealed that SACD and HDCD both sound better than a standard Red Book CD (16-bit/44.1kHz) recording, but still could not match the warmth of vinyl. The high-resolution streaming formats (24-bit/96kHz) came very close to vinyl.

It is certainly worthwhile to have a subscription to [TIDAL](#) and/or [Qobuz](#) and use a [Roon](#) Server to access and manage your streaming tracks, combined with your local music library ripped to FLAC format.

Streaming platforms do offer the ultimate convenience, affordability, and instant access to millions of high-resolution tracks. There is a reason why they have taken over. People are getting rid of their CD collection to save space.

The digital medium offers convenience. The analog medium offers the best quality.

Most of the music from the 1950s was captured on professional multi-track recorders using 2-inch wide magnetic tape moving at 15 inches/second.

The best way to experience the magic of these original analog studio recordings is to invest in a reel-to-reel tape machine and buy analog tapes. The selection is limited and prohibitively expensive. They can range from \$200 to \$800.

The next-best way to enjoy the purity of original analog recordings is to purchase a vinyl album. The signal remains completely in the analog domain. You avoid having to go through the mandatory AD and subsequent DA conversion cycles required to play back any digital format.

Here is an overview of the legendary Studer A827 Analog Multi-track Recorder.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmjSY2YozAc>



Digital Multi-track recorders like the [Sony PCM-3324](#) began to gain popularity in the early 1980s.

The [Alesis ADAT HD24](#) Hard Disk Recorder made digital multi-tracking affordable to home musicians.

Today, anyone can set up their own home studio using a Mac or a PC with an Audio Interface like the [Apollo Twin X](#).

Music recording has evolved significantly over the past 75 years. Almost all professional recording studios have moved away from analog multi-track machines. Digital consoles like the [Yamaha DM7](#) and [TF5](#) are the norm.

While it is true that [Pro Tools](#), [Logic Pro](#), [Nuendo](#), and [Cubase](#) have transformed the way modern music is recorded, edited, and mastered all in the digital domain, they could never capture the warmth and emotion of a pure analog recording.

Closing Thoughts

If you are lucky enough to have a vinyl collection of your favorite artists, hang on to them for dear life! There is nothing in the digital domain that can outshine your analog source. Nothing will bring the same pleasure as carefully removing

an album from its cover, placing it on a platter, dusting off the surface with a brush, and gently lowering the needle to experience the sheer bliss of a pure analog reproduction. It is a sublime feeling.

SACD and high-resolution streaming have come a long way in capturing the magic of the original analog master tapes. However, vinyl still rules. It is the ultimate source without breaking the bank. There is a reason why vinyl is making a comeback. Vinyl record sales officially surpassed CD sales in the US in 2022.

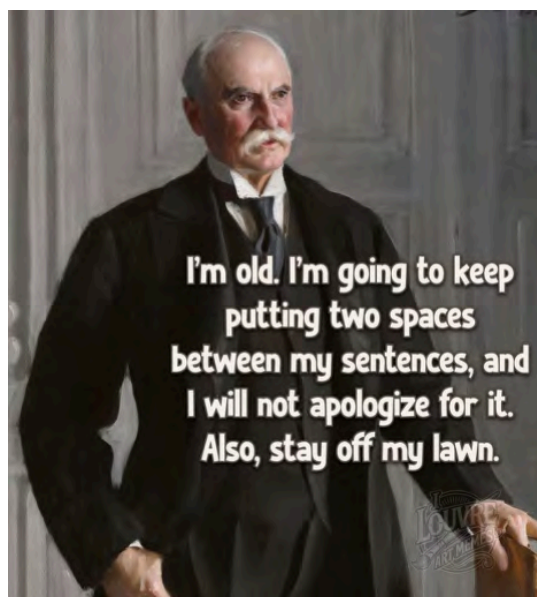
Jim is a true music lover. He frequently attends concerts and local bands. This is his lifelong passion. If you ever wish to experience music the way it was supposed to be heard in its pristine analog glory, I would highly recommend visiting his home and spending an afternoon. It will be an unforgettable experience.

Jim maintains his own website Catchgroove.com, where you can learn more about his hobby and his [Music System](#). He reviews 2 to 6 albums every month. Here are the [5 albums](#) he reviewed in March, 2026. As you can see, this is a work of passion. You can find Jim on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), where he frequently posts about music.

WASTING TIME ON THE INTERNET

By Jim Welby

Our record reviewer, Dave Hjortland, shared this meme with me:



In general, when I type, I leave two spaces between sentences. However, the modern standard is to use only one space after a period (or any end punctuation) in modern typing. While two spaces were standard on typewriters to improve readability, modern word processors and digital fonts are designed for single spacing. Using one space is the standard for web, professional, and academic writing these days. But old farts like me, who learned to type on a typewriter (a manual one, in my case), are stuck with the two-space rule.

Passing On The Audiophile Bug to Future Generations

By Jim Welby



One of my concerns is that our hobby will die with us. When I went to college in the fall of 1977, one of the badges of honor in the dorm was having a good stereo. Most young people, even if they are music lovers, just don't care about audio

quality. Fortunately, my 35-year-old daughter is not one of those. When she got her first real job out of college, one of the first things she bought was an entry-level audiophile-quality turntable.

Our daughter (Al), son-in-law (Alex), and new granddaughter (Wren) just moved into their first house in St. Louis Park, MN. As a housewarming gift, we got them an integrated amp, streamer, and speakers. For the last six years, they have been living in Manhattan, where space was a premium and a “stereo” meant a small Bluetooth speaker. They now have a nice 16’ by 28’ room that was begging for a real stereo.

Integrated Amplifier: A few years ago, I purchased a [Douk Audio X1](#) amp for our Minneapolis condo. The appeal was that it had a phono amp, Bluetooth, an aux input, was tube-based, had a small footprint, had enough clean power to drive speakers at low to moderate volume, and, most of all, was cheap (under \$150). The Douk has served me well and seemed like the perfect Chi-Fi solution for the kids. **Chi-Fi** (short for Chinese High-Fidelity) refers to affordable, high-performance audio gear—specifically IEMs, headphones, and DACs/amps—produced by independent Chinese brands. It has gained popularity for offering premium features at low costs, often acting as a budget-friendly gateway for audiophiles.

Speakers: A good starter speaker is a bookshelf-style speaker. They will be useful forever - they always have a role. A safe choice is an audiophile-quality brand’s entry-level model. I chose the British speaker company [KEF’s Q1 Meta](#) because it is well reviewed and reasonably priced (\$400). I have been auditioning them in Al & Alex’s new house, and they sound great! They fill the space easily and offer a nice range from punchy bass to crisp highs. Good sound stage, even when not sitting in the sweet spot.

Streamer: Once you decide to go even slightly HiFi, Bluetooth will not cut it. So I got them an inexpensive streamer from WiiM (the [WiiM Pro](#)). I have been using Bluesound devices for several years and was curious about their competitor, WiiM. The WiiM works great and is priced much lower (\$150) than Bluesound’s Node (\$550).

Rather than “broadcasting” your streaming service via your phone’s DAC at low resolution (and at short range) to your amp (the typical Bluetooth), you use a streamer. A streamer is an audiophile network device that connects directly to your streaming service and converts high-resolution files (typically up to

24-bit/192 kHz FLAC) into analog audio. You control this through your streaming service's app on your phone - so it's easy to use (for the true audiophile, you can use Roon). A streamer sounds way better than Bluetooth.

Turntable: My daughter already had a turntable that she used before they went to NYC. It is a solid entry-level audiophile table. See the [link](#) for the backstory on her Music Hall mmf-2.2 le.

I am satisfied with this setup, and the kids seem delighted, too! They now have a high-quality entry-level audiophile rig. They can listen to high-resolution digital audio and fully appreciate vinyl. They are both musicheads, so it will be interesting to see if they get bitten by the audiophile bug. All part of my mission to sustain the audiophile hobby by passing it on to the next generation. Having access to a decent stereo when I visit the kids is part of the motivation, too 😊.

Please share your stories on passing on the audiophile bug to future generations for publication in this newsletter.

Final note, I realize having the speakers on the same piece of furniture as the tube amp and turntable is not ideal - this is temporary as the kids do not have much furniture, and their new baby is still not mobile - a turntable within reach of a toddler will never work LOL.

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/>

Vinyl Record Dude <https://vinylrecorddude.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

Turntable Set-up and record cleaning:

Richard Jensen confirmed still in business

[602 717 2399](tel:6027172399) | worksbau@gmail.com

Scott Cohen- Geared more towards vintage gear, email VintageAudioReview@proton.me with device info and problem(s), and I will let you know if it is something that I think I can help you with. Located in Tucson. Your device might even be featured in a YouTube video. Confirmed in business.

Jeff's Professional Audio Repair [602-274-0794](tel:6022740794) - Also, Car Stereo work was emailed on 9/9/24 to confirm if still in business - did not hear back jparepair@yahoo.com

Re-foaming Speaker Surround Service:

Michael Mitchell 480-749-7003

mmiller43228@yahoo.com emailed on 9/9/24 to confirm if still in business - did not hear back