



Newsletter

August 2026

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President's Message

By John Harvell

Welcome to the Dog Days of Summer here in sunny Arizona. It's somewhat hard to believe that we are already through 66% of 2026. As we all get older, it certainly seems like time is getting past us and we all have limited time left on the clock. With that thought in mind, the club leadership is trying to bring you interesting events and will strive to make it easier for you to broaden your knowledge and experience on audiophile topics.

First, thanks to the 11 club members who voted on the three options for the upcoming September Cinematic Home A/V event. The three options were:

A. Comparison of integrated amp/bookshelf combinations

- B. Comparison of the entry-level lineup of the Cinematic Home A/V speaker line options: Estelon, YG Acoustics, Fyne, Totem Acoustic
- C. Comparison of the entry-level lineup of the Cinematic Home A/V amplification components: Accuphase, Esoteric, Advance Paris, Prima Luna, Hifi Rose

The voting results are as follows: By a small margin, Option B won over Option C, and Option A was a distant 3rd. I will communicate those results to John at Cinematic Home A/V and look forward to an enjoyable September event.

Second, the AAVC leadership has been discussing ways to make the club website more useful and productive for our club members. To that end, we've discussed the option to add pages that reference websites of interest and provide supporting reports and materials on topics relevant to club members. Some thoughts on topics of interest might include:

1. Links to YouTube videos that present reviews of current equipment or at least a list of audio equipment reviewers.
2. Information and vendors associated with room Acoustics, measurements, and treatment products.
3. Software and hardware systems associated with room/speaker equalization processes and tools.
4. Music listings of truly high-quality recordings which may be of interest to audiophiles

This can and will likely be a regular work in progress, and, as always, its success or failure will be strongly influenced by the support we get from you, the club members. So, how can you help? Contact one of the following people with your suggestions and recommendations, and we will try to implement your requests and interests.

- David Das - das.t@att.net has committed to helping create and support website improvements
- John Harvell - jharvell_1@cox.net is willing to help create/organize website information
- Jim Welby - catchgroove@gmail.com assembles and publishes AAVC newsletter

If you have questions or concerns you would like to discuss, please contact me so we can work through them.

All the best,
John

Friday Zoom Meetings

Every Friday there is an AAVC Weekly Audiophile Chat at 7:00 PM Arizona time. All members are welcome. See the [AAVC Website](#) for the link, or use this [link](#).

Next Meetings:

The **August event** for the Arizona Audio Visual Club will be a speaker cable comparison. The meeting will be at Faith Lutheran Church (Parish Hall - the big hall - same as last month's meeting.

The cables that will be compared are (this list has been revised/corrected from previous communications):

1. PTFE 24 conductor Kimber-like cable PTFE | air core (8Ga)
2. GR Research 24 conductor Kimber-like cable | cotton core (8Ga)
3. Belden 10 White Blue Jean Cables (10Ga)
4. Mogami 2504 star quad cable (8Ga)
5. Mogami 3082 coaxial speaker cable (14Ga)
6. Audioquest Robin Hood Silver Zero speaker cable (15 Ga)
7. Wireworld Solstice 5.2 flat conductor/geometry ofc copper (12Ga)
8. Morrow Audio SP-7 1152 conductor ofc copper cable (11 Ga)

The club welcomes attendees to submit their speaker cables for comparison and consideration. If you want to provide a pair of speaker cables for comparison, please tell us (email Paul Johnson (tachyon2go@gmail.com) the manufacturer, name, and a brief description (length, gauge, terminations, etc). Cables submitted should be between 8ft and 15ft in length, terminated in either spade lugs or banana plugs.

Future Months:

- September (date TBD) at Cinematic Home AV - John Acres to demonstrate the full Fyne Audio loudspeaker lineup.
- October - LMC Event in Scottsdale
- November Multichannel Final Speaker Demo
- December TBD 2nd Annual end of Year Club Party (Pot Luck Event)

Additional meeting ideas:

- D Agostino Meeting in Cave Creek
- Swap Meet
- Isolation Systems for Components

- DIY sound absorption panels

FINAL Model 35 Demo Event

Review by David Das

I had the pleasure of attending the FINAL Model 35 Demo Event at the Faith Lutheran Church, Parish Hall on Saturday, July 18, 2026. This event was hosted by **Ravi Velnatti**, the US distributor for FINAL speakers. He presented the flagship [Model M35](#) in red along with the [Model M15](#) in blue.



The Model M35 was released on the 35th anniversary of FINAL. It stands 83 inches tall and weighs only 66 lbs, making it the lightest full-range planar speaker in the world, extending down to 29Hz. The smaller Model M15, a step below the flagship, stands 80 inches tall and weighs only 40 lbs with a bass extension down to 40Hz.

These full-range electrostatics provide the ultimate coherence using a single-panel diaphragm with no crossovers, resulting in no slipping, loss of traction, or loss of fidelity throughout the frequency spectrum. In contrast, conventional Dynamic or Planar Magnetic Ribbon speakers, which use crossovers, reproduce the music signal with different drivers for each frequency range, made from dissimilar materials with varying masses and thicknesses.

Electrostatic speakers are much more complex to design and build than any other speaker technology, as much an art as science; ensuring even distribution

of the bias charge on the diaphragm, precisely maintaining the spacing of the stators to provide maximal and evenly distributed electrical forces on the diaphragm, and insulating the diaphragm and stators to prevent “arcing” or other high-voltage breakdowns are solved through patented innovations.

Digital Front-End

Club Secretary **David Snyder** came in early and set up his Diredta Network Audio Transport protocol, running its latest software iteration, routing bit-perfect data directly into an Oppo 205 DAC serving as the system endpoint.

Traditional Network Audio protocols drop bursty, erratic processing loads onto your endpoint, creating systemic noise and timing jitter that mask subtle details. You aren’t hearing the full resolving power of your DAC – you’re hearing the noise of the network transport.

By leveraging the Diredta protocol, David’s DIY network audio bridge shifts the heavy computational processing away from the audio endpoint. It transmits data in a predictable, continuous stream, radically minimizing power fluctuations and electromagnetic interference at the DAC.

The end result is a blacker background, holographic instrument separation, and a calm, effortless ease that allows the Final electrostatic panels to perform at their absolute limits.

Amplification

The speakers were driven by a flagship [Coda 16.0](#) 100W/channel Class A stereo power amp. They are optimized for driving Electrostatics to their fullest potential. They are stable down to 0.3 ohms and can handle the impedance dip exhibited by Electrostatics at higher frequencies.



A [Parasound Halo P6](#) was used as a preamp.



David Snyder brought his [SVS 3000 Micro REvolution](#) subwoofer to boost the bass response.



Parish Hall is a massive space measuring 25' wide x 76' long with a 9' high ceiling, making it the ideal venue for evaluating electrostatic speakers free from room modes and boundary effects.



The Demo

After a brief introduction by Club President **John Harvell**, Ravi Velnatti started off the official demo.

Ravi has been an audiophile all his life for 30 years. He moved to Arizona from Michigan a couple of years back. He worked for General Motors as an Automotive Engineer for 25 years. He has a passion for high performance cars. He visited the race tracks in Germany for calibration rides. It was a lot of fun for Ravi. He stated, "High performance cars and High-End Audio go together." They are both fast and expensive!

Electrostatic speakers are very fast. Their diaphragm is the lightest in the industry. It is 6 microns thick and so light that if you spread it in the air and let it fall it would float.

Here is a link for further reading and reference on the technologies and innovations:

[KNOWLEDGE | FINAL AUDIO](#)

Electrostatic speakers have a front stator that is positively charged and a back stator that is negatively charged. In between is the diaphragm with a conductive coating. As the music plays, this diaphragm gets attracted and repelled between the positively and negatively charged stators operating at 3000 volts. This is a simultaneous push-pull operation across the entire frequency spectrum, unlike ribbon speakers like Magnepans and Planar Magnetics, which are one-sided on some and push-pull on others!

The diaphragm is held under constant tension, allowed to move only 1 to 2mm laterally. This is why you need large panels to move enough air for reproducing all the frequencies. The lateral movement is intentionally limited to minimize distortion, which is the lowest among all speaker technologies.

Electrostatic speakers have limitations in dynamics and loudness, thanks to the limited and controlled excursion of the diaphragm, which is a limitation as well as its strength; it offers the lowest distortion of any driver technology!

However, they can be compensated for by using a subwoofer. This gives you the best of both worlds. You get to enjoy the ultimate resolution in the high and mid frequencies while your subwoofer handles the bottom end.

Final Electrostatic speakers can be purchased for the lowest price in the US compared to the global market since Ravi sells them directly to his customers. Ravi wants to build brand recognition before offering the product line to dealers. For comparison, the Model M35 retails for 32,000 Euros in Europe, whereas you can buy the same model for \$23,000 directly from Ravi in the US. Ravi wanted to keep the price below that of the [Magnepan 20.7](#), its target competitor.

Read my [full 41-page Review](#) of this event where I cover:

- High-resolution photos of all the equipment used during this event.
- Description of the gear with hyperlinks.
- Qobuz and TIDAL Playlists of all the songs that were played
- My impression of the Flagship Final Model M35 speakers at Ravi's residence.
- My closing thoughts.

Dave's Record Reviews

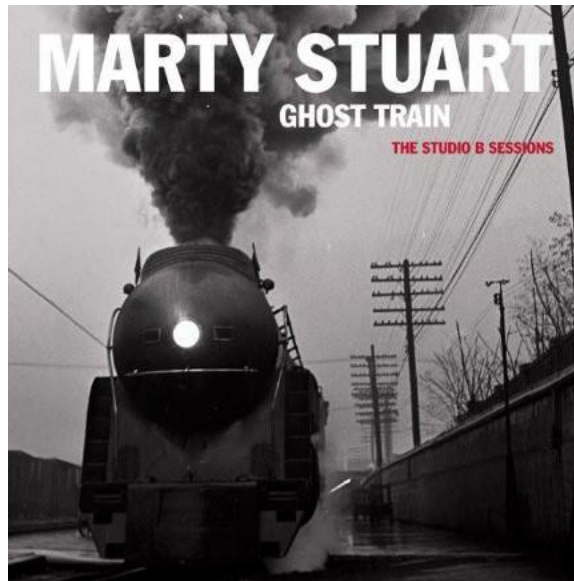
Championing worthy albums from the past that should not be forgotten...

For the AZ Audio Club, August 2026

#42

Marty Stuart – **Ghost Train**

(CD only, Sugar Hill, 2010)



I've been meaning to write a review of a Marty Stuart album for a while, and now is a very opportune time. Why? Keep reading.

In 2013 I was vaguely aware of Marty Stuart as a guy who dressed in flashy western clothes and occasionally turned out fun, rockabilly-style songs. I wasn't expecting much more than that when I decided to take in a concert of his, but... shortly after he and his band started playing it became obvious that this wasn't just another country band, but extraordinarily talented musicians. I was involved and even enthralled, pretty much riveted by every song. I have gone out of my way to attend every concert of Stuart's that I could reasonably get to ever since.

Marty Stuart started playing guitar and mandolin as a child, and was asked to join Lester Flatt's backing band in 1972, at age 14. He joined Johnny Cash's band in 1980. (He played on ***Class of '55***, an album of Cash, Carl Perkins, Ray Orbison, & Jerry Lee Lewis that was included in the second column of record reviews I wrote for the club in April of 2021.) To date he has released some 23 solo albums (and 8 compilations). He has been nominated for 16 Grammy Awards and won 5, and is a member of the Grand Ole Opry and Country Music Hall of Fame. He

formed his 3-member backing band, The Fabulous Superlatives, in 2002, and they tour with him and are on most (all?) of his subsequent albums. Stuart is a country music historian, has a large collection of related memorabilia, has published books and has books published about him, hosted a cable show on RFD-TV for 14 years, and is in the process of establishing a “Congress of Country Music” a sort of museum and library that is scheduled to open next year in his hometown of Philadelphia, Mississippi.

While Stuart is identified with the country genre, he is also known for playing and incorporating a number of styles in his performances and albums. He moves easily from country to bluegrass to rock’n’roll to western swing. He has released a gospel album, and his most recent album, 2025’s ***Space Junk***, is basically – believe it or not – instrumental surf music! Quite the versatile musician he is.

Anyway, picking one of his albums to review was somewhat difficult as most of them have excellent songs on them. Some of his older ones especially have more of a rock’n’roll tilt, which appeals to me. However ***Ghost Train***, which by my count is his 17th album, is outstanding. It is subtitled ***The Studio B Sessions***, as it was recorded in the historic RCA Studio B (which has its own Wikipedia page) that was being used as a museum when Stuart requested to use it to record this album. The album is a tribute to diverse elements of traditional country music, while still managing to be fresh and delivered very much with Stuart’s own sound.

So what’s goin’ on here, what’s the music like? Glad you asked. The album kicks off with “*Branded*,” a Stuart-penned song that harkens back to a ’70s country rock sound. The singer is, “*branded, trying to outrun a bad story everyone seems to know*.” The tempo picks up with “*Country Boy Rock & Roll*,” an old bluegrass tune with some of the flashiest pickin’ you’ll hear. Stuart trades licks with bandmate Kenny Vaughn and will give you an idea of the amazing skill that the two exhibit in live performances.

To mention just a few other of the 14 cuts on the album: “*Bridge Washed Out*” was a country hit in 1965, and performed here as one of Stuart’s more direct homages to traditional country music. “*Hummingbyrd*” is a terrific up-beat instrumental Stuart wrote in tribute to Clarence White, well-known bluegrass and country guitarist and one-time member of the Byrds – and he performs it on White’s electric guitar. “*Hangman*” is a sober song, co-written by Stuart with Johnny Cash just four days before Cash died.

“*I Run to You*” was co-written and is performed by Stuart with his wife Connie Smith. “*Porter Wagoner’s Grave*” is an interesting story of a ghostly meeting at graveside. “*Little Heartbreaker*” was co-written by Stuart with noted steel-guitar

player Ralph Mooney, who played on many country hits back in the day and is on this cut and others on this album as well. The album closes out with “*Mississippi Railroad Blues*,” a brief piece which has Stuart giving a virtuoso solo performance on the mandolin.

In the album’s booklet Stuart writes how he decided that, “...*it was long past time to play some hard-hitting country music.*” He succeeded. A number of Stuart’s albums have been released in LP format, but this unfortunately is not one of them. However he has always paid attention to the production quality of his albums, especially in later years, and the sonics of the CD are very good. The CD is available pretty cheaply on Discogs, and for those folks who persist in their disregard of the quality of physical media, it is available via streaming.

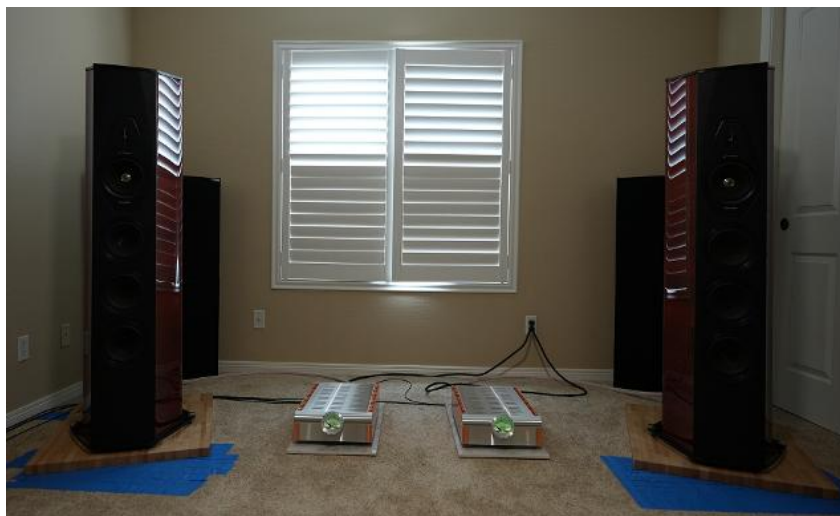
Now if you are still with me, if you have read this far and not been turned off by the fact that Stuart is known for country music and this album is very much that, you may recall that I opened this review by mentioning that this was an opportune time to review this album? The reason is because (drum roll please) Marty Stuart and His Fabulous Superlatives are playing the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts on September 27th. I have tickets for my wife and self. Dare I suggest you consider it?

(You might check out some of his videos on YouTube if it would help you make up your mind...)

John Harvell’s Sonus Faber & D’Agostino System

Review by David Das

I had the pleasure of auditioning Club President **John Harvell’s** Sonus Faber Lilium speakers on Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at his home in Chandler, Arizona.



I was mesmerized by the soundstage's resolution, dynamics, imaging, speed, punch, depth, width, and height. These speakers have a breathtaking transparency. They simply melt away when the music starts playing, leaving you positioned right within the performance where you can precisely locate every instrument on the stage grouped around the singer.

Every pluck on the guitar strings is rendered with uncanny realism, with all the upper harmonics. You can hear the complex texture of every bass note coming from the double bass. You can distinguish every note on the 7th, 9th and 13th chords played on the piano. You can appreciate the subtle changes in tonality as the bow sweeps across the strings of a violin. Every cymbal, Hi-hat, melodic toms, and triangles shine through with their distinct sonic signatures.

These speakers are like high-powered magnifying glasses that allow you to probe deep into an orchestral passage and marvel at each individual instrument, while at the same time you can let your mind relax and enjoy the interplay of the harmonies and listen to the performance as a whole.

The [Sonus Faber Liliu](#) speakers stand 74" tall and weighs in at 227 lbs. each.

These are 4 ohm speakers with a high sensitivity of 92dB. They work with amplifiers rated 100W to 800W.



They look majestic in a red high-gloss finish with black inlays and a black leather front baffle. The Liliums are priced at \$75,000 a pair and received rave reviews on [The Absolute Sound](#) and [Secrets of Home Theater and High Fidelity](#).

Driving the Liliums are a pair of Dan D'Agostino Momentum M400 monoblock power amps. These deliver 400W into 8 ohms, doubling their output to 800W at 4 ohms and doubling once again to 1,600W at 2 ohms. The Momentum M400 amplifier has been replaced in the D'Agostino Momentum lineup by the upgraded M400 MxV and, more recently, by the newly released Momentum Z monoblock amps, which retail for \$125,000 a pair.



John has kept his 2-channel reference audio system clean and simple. He is streaming high-resolution audio tracks from TIDAL managed by his custom-built ROON server into an Esoteric N-01XD SE DAC/Streamer that feeds into a Dan D'Agostino Momentum HD Preamp.

This is the Momentum HD Preamp sitting on top of the equipment rack against the back wall.



This is the Esoteric N-01XD SE DAC/Streamer. This DAC came out at the very top during our 2nd [DAC Shootout Event](#) on November 8, 2025 at Cinematic Home A/V.



This is considered as the ultimate [Network Streamer and DAC](#) that fully supports 384kHz/32-bit PCM, 22.5MHz DSD, DSF, DSDIFF, Apple Lossless, FLAC, WAV, AIFF, MP3, AAC, and MQA formats.

This device is Roon Ready and supports streaming from Qobuz, Tidal and Spotify.

John has assembled the best-sounding 2-channel reference audio system combining state-of-the-art Sonus Faber Liliu speakers with D'Agostino electronics. The synergy is magical. It is guaranteed to knock your socks off. The precision, power, resolution, and dynamics are breathtaking. The 74" tall Liliu speakers are the largest model that can be played at their full potential in John's 12' x 17' x 9' listening room. The next model, the [Sonus Faber Aida](#) would have been just too big.

John was lucky to find the Liliu speakers, D'Agostino M400 monoblocks, D'Agostino Momentum HD preamp, and the Esoteric N-01XD SE DAC/Streamer in used, pristine, flawless working condition. Purchasing them new would have cost \$232,500.

The performance of this setup exceeded all my expectations. The Sonus Faber Liliu speakers in John's listening room sounded more refined, more cohesive, with better bass control than the more expensive [Estelon Forza's](#) at Cinematic Home A/V.

This system is capable of creating a feeling of intimacy and realism with a holographic 3D space when featuring a solo performer, while the soundstage

opens up far and wide beyond the boundaries of the speakers when the spatial information is present in the recording.

I have auditioned many of the demo songs on other systems that John played. It was a completely new experience through the Lilioms. I heard so many new subtle details in the recordings. This system will allow you to rediscover your entire music library.

Previously, I had concluded that John's living room setup with [Martin Logan CLX](#) speakers was the finest electrostatics I had ever heard. I wondered how their performance could be surpassed. The Sonus Faber/D'Agostino pairing manages to excel them in every metric except the width of the soundstage.

This is a system that makes you forget the electronics and draws you deep into the music as you marvel at the brilliance of each instrument, their texture and dynamics, with the distinction and definition of every note played. I would classify this at the ultimate audiophile dream system one can assemble inside a 12' x 17' room.

This is the culmination of John's audiophile journey spanning 40 years since his college days. Every dollar spent was worth it. John loves to share his passion with fellow audiophiles. He is very generous in opening his listening room to any Club Member who may be interested in experiencing what a state-of-the-art 2-channel system can deliver.

I would strongly encourage all Club Members to attend the 2nd Annual Year End Club Party Potluck Event at John's place this December. You will get to hear your favorite tracks on this reference system and compare it with the Martin Logan CLX speakers in John's massive living space.

Read my [full 25-page Review](#) to view the high-resolution photos, a list of all 36 audiophile demo tracks that John streamed over the course of 3 hours, and a Qobuz Playlist that you can import into Roon.

This was an unforgettable experience.

Soundcave Audio Exchange

By Nick Mavrikos



So I came across the [Soundcave Audio Exchange](#) while looking on Facebook Marketplace. This used Hi-Fi dealer is located close to my home in Chandler. He is only open for general business on Saturdays between noon and 5:00 or by appointment.

About 5 weeks ago, my wife and I went out for breakfast in downtown Chandler. I realized I was close by and it was and it was a Saturday. Since it was my birthday weekend, I was able to convince my wife to stop by with me. I wasn't looking to purchase anything, just wanted to check out the shop and meet a fellow audiophile.

Mike Amore's shop is located in the back of a business complex. The shop is relatively small, and when I got there, Mike seemed to be bringing in a shipment of various used speakers. I introduced myself, and Mike was very friendly. I proceeded to show him photos of my setup and a list of my gear. Then I asked them about himself, and he told me about his shop. I don't remember the details of how he started his business, but it was started more as a hobby, and he has been doing it for some time now.

His shop had a variety of speakers and components, both newer and vintage. My impression was that it was more modern gear than vintage, but it was a mix of both. He had both solid-state and tube gear from many different brands, all high quality and well-respected.

As I said, he was quite friendly but busy bringing in gear, and there were quite a few customers there at the time, and he was getting ready to demo some speakers for one of his regular clients. He did spend a good amount of time with me showing me all the items he had to offer. His prices seem very reasonable, and I was impressed by one he had to offer. But I just wasn't looking for anything at the time.

I also told them about our club, and he said he was aware and had thought about joining us. I suggested maybe it's possible to get him on the list of local dealers that we have at the end of our monthly newsletter (editor's note: the shop has been added to the Dealers' Corner below). He handed me a bunch of his business cards and told me to feel free to look around and to please let him know if I had any questions.



While he was busy with other customers, I met his business partner, and we exchanged phone numbers. He was very knowledgeable about tube gear and proceeded to show me some of the offerings they had in the store. I had to depart shortly after that since my wife was waiting in the car. I definitely would consider visiting Mike and his shop if you're interested in some quality Hi-Fi gear and do not want to pay the higher price for new gear.



WASTING TIME ON THE INTERNET

By Jim Welby

Editor's Note: The original inspiration for “wasting time on the internet,” club member David Hjortland, sent me some great memes that might appeal to music lovers and audiophiles last month - here are some more:





My Diretta Journey

By Jim Welby

This is the final installment of my adventure in perfecting my digital listening experience. In the first installment (see [June Newsletter](#)), with the help of club member David Snyder, I explained why, without the right tools, you can't fully take advantage of streaming and introduced David's three-tier topology based on the Diredta protocol. My second installment (see July Newsletter) was my introduction to Roon. This final installment is about implementing David's DIY Diredta solution.

I ordered two Raspberry Pi computers and other supplies. David Snyder has produced a [step-by-step instructional video](#) on turning the Raspberry Pi computers into Diredta host and target devices and integrating them with a Roon server. It was not hard, but it requires some level of comfort with computers. I am not particularly technically skilled, and I pulled it off. I ran into a few speed bumps: some self-induced (because I didn't follow the recipe or was ignorant), and some because technology sometimes doesn't work the way it is supposed to. I am going to skip the gory details and focus on how it sounds.

First, my comparison point: I have been using a Roon server with a Bluesound Node with a Schiit Mimir DAC and was fully satisfied. In fact, I was fully satisfied with using Tidal's native app with the Node too. I was not really getting that

value of Roon, but I knew it was necessary to take an inexpensive leap of faith with David's DIY Diretta solution.

My setup allows me to easily compare the Roon/Bluesound Node to the Roon/Diretta host and target - not quite an A/B switch, but pretty close. I primarily listen via headphones because I live in an open-concept apartment-style condo in Minneapolis.

The Diretta solution is better, but subtly better. I started this audiophile hobby when vinyl LPs were the primary standard, and I have a bias toward analog's warmth, but I also disdain vinyl's surface noise and distortion. CDs are generally harsh. The Diretta solution sounds like a pristine, well-mixed, quality-pressed vinyl record. Diretta sounds clearer, that is, sharper without being harsher. I feel like the Diretta really shines with Redbook (16-bit/44.1 kHz FLAC) streams. Because I listen primarily with headphones, Diretta's analog-like warmth is really easy on my ears. Implementing David's DIY Diretta solution is a great return on investment (roughly \$500 and a little sweat equity), and I highly recommend it to all streamers in the club.

Paul Johnson's Playlist

Glen Hansard | Didn't He Ramble | Rhythm And Repose (Deluxe Edition) | All That Was East Is West Of Me Now | Don't Settle Vol 1 & 2 (Live) | Set List (Live)

The Swell Season | The Swell Season | Factory Street Balls | Stuck In reverse | Once (Soundtrack)

Jerry Joseph & The Jack Mormons | Panther Tracks Vol 1 & 2 | The Beautiful Madness

Beirut | Artifacts | A Study of Losses | Gallipoli

Kim Beggs | Whiskeytown | Alive and Well in My Dreams | Bury Me Inside Your Heart | On Christmas Time

Naïm Amor | The Western Suite and The Siesta Songs | Tucson Safari | Soundtracks I, II, III, IV

Jon Batiste | Monk Meditations | Monk Movements | Black Mozart

Neil Young & The Chrome Hearts | Second Song

Ray Wylie Hubbard | Reel 2 Reel 4 Real

John Carpenter | Cathedral

Margaret Glaspy | I Am Both

Bill Withers | Live At Carnegie Hall

Tom Tom Club | Let There Be Love (Box set)

The Rat Pack | Live At The Sands | A Night On The Town | All That Jazz

Rain Parade | Emergency Third Rail Power Trip | Last Rays of a Dying Sun | Live in Japan at Tsubaki House

Thea Gilmore | Thea Gilmore | Strange Communion | Small World Turning | These Quiet Friends

The Tallest Man On Earth | Henry St. | Too Late for Edelweiss | I Love You It's a Fever Dream

Phoebe Bridgers | Lost Weekend

Raul Malo | Bella Ciao : Live in Nashville

Charles Berthoud | This is not A.I. | The New Age of Solo Bass

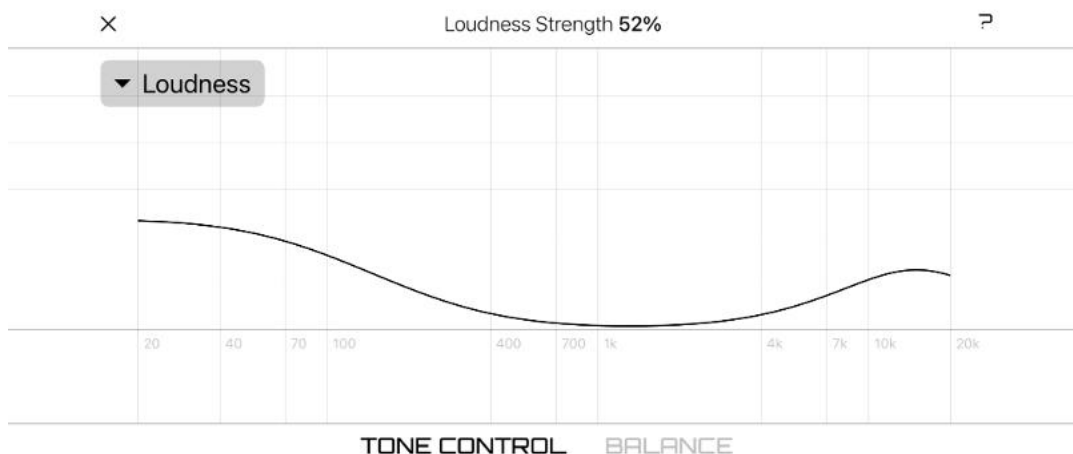
Bonobo | Distance in Static

Loudness Button

By Jim Welby (inspired by David Snyder)

Back in the day, it was common to have a “loudness button” on integrated amps, receivers, and preamps. I always thought the term “loudness” was an odd choice because the purpose of the loudness button was to enhance the equipment's sound at lower volumes. Back in the day, I was ignorant as to this purpose of the loudness button - I just could tell that it made things louder, especially on the low end.

I had been thinking about loudness recently, as the Schiit Mimir DAC I purchased included a digital tone control plug-in (Forkbeard) that offered loudness. Now that I am a more experienced audiophile, I understand the purpose of loudness, and it is a really important feature to me as I like to listen to music at low volumes. The loudness feature on my Schiit Mimir is wonderful - it makes my stereo sound much fuller at the lower volumes I enjoy listening at. The fact that it is adjustable is even better - I generally find I like setting it at 50% - 100% is way too much bass for my ears.



UI for Schiit Forkbeard loudness control

But I really had no idea why loudness is pleasing. I assume it was just a random equalizer curve designed to enhance the bass. Out of the blue, AAVC member David Snyder texted me about a project he was working on to incorporate a loudness feature in his DIY digital streaming solution. David provided me [a link to the project](#) (here is an additional [link](#) to the companion web app David published), and as part of that documentation, there was a technical explanation of loudness. He also included [a video](#) by the successful (nearly half a million subscribers) audiophile YouTuber Randy Parker (whose YouTube channel is [cheapaudioman](#)) on the subject.

It turns out that loudness is not random at all, but a feature that is intentional and backed by science. I won't try to duplicate what David's documentation and the YouTube video say, but the short explanation is that loudness is designed to counteract the human ear's natural loss of sensitivity to low and high frequencies at lower volume levels (based on the Fletcher-Munson / ISO 226 curves). Mastering engineers generally use a reference level of 83-85 dB when assessing tonal balance and EQ in the studio. To hear what they intended, we must either use the same reference level for playback or compensate for how human hearing perceives low and high frequencies differently at our preferred

volume level. If your interest is piqued, I recommend you watch the video and read David's document.

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/>

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

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

New addition to list August 2026: Soundcave Audio Exchange (used)
<https://soundcaveaudioexchange.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:

Tim Hoffman is an AAVC member and the owner of Arizona Audio Video Electronics
(<http://www.azvideoelectronics.com>).

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](mailto:602.717.2399) | worksbau@gmail.com

Scott Cohen- geared more towards vintage gear. Email [**VintageAudioReview@proton.me**](mailto:VintageAudioReview@proton.me) with device info and problem(s), and I will let you know if I think I can help. Located in Tucson. Your device might even be featured in a YouTube video.

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

Re-foaming Speaker Surround Service:
Michael Mitchell 480-749-7003
mmiller43228@yahoo.com