



# Newsletter

February 2024

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- Cinematic Home A/V - *This is a long and detailed review by Dave Das is worth your time to read. It concerns an excellent January AAVC event at a top-notch A/V Valley showroom/store, including home theater and two-channel stereo demos.*

## President's Message

By AAVC President John Harvell

All Currently Active AAVC Members (paid up during 2025): **Please vote for the 2025 Club Officers Before the February 27th** Club Meeting at the Church. Note: The position of club president has two candidates this year, so please vote for the person you would like to see as club president. The election of club officers will be completed prior to and during the 27 February general meeting. The steering committee and club officers work behind the scenes to plan events, publish newsletters, and bring members together around our shared interest in fine audio and video playback. If you cut and paste the following link into the browser of your choice, it should bring you to the 2025 Ballot document:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSesrurC80aIeZ9v\\_qSBcVTqtTf9qsqm8wzVTVzCIvd8en25Bw/viewform?usp=dialog](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSesrurC80aIeZ9v_qSBcVTqtTf9qsqm8wzVTVzCIvd8en25Bw/viewform?usp=dialog)

NOTE: Just clicking on this link does not get you to the Ballot as it used to... so I suggest pasting the link into your browser. This does appear to work correctly.

Those prior club members who have not sent in their **membership dues yet for 2025** should do that now to maintain their current membership status. If you have not done that you are not eligible to participate in club meetings or to vote on club leadership roles.

The previous meeting at **Cinematic Home AV on January 16th, 2025**, was a huge hit for those who attended. If you haven't had a chance to get out there yet, you should seriously consider a visit. It's worth it. John Akers is a co-owner/creator of this new store at 10,658 N 32nd St., Phoenix, AZ 85028. They can also be reached at 602-796-4127. See a review of the event at the end of this newsletter.

Please keep stories, reviews, and suggestions coming to our **club newsletter** editor (Jim Welby) at [catchgroove@gmail.com](mailto:catchgroove@gmail.com).

Please attend the **next scheduled club event** where the Chesky Audio LC1 speakers will be demonstrated on **Feb 27, 2025**, starting at 7 pm at Faith Hall, 801E Camelback Rd., Phoenix, AZ. Note: These are 3D-printed speakers designed by Lucca Chesky. Lucca designed these Speakers himself with the help of Dr. Edgar Choueiri (BACCH) & Sandy Gross (Polk Audio, Definitive Technology, & Golden Ear). He used his Dad's recordings to help voice these speakers, a big hit at Capital Audio Fest and will be at future showings. This event will include a Zoom session with the designer, during which the designer can ask questions. I hope to see you all out there.

Best regards, and share your listening experiences!

## Future Meetings

**February** - Thursday, February 27th, from 7-9 pm, the club will meet at the Church (Faith Hall) to demonstrate [Cheskey Audio's](#) new printed speaker design. Music choices provided by club members will be streamed through the Church WiFi and played through examples of the Cheskey Audio speakers.

**March - Amp Comparison** - Saturday, March 22 at Faith Luther Church (time TBD)

- [CODA](#) A-A/B
- [Benchmark](#) A/B
- [Burmester 911 Mk3](#)

Amps will use digital source material (streaming/DAC/SACD) and will be played through [Final](#) speakers.

**April** - Date and time TBD - [USA Tube Audio](#) meet and greet with discussion/demonstration of equipment available from this store.

## **May - Date and time TBD AAVC Swap Meet**

The Arizona Audio Video Club proposes hosting an Audio / Video Component Swap Meet in May 2025 at Faith Lutheran Church (our typical AAVC meeting spot at 7th St and Camelback Ave.). Possible weekend dates would be Saturday the 17th, the 24th, or the 31st. The actual time start and end time are TBD; questions of potential participants to be asked are;

- Would the proposed date(s) be amenable to club members? If so, which Saturday weekend?
- What type of equipment would members have for sale, and what are the respective conditions and pricing?
- Club member components offered for sale could be posted on the AAVC website before the event to gather prior interest. Please provide pictures, descriptions, and a familiar grading scale if interested.
- Tables and seating would be provided for club members wishing to sell equipment. Please bring any ancillary components if you want to demonstrate equipment.

The AAVC club will NOT facilitate monetary accommodations (PayPal, Zelle, etc.) or warranties regarding purchased, traded, or sold components. All sales and trades are the sole responsibility of the respective individuals.

If enough interest is acquired within one month before the proposed swap meet, the steering committee will proceed with facilitating it. The Steering Committee assumes everyone in this club has something they wish to trade or sell; we welcome your thoughts and comments concerning this event.

Please send any inquiries, comments, or concerns to Paul Johnson at [tachyon2go4u2@gmail.com](mailto:tachyon2go4u2@gmail.com)

## **June - Date and time TBD - Presentation and Q&A with speaker designer [Maarten Smits](#) of **Final Audio****

If you have an idea for a club meeting, please share it with the club's president, John Harvell ([jharvell\\_1@cox.net](mailto:jharvell_1@cox.net)), or the Newsletter Editor, Jim Welby ([catchgroove@gmail.com](mailto:catchgroove@gmail.com)).

## **Turntable Modification**

By Greg Wann

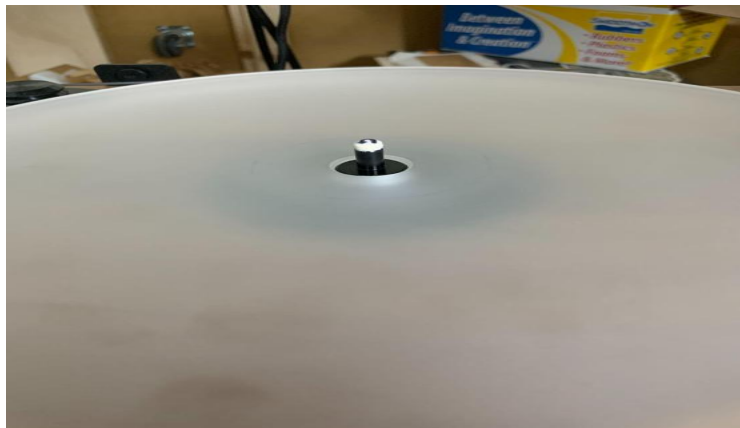
Since making improvements on my record cleaner spindle (see last month's AAVC Newsletter), I wondered how I could improve the spindle on my new Uturn turntable?! My idea was to make the tip soft and illuminated. I tried to give the company my latest

idea, but they were uninterested. If I were building turntables, I would be! I also suggested a fiber optic light for people with vision problems (audiophiles tend to be old). They were not interested in that either!

I set about how to do it. For five bucks each, I bought the spindle from Uturn to experiment with and not use my own. I have a selection of K&S brass hobby tubing. I found one with the same diameter as the spindle and cut a short length. Dipping the end of the tube in the Polytek created a small dome.

I then set out to add their logo on the tip. This was not easy. I Copied the logo but then had to reduce its size to fit on the tip! That took a while! What was more difficult was cutting it out so that it looked decent, and that required a lot of practice with an X-Acto hobby knife. My master part of this was finally on two thicknesses of printer paper. Centered and glued on, I made a silicone mold of my completed master spindle piece that is about 3/8 inch tall.

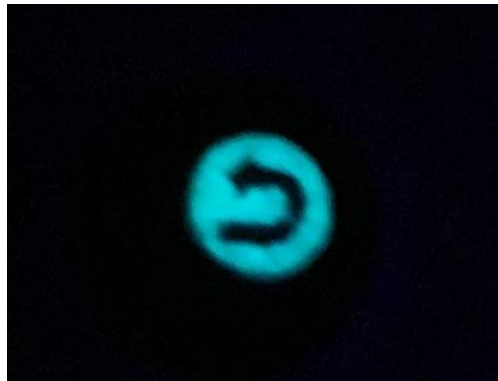
I used several pieces of K&S tube to make the hole in my TT spindle part, which they sent me, smaller to keep it centered - this tube fits together like an old radio antenna. I drilled a small hole, not very deep, and glued a short, small brass rod in it. After some other fiddling, I thought I built a small shelf out of plastic with a hole in it that my TT spindle fit in, which would be the proper depth into the small master mold that I had made. My mold was made from a two-part silicone I use to make resin-cast scale model car parts. This Polytek mix included white dye and blue glow-in-the-dark powder to make what you see here. I used a black felt pen to color the logo black. I have a FB page called Holy Grail Resin Model Parts. I make model car tires using Polytek and black dye.



Side view



Top view



Glow in the dark view

## Dave's Record Reviews

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

For the AZ Audio Club by David Hjortland

#24

Nicolette Larson – **Rose of My Heart** (MCA, LP only, 1986)



So, like, when was the last time you put on an album that you weren't quite sure of, didn't know what to expect from, maybe didn't have much hope for, and it grabbed you by the ears so that you had to pay attention and come to the realization that, hey – this is great stuff! If you have any susceptibility whatsoever for well-done pop/rock/country music, this outwardly unassuming album has that capability. This, music fans, is great stuff.

Nicolette Larson (1952-97) worked her way up the California music scene in the 70's, singing backup for many well-known artists both in studios and live on stage. Her career got a big boost in 1977 when Linda Ronstadt recommended her to Neil Young. That led to her being signed to Warner Brothers Records, one of the biggest music companies of the day. Her first solo album, **Nicolette**, was released in 1978. An interesting mix of different styles of music, it did reasonably well and the critics loved it. (Ronstadt sang backup vocals on it if anyone wants to know.) Personally, I found it to be a solid debut, though the material could have been stronger and her vocals definitely got better on her later albums.

Her next, follow-up albums did not live up to expectations, however, though I always considered that her fourth album, 1981's **Radioland**, was pretty good. The album at hand, **Rose of My Heart**, was her seventh, and her second for MCA. It's a bit uneven, but for my money, it's her best, and the best cuts on it are *really* good.

Ostensibly a country album – note Nicolette's shirt on the cover – it was one of two supposedly "country" albums that she did for MCA. Kinda sorta-maybe. I suppose there are a few cuts you could shrug your shoulders and agree they fit into that category. For my part, if labels there must be, I would call it pop/rock with an occasional nod to country. An excellent supporting cast was with Nicolette for this outing. The names I recognize among the credits are Steve Wariner, Dave Loggins (second cousin to Kenny), Deborah Allen, Harry Stinson, and... Linda Ronstadt. Perhaps you might recognize others – one never knows.

The album leads strongly, with the upbeat "*I Won't Give Up*." Punchy and spare, this is as much of an out-and-out rocker as it gets on this album. The tempo slows

considerably for the next cut, “*That’s How You Know When Love’s Right*,” a schlocky radio-ready duet ballad with Warner that was the most successful hit on the album. It’s... OK, I guess. Well, not really, but the next cut, “*If Only For One Night*” is one of the album’s best – a duet with Dave Loggins on a song he co-wrote with another guy. Now THIS is more like it! It opens with some light percussion, then Nicolette comes in with a soulful rendition of the refrain, background singers come in, then Loggins’ vocal comes around, and the song is just... impressive.

“*If I Didn’t Love You*” is another strong song, but not because it is rock’n’roll. Here you have well-done pop, performed with deep hooks, vocal harmonies, tight backing, and clean production – all the elements you could ask for in a mid-80s love anthem. I doubt that it would impress on, say, a car radio or boom box, but on a good audio rig it’s worthwhile. “*Captured by Love*,” the only song crediting Larson as a writer, has a fiddle part that admittedly lends a country twang to the proceedings, but hey – you won’t mind that a bit as this song jumps briskly and engagingly along.

There are other really good things on the record, as well as a couple of not-so-good ones. The last cut, “*You’re Running Wild*,” is a dirge-like song with country steel guitar which... I will be charitable and just call it unnecessary.

Picking a favorite song might be tough. For me, it’s the cut, “*That’s More About Love (Than I Wanted to Know)*.” Every so often I come across a song that seems to have everything going for it – it’s well-written, with great vocals, excellent backing, good production, and everything just comes together for an overall great impression. The word *crafted* comes to mind, and it certainly fits this song.

As a whole this is a really fine, enjoyable album, a good listen. It should have done more for Larson’s career than it apparently did – I believe this was her last album for a major label. But Nicolette Larson – and this album – definitely should not be forgotten. She died in 1997 at age 45, far too young. She left behind a recorded legacy of some eight albums, though as is so often the case her discography leaves a little room for interpretation.

LP is the only format Discogs seems to acknowledge the existence of – which is fine by me – and copies are listed for sale there for cheap/reasonable. Unfortunately, it is not available on streaming services (I checked Tidal and Spotify) I would note that Wikipedia mentions a 2012 CD release that’s a 2-album set with Nicolette’s previous 1985 album, **...Say When**. That, by the way, has some really nice things on it, though it doesn’t achieve *quite* the level **Rose** does.

## Play Dates

By Jim Welby

I am a relatively new club member. My wife and I are retired snowbirds (we summer in Minneapolis and winter in Phoenix). I used to belong to an Audio club in Minneapolis, but that club has unfortunately disappeared. So I was happy to discover that there was a club in The Valley. I attended a few meetings and got roped into joining the steering committee and, last fall, agreed to become the Newsletter editor.

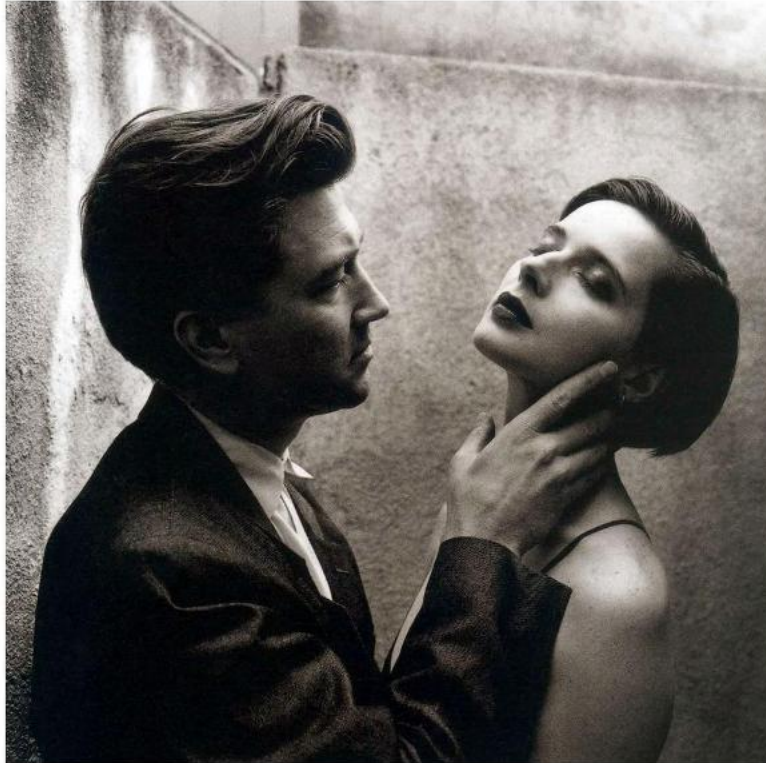
One of the things that I enjoy about the AAVC is that we have informal listening sessions in members' homes. I recently [went to Greg Hann's Audio shrine](#) for a one-on-one with Greg and his rig - I had missed the club event at Greg's place as I was still in Minneapolis (see the December newsletter for David Das' excellent review of the event). Then I went to David Hjortland's place. I am scheduled to go to John Harvell's place later this month. It is an absolute joy to hang around with a fellow audiophile and share our passion for our hobby.

My wife humorously labeled these sessions as **“play dates”** - like we used to do with our kids when they were little (they are 34 and 35 now). But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that play dates are a pretty good term - we get together and **play** music.

I encourage members to participate in these play dates with other club members!

## **The Sounds Behind the Visions - The Music of David Lynch**

By Barrett Strong



David Lynch and Isabella Rossellini c 1987

When David Lynch passed away this January, I knew I should do a piece on his music. His films are relatively well-known, but the importance of sound in them cannot be overstated. I started researching and listening through his catalog of studio albums, collaborations, soundtracks, and singles and was immediately overwhelmed. We live in a time where almost everything created in the last 100 years is available at our fingertips instantly. The challenge we face in choice in the flood of content is how to find quality in quantity. No one can keep up with the present, much less experience the best of the past. It's impossible, of course, but it's still worth trying.

In the three weeks, I listened to every track and watched every video I could to prepare for this piece. I read several articles released about his legacy, even some specifically on his musical contributions, all by better writers than myself. Perhaps my task is not to biograph or speculate on who he was, what his art meant, or how it influenced our culture but to help provide a manageable overview of the sound behind his vision with an emphasis on what might interest club members. Due to the size of his body of work, I will pare it down to what I think are the best audiophile tracks from just a portion of the 17 albums he either wrote, collaborated, or played on.

- 1989 “*Falling*” by Julie Cruise on her album “*Floating into the Night*”. Those opening four notes. The *Twin Peaks* phenomenon. I loved it. A tuned-down electric guitar and the slightest cymbal meter are 30 feet away to the left in a very large room; keyboards come in the center at 20. Julie is maybe 10 feet away

but also everywhere at once. Incredible transparent soundstage. It is soothing yet ominous.

- 1998 “*Et Idio*” by Jocylyn Montgomery on her album “***Lux Vivens.***” Celtic angel funk. Who knew? Also “***Kyrie***” is a beautiful traditional prayer performed in gorgeous church acoustics.
- 2001 “*Go Get Some*” by David Lynch’s band Blue Bob in which he plays slide lap guitar and invents a genre of music now called Industrial Blues. Plodding bass and psychedelic guitar under ominous clouds. As decadent as it gets.
- 2010 “*Chrome Optimism Oxygene Dub Pt. 4*” by Dubblestandart featuring Lee Scratch Perry. Art of Noise meets Dubstep meets David Lynch. For a realistic Lee Scratch Perry sound, turn your bass up. Way up.
- 2011 “*This Train*” by Chrystabell on her album “***This Train.***” Locomotive sounds in each channel play off each other creating a hypnotic backdrop to her gorgeous voice.
- 2013 “*The Big Dream*” by David Lynch from his album “***The Big Dream.***” The sub-50 Hz bass drone lays the foundation for David’s cavernous vocals and instruments that play fragments of melodies that waver out of focus, like images in a dream.
- 2018 – “*Summer Night Noises*” by David Lynch and Angelo Badalamenti on their album “***Thought Gang.***” A 9-minute audio journey from tiny creatures that flutter and scramble in the darkness to the terrifying arrival of thundering leviathans.
- 2024 – “*You Know the Rest*” by Chrystabell and David Lynch on their album “***Cellophane Memories.***” Intimate vocals begin to tell a story, but additional reversed vocals start layering on top, creating a feeling of time going in both directions. The past and present dance together tenderly. Meaning is elusive as we get only glimpses between periods of disorientation. You know there are words, but only small portions can be understood. Time loses its linear grip, and we are cast adrift. It’s hard to both keep up with the present and, at the same time, experience the past. Understanding may in fact be impossible, but it’s still worth trying - kind of like a David Lynch film, kind of like life.



David Lynch 1946-2025

## **Vintage AV Receiver A/B Test/Comparison Club Event in Tucson**

By Scot Cohen

Thanks to everyone for showing up on Saturday, February 1, 2025, particularly those who drove down from the Phoenix area. There were 25 at the event at one point or another. And, of course, a big thanks to Richard Skrill for hosting it again and providing an opportunity for some on-the-spot troubleshooting of the Paragon system. I don't know what was going on, but when I got the C22 home and tested it, it did have both channels working.... And a nice shout out to Ian for being the guy who helped develop "audio friendships" amongst many of the attendees.

I told folks who asked that Ian provided me with two vintage receivers from the 70's, which is true. Ian brought them over during the week, and when I re-measured them, one of them, an ONKYO TX4500, did not have a close enough frequency response to the other receiver, even after playing with the bass/treble controls. I pulled out an NAD3130 integrated amp from the garage, but it was acting up, as was another Receiver (Yamaha RX100) I had, so I went to something else - which you will see in a moment.

As for the set-up, my HiFi Walker H20Pro DAP played a .wav file with 7 tracks a bit over a minute long. The output of the DAP went into a 4' stereo cable with a 1/8" jack on one end and RCA jacks on the other end. The right and left RCA connectors are each plugged into an RCA "Y" cable adapter, whose outputs then go into the respective inputs of the devices under test through a 1.5m RCA cable. The speaker outputs of each of the devices were connected to the A/B (B-C) Switch Box, whose outputs went to the JBL 250Ti speakers. The RCA/speaker cables used to connect each device were the same type. Once everything was set up in the room, I played 1khz, 440hz, and 200hz

test tones with my multimeter hooked up to the speaker loaded output and ensured that the volume levels between the two devices were at the same voltage levels.

I didn't hear any complaints about the music track selections or the listening level of the music, which was good.

Finally, I am ready to get to the results- question #5 says it all: "Whose overall sound did you prefer more?"

- 26% Chose B
- 52% Chose C
- 22% said, "About the same."

C also received the higher % of votes for the other four questions. C was the fan favorite, so to speak, though "About the same" was often higher, a higher % than B for many of the questions. So what were B & C? Here they are:

- The Yamaha CR1020 receiver from 1978 (70w/8ohms) was "B"
- The very small [Aiyima A08Pro](#) class D integrated amp with the glowing meter (sitting on top of Ian's HK230e receiver, which I brought to return to him) rated at about 50w/8ohms was "C."



**AIYIMA**

Bluetooth® 5.0 Qualcomm® aptX™ HD



The Yamaha weighs about 41 lbs and the Aiyima about 3 lbs with the power supply. Ian knew that the CR1020 was being used but did not know about the switch I made. I will use this material for an upcoming video, which will be out in a month or so (we will include a link in next month's AAVC newsletter).

Thanks again for participating, and we will do another one later this year.

## Member Playlist

By Paul Johnson

Here is a list of artists I am listening to that you might enjoy. I have refrained from descriptions. Instead, I will list the artist and the album release. In every case, one can access their music on streaming services (Qobuz, Bandcamp, YouTube, Apple, Tidal etc.). With that said, I hope you find something listed here that puts a smile on your face. A cool website for watching music live performances is [NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts](#) (Tower of Power is a great start).

- Waxahatchee (Katie Crutchfield) – Tigers Blood
- Phoebe Bridgers – Punisher
- Lana Del Rey – Chem Trails Over The Country Club
- Songs Of Our Native Daughters (Rhiannon Giddens, Amythyst Kiah, Leyla McCalla, Allison Russell)
- Ryan Bingham – Mescalito
- Lucinda Williams – Blessed
- The Ghost of Johnny Cash – (Qobuz)

- Lord Huron – Strange Trails
- Darrell Scott – Sings the Blues Of Hank Williams
- Sharon Jones – I Learned The Hard Way
- Chris Whitley – Living With The Law
- John Hiatt – Bring the Family – Little Head
- Leonid And Friends (A Chicago Cover Band From Ukraine) – Chicagovich Vol. 1, 2 or 3 (Their videos are amazing)
- Sons of Kemet – Black To The Future
- Little Feat – Rhino Remasters of
  - Sailin’ Shoes
  - Feats Don’t Fail Me Now
  - Dixie Chicken
- Muete (An Acoustic Techno Marching Band) – Live in Paris (Their videos are way cool, Thanks Ed)
- Nine Inch Nails – Pretty Hate Machine (Be careful with this release; it is not safe for work)
- Jason Isbell – Weathervanes – Live From Alabama
- Drive-By Truckers
  - Brighter Than Creations Dark
  - Go Go Boots
  - The Dirty South
- John Moreland
  - Visitor
  - Birds In The Ceiling
  - Big Bad Luv
- Otis Taylor
  - Hey Joe Opus
  - Fantasizing About Being Black
- Rodrigo Y Gabriela
  - In Between Thoughts
  - Rodrigo Y Gabriela
  - Mettavolution (Don’t miss a live concert!)
- Calexico (Tucson Musicians)
  - The Black Light
  - Algiers
  - El Mirador
- Son Of The Velvet Rat
  - Ghost Ranch
  - Dorado
  - Animals
- The Tallest Man On Earth
  - The Tallest Man On Earth
  - Too Late For Edelweiss
- Jeremie Albino – Our Time In The Sun
- Kevin Gordon – The In Between

- Kevin Gilbert
  - Thud
  - Kevin Gilbert Performs Toy Matinee Live

More next month, stay tuned.

## **Cinematic Home A/V**

Review by David Das

I had the pleasure of attending the Cinematic Home A/V Event hosted for AAVC by owner John Akers and his family on January 16, 2025. There showroom is located at 10658 N 32nd St, Phoenix, AZ 85028. The event started at 5pm and lasted through 8pm.



Almost half of our lucky club members got the unique opportunity to experience a truly state of the art dedicated Home Theater as well as a high-end 2-channel Audio system using reference grade components.

As we walked in we saw this welcome banner displayed on an 85" Sony Bravia 4K TV.



John's wife had arranged a delicious spread of refreshments for the evening:



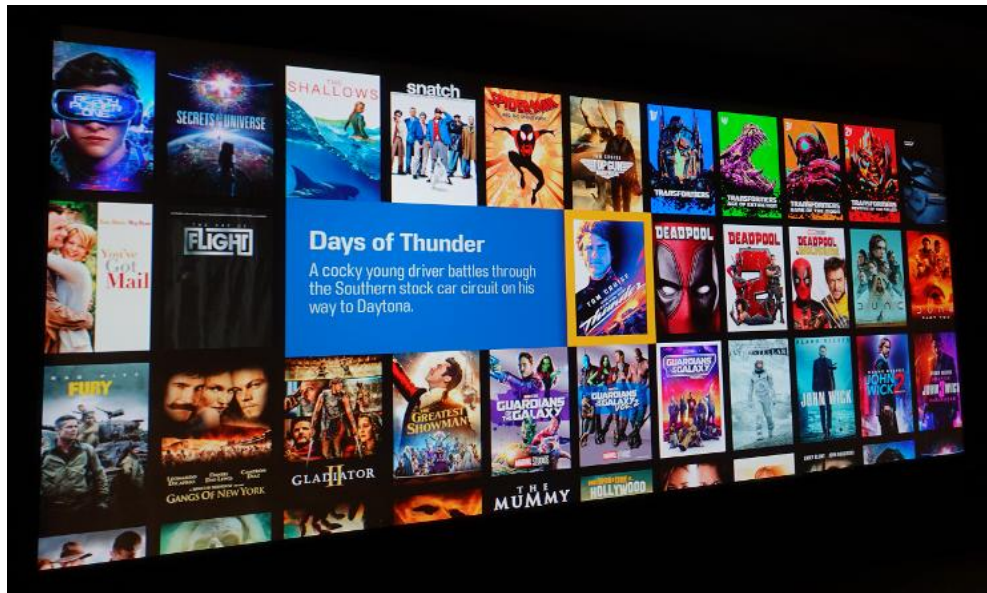
John split the 3-hour demo into two parts. The first part was a demo of his Reference Home Theater setup with an explanation of each component followed by an extended audition of several of his 2-channel audiophile systems.

### **11.6.6. Reference Home Theater Demo**

As I entered this 16' wide by 20' long dedicated Home Theater I was impressed with the clean décor. There were no exposed speakers visible on any walls. My eyes were immediately drawn to the super bright 14' wide x 7' tall display stretched all across the front wall.



The text was razor sharp all across the screen and the picture filled your peripheral vision as you sat on the couch 14 feet away.



Even as you walked up close at arm's length to the screen, you could not see any visible pixels. The fine black dots you see are the perforations on the acoustically transparent screen.



John began his demo with a clip from the movie '**FORD v FERRARI**.'

I was completely transported into the scene of the visceral action with the 360 degree surround sound enveloping my senses. For a moment, I completely forgot about the \$500,000 worth of electronics powering this audio-visual magic. I felt I was in the movie as a spectator watching this heart-pounding car ride unfold before my eyes. I did not want this clip to end.

I guess this is the true test of a Reference Home Theater system. It fools you into believing you are actually in the movie as it draws you into the storyline with its stunning picture clarity and surround sound.

The second clip John played was from the movie '**A QUIET PLACE.**' This revealed the magic of surround sound with pinpoint accuracy. You felt you were standing right beside Emily Blunt in the basement scene.

The third clip was from the movie '**PASSENGERS.**' It gave you a sense of moving around in a vast empty space. The black level and shadow details were impressive.

The fourth clip was the scene from the song "*Never Enough*" from the movie '**THE GREATEST SHOWMAN.**' This was the most revealing clip that showcased how well this system excelled at multi-channel audio with musical content.



I felt I was part of the audience in the arena experiencing the full range of emotions from this singer.

The last clip was from the movie '**FURY.**' This was the perfect clip to showcase the sheer dynamic range of the 23 speakers in the room. You could hear as well as feel the impact of tank shells exploding as they hit their targets.

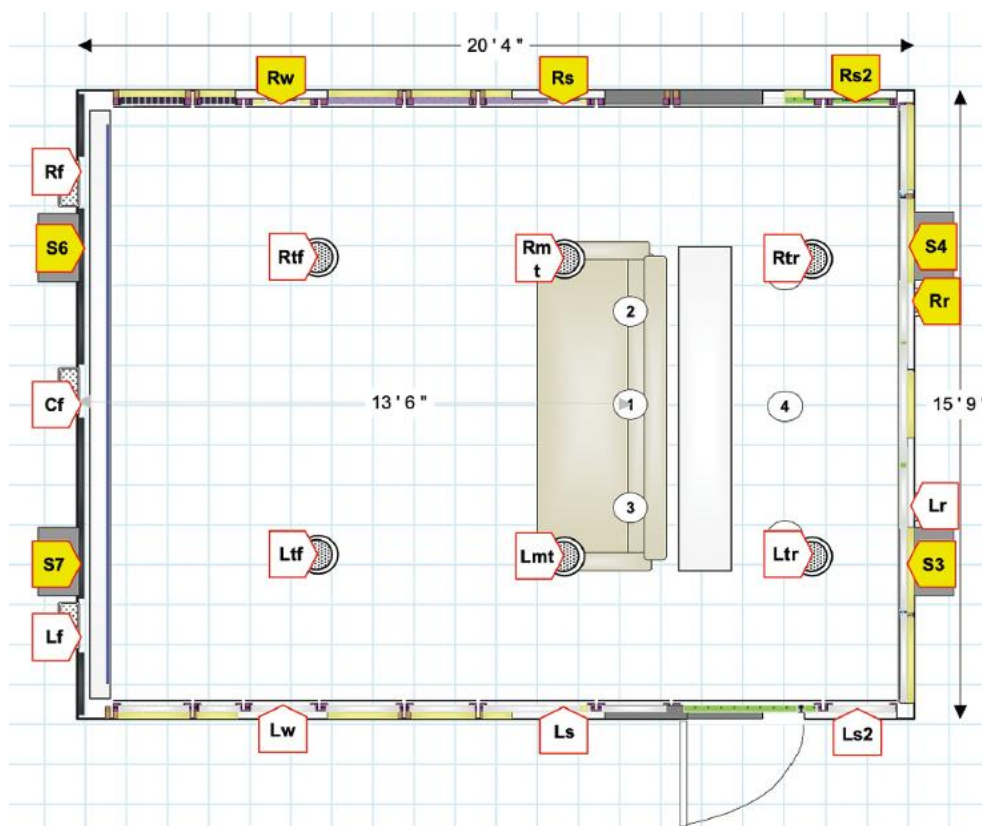
John had carefully selected these 6 movie clips to showcase the extreme levels of performance his Reference Home Theater is capable of.

I have seen all 6 movies in the theaters. This was a totally different experience. The picture was sharper and a lot brighter. The immersive surround sound was more precise in its positioning, clarity and exhibited an effortless dynamic range.

How was John able to exceed a typical Dolby Atmos Theater experience that you get at your local multiplex within a residential setting? Let's explore! John was kind enough to furnish the room schematics of his Home Theater.

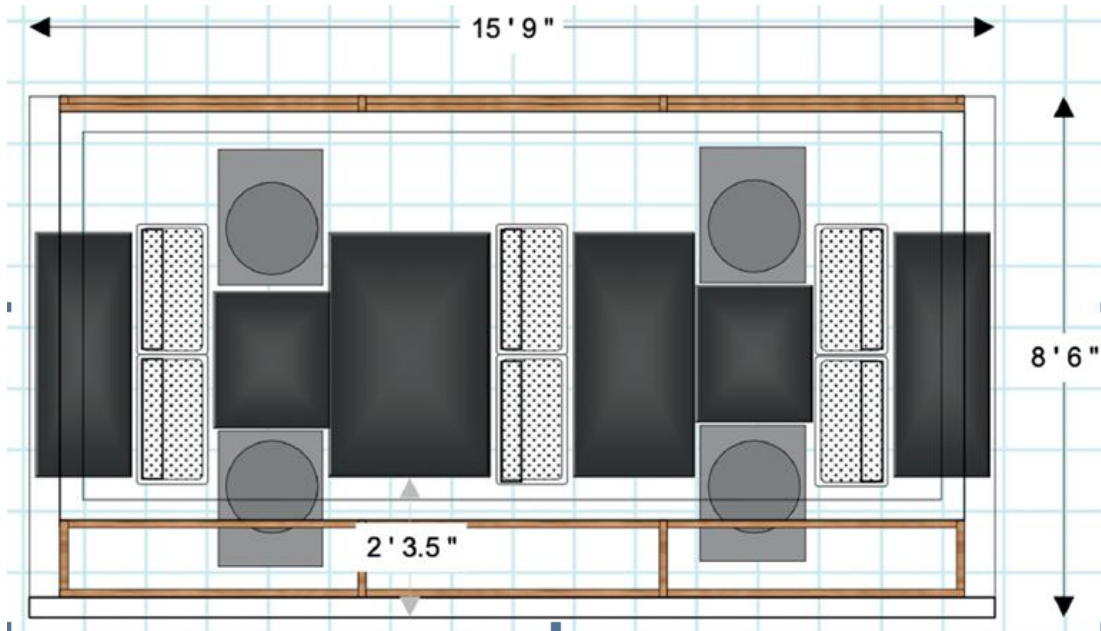
This is the **Plan View**: You have the 3 Left, Center and Right Main Speakers on the front wall.

You have 3 Surround Speakers on each of the side walls along with 2 additional Surround Speakers on the rear wall making a total of 11 bed channels.



There are 6 Dolby Height speakers mounted on the ceiling. The acoustically transparent screen stretches 14 feet across the front wall. It is 7 feet tall, giving it an aspect ratio of 2:1. The seating distance is 13' 6" from the screen.

This is the **Front Elevation**: You can see the 3 Main Left, Center and Right speakers shown by the shaded tall rectangles.



There are 4 18" subwoofers mounted on the front wall between the main speakers.



You can see the in-wall surround speakers from this photo taken during construction.



There are two additional 18” subwoofers mounted on the rear wall.

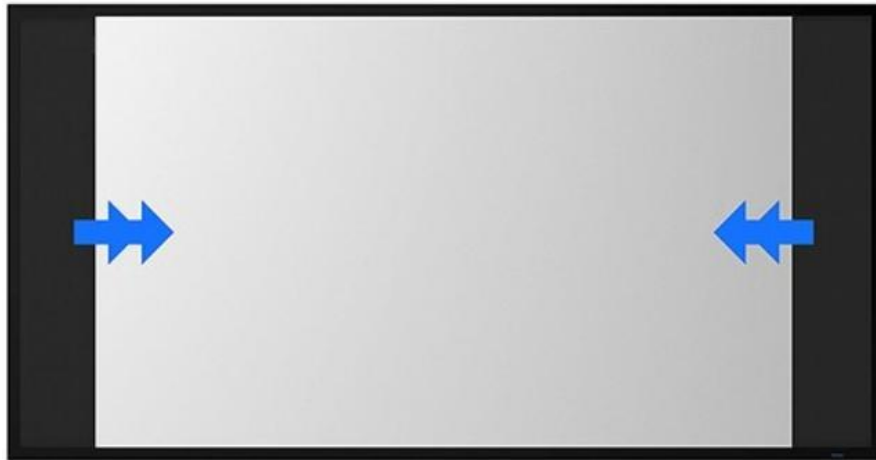
This constitutes the full 11.6.6 Dolby Atmos Speaker Setup.

John went to CEDIA and several high-end Audio Shows over the past few years to select the best equipment for each component in his Home Theater. Following is the breakdown of his equipment list.

**PROJECTOR** - The most critical component of any home theater is the projector. Nothing beats the experience of a wall-to-wall vivid, sharp, and bright picture. John chose the [Barco Residential Njord Cinemascope Projector](#). This 3-chip DLP Projector has a 5K Ultra HD resolution of 5,120 x 2,160 pixels. It is a super bright projector capable of 9,000 lumens far exceeding the 2,000 lumens of brightness you get in a typical movie theater. This is what makes the picture pop. John was running his Barco projector at 60% peak brightness. This is one of the finest projectors available within a residential setting. It is not cheap. It retails for [\\$104,999](#). No flat screen TV can match the panoramic experience of watching a picture that extends wall to wall and fills your peripheral vision. The Barco Njord Cinemascope projector was the star of the show.

**SCREEN** - When it comes to purchasing a screen for your Home Theater, the premium brand is Stewart Filmscreen. John is using the [Stewart](#)

[VistaScope EVO screen](#). This comes with a Continuously Variable Masking control system that allows you to select an aspect ratio from 2.40: 1 to 1.33:1 while maintaining constant image height.



The VistaScope EVO retails for \$32,000.

**MAIN SPEAKERS** - Left, Center, Right - Wisdom Audio [Sage Cinema Line 2](#)



These In-Wall Line Source speakers featuring 24" Planar Magnetic drivers and 6 high output woofers retail for \$6,000 each.

My first exposure to Wisdom Audio speakers was at CES several years ago. They had set up a demo room at the Venetian Towers. The entire front wall was covered with a black curtain so no one could see the actual speakers. They ran several audio demos that sounded stunning. Our jaws dropped when they told us that we were listening to in-wall speakers. I thought they rivaled regular audiophile speakers. That was a memorable experience that left me feeling that Wisdom Audio would conquer the Home Theater space. There was nothing comparable that delivered this level of performance. I was pleasantly surprised to find that John selected this brand for all his 11 bed channels.

**SURROUND SPEAKERS** There are 8 Wisdom Audio, [Insight L8i](#) Surround Speakers:

- Left Wide, Right Wide
- Left Surround, Right Surround
- Left Surround 2, Right Surround 2
- Left Rear, Right Rear



Each In-Wall Line Source speaker has 2-24" Planer Magnetic Drivers with 8 high-output woofers. They retail for \$6,800 each.

John has them angled exactly to face the listener's position.



These line source speakers are designed to minimize the effect of floor and ceiling reflections.

**DOLBY HEIGHT SPEAKERS** - There are 6 Wisdom Audio, [Sage iCS7a](#) In-Ceiling speakers.

- Left Top Front, Right Top Front
- Left Top Middle, Right Top Middle
- Left Top Rear, Right Top Rear



Each of these In-Ceiling speakers houses a 6-Bar Planar Magnetic driver and a High Output woofer. They retail for [\\$3,600](#) each.

**SUBWOOFERS** - To round up the 11 bed channels and 6 height speakers, John has installed 6 Procella Audio [P18Si](#) High output subwoofers.



These 18” subwoofers can reach down to 18Hz while delivering an impressive 127dB of sound pressure level. They retail for \$4,000 each.

Total cost of all 23 speakers =  $(\$6,000 \times 3) + (\$8,160 \times 8) + (\$3,600 \times 6) + (\$4,000 \times 6) = \$18,000 + \$65,280 + \$21,600 + \$24,000 = \mathbf{\$128,880}$ .

**AUDIO PROCESSOR** - If you want to experience the pinnacle of multi-channel audio processing, only one brand leaves the competition in the dust. Unsurprisingly, John picked the Trinnov AL32-1632 [Altitude32](#) Reference Immersive Audio Processor.



It boasts impressive [specs](#) and handles up to 34 discrete channels of object based decoding. This device handles all variants of the Dolby, DTS and PCM codecs and works with Roon. The AL32-1632 configuration retails for [\\$42,000](#).

John spent many hours tweaking every speaker until he achieved perfection. When he sent his room response measurements to the folks at [Trinnov](#), they were surprised at the level of accuracy. They could not believe the results.

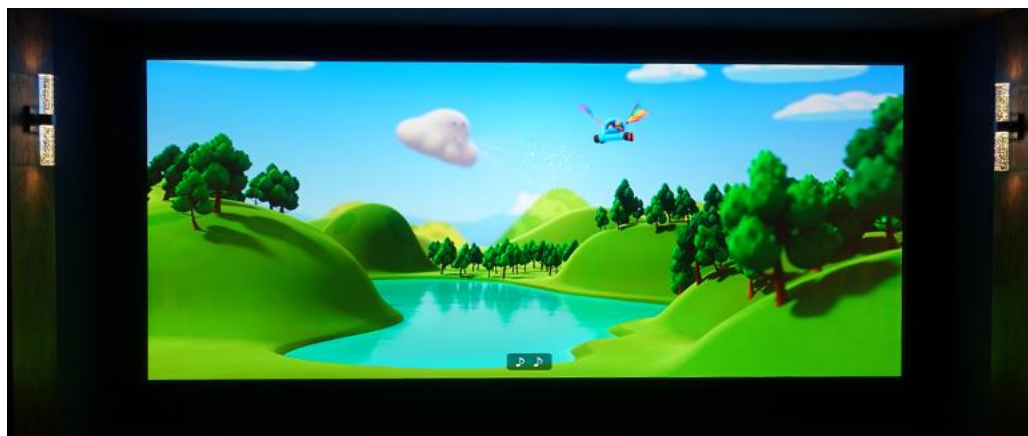
I listened at different spots in the room. I was surprised how there were no standing waves at the very edge of the back wall. How was that even possible? John explained this audio magic was the result of the [Wave Forming](#) Technology from Trinnov. One can spend hours going through the Digital Room Correction algorithms from Trinnov.

**VIDEO PROCESSOR** - All video processing is handled by a [madVR Envy Extreme MK2](#).



This video processor offers best-in-class 4K HDR dynamic tone mapping, 4K upscaling along with instant aspect ratio management. Even though the Stewart VistaScope can handle motorized masking for changing aspect ratios, John is using the madVR for this task which utilizes the full screen.

I captured an example of how the madVR was using non-linear stretching to expand a 16:9 source to completely fill the 14' x 7' screen with a 2:1 aspect ratio.



This industry reference video processor retails for [\\$15,999](#) and earned rave [reviews](#).

**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](#). One can rent movies for \$7.95 and watch them unlimited number of times within a 48 hour window. It takes about 10 minutes to download a full-length movie with a high-speed internet connection. This makes 4K Blu-ray players obsolete and has earned glowing [reviews](#).

## **MOVIE SERVER**

A Kaleidescape [Terra Prime 8TB Movie Server](#) is used for additional storage.



This retails for [\\$4,995](#).

Up to 4 Terra Prime Movie Servers can be connected to a Strato V Movie Player. It should be noted that Kaleidescape movies are typically 10 times larger than streamer movies.

## AMPLIFICATION

Two [Wisdom Audio SA-3](#) amps power the 3 Front Main Speakers. Each amp provides 3 channels of amplification at 500 Watt per channel.



Each Main Speaker needs 2 channels of amplification for the Active Crossovers. This is the reason for using two of these SA-3 Amps which retails for [\\$7,560](#) each.

The 8 Surround Speakers and 6 Height Speakers are powered by a Trinnov Audio [Amplitude 16](#) amplifier. This beefy 16-channel power amp can provide 2,800 Watts of continuous power with all 16 channels driven at less than 0.1% THD. Maximum peak power is 6080 Watts with all 16 channels driven with 1% THD+N.



You can read the reviews at [Sound&Vision](#) and [Home Cinema Choice](#). This Class D multi-channel amp costs \$12,500.

The 6 Subwoofers are powered by 2 [Procella Audio DA08-DSP](#) amps.



This single rack unit delivers 4 channels of Class D amplification of 800 Watts per channel into 8 ohms. It comes with 40 presets and is designed to mate with the massive Procella subs. They cost \$5,300 each.

The total cost of amplification to drive the 23 speakers =  $(\$7,560 \times 2) + \$12,500 + (\$5,300 \times 2)$   
= \$38,220

This brings the hardware cost of the Projector, Screen Speakers and Electronics to **\$370,208**. John spent an additional \$20,000 on room treatment. He used 12-AWG oxygen-free copper wires to hook up all the speakers.

All the Automation and Lighting is by [Crestron Control](#) and [DMF Lighting](#).



John can replicate this home theater setup as a turnkey project for **\$525,000**, including construction and installation fees.

There are no exposed electronics in the room. The back wall has a small rectangular cut out covered by extra clear museum glass to accommodate the projector lens.



All the equipment is neatly stacked in the narrow room behind the back wall. John built a sturdy scaffolding to hold up the 105lb Barco Projector.



The top shelf of the equipment rack houses the fan directly above the Kaleidescape Strato V Movie Player and Terra Prime Movie Server.



The madVR Envy Extreme MK2 and Trinnov AL32-1632 Altitude 32 preamp/processor are mounted below.



Below the Trinnov Altitude 32 processor is the Trinnov Amplitude 16 power amp.



At the very bottom you see the two Procella Audio DA08-DSP power amps and the three Wisdom Audio SA-3 power amps.



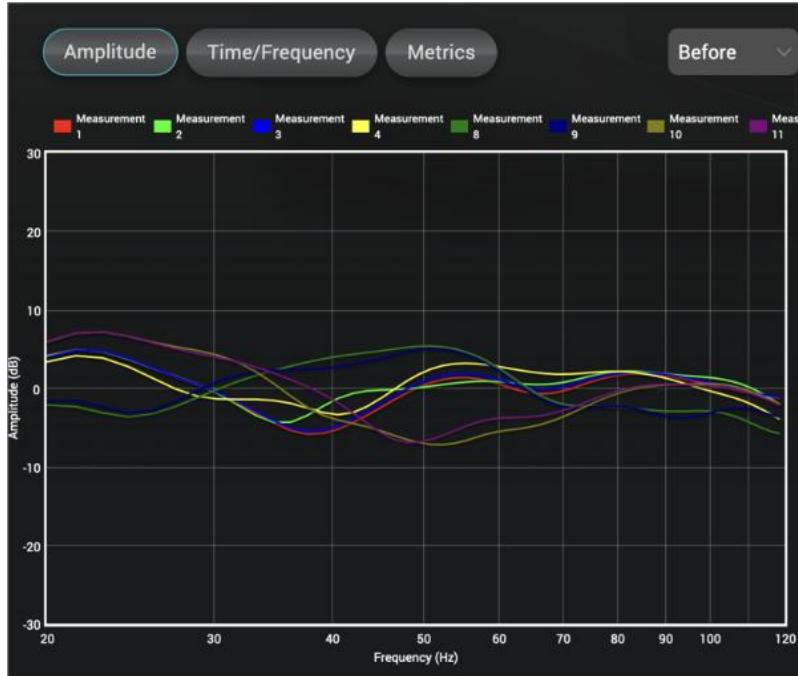
This is an impressive stack of state-of-the-art electronics.

This project is truly a work of passion. It represents the pinnacle of technological advancement in Home Theater. If this is presented at CEDIA it would qualify for the Best of Show award.

## MEASUREMENTS

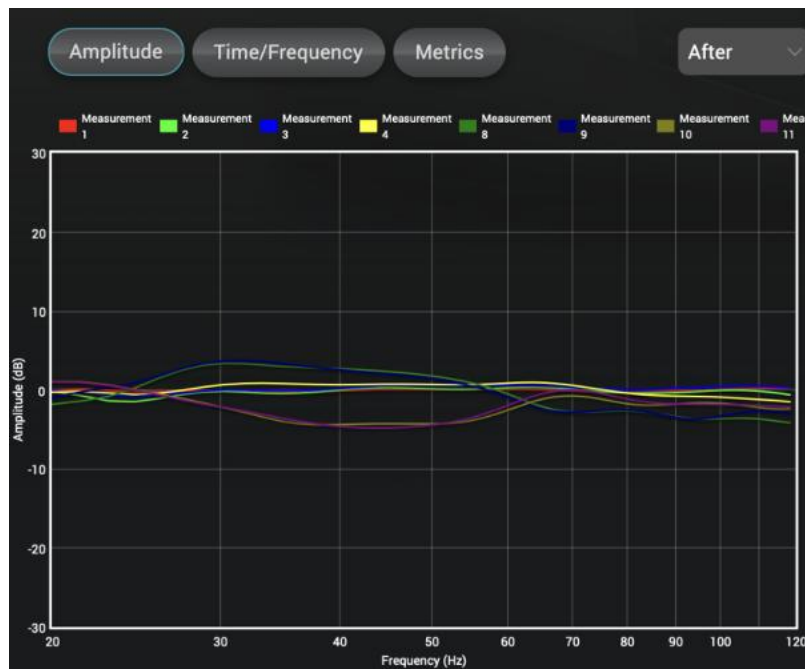
What was remarkable about this room was the uniform bass response no matter where you were seated. This was the result of implementing the patented WaveForming technology by Trinnov Audio.

Here is the Bass Frequency Response Curve from 20Hz to 120Hz *before* Room Correction.



Each colored line represents the bass response measured at the 8 different listening positions. You can see they vary a lot.

Compare this to the Bass Response curves taken *after* Room Correction. Notice, how they converge and flatten out.



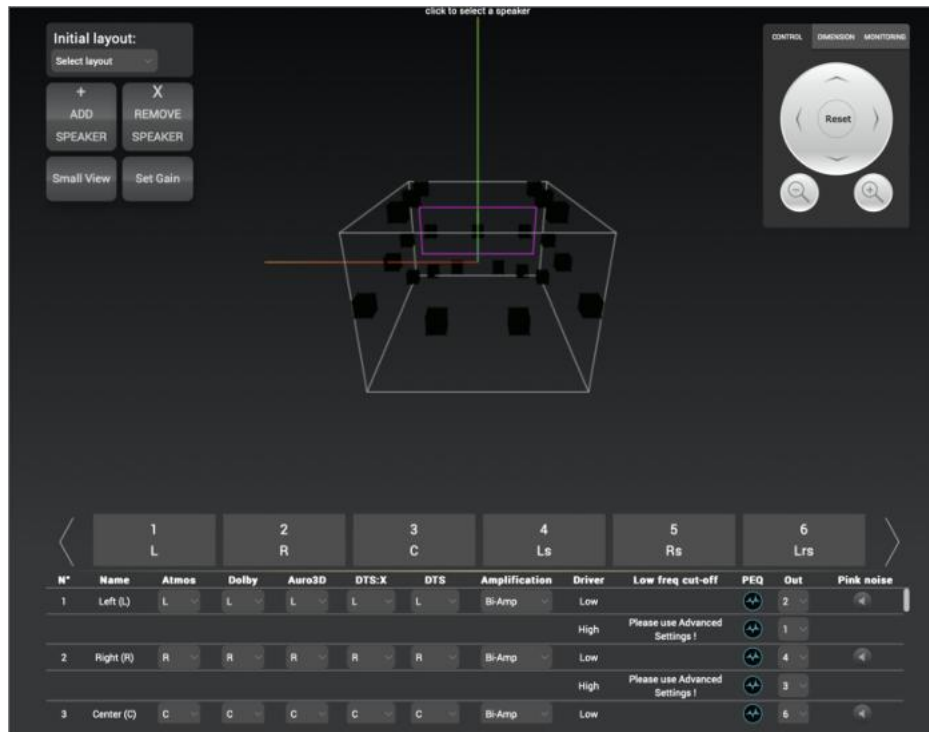
If you wish to learn about the science behind this WaveForming Technology, watch the first 40 minutes of this webinar [Redefining Low Frequency Reproduction](#) by Trinnov Audio.



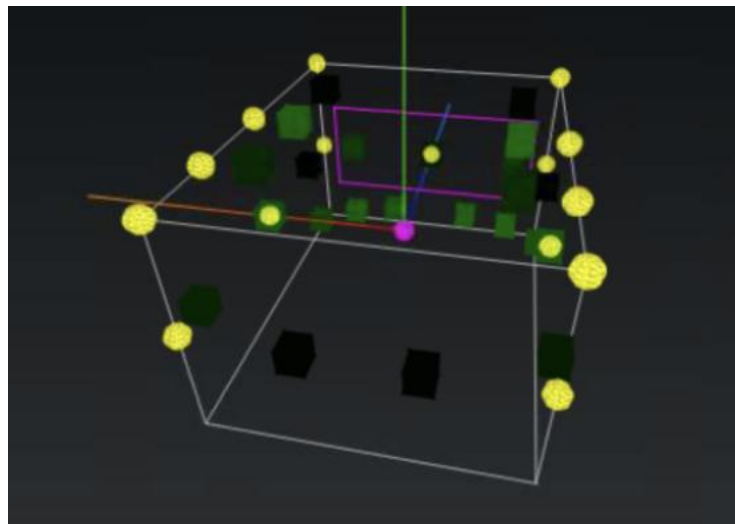
All measurements were taken with this highly sensitive \$800 microphone provided by Trinnov.



Trinnov provides the software to visually track how the sound effects move across the room as you play any multi-channel audio source. Here is a screenshot.



The purple rectangle is the screen on the front wall. The speaker locations around the room are shown in black. The speakers that are active at any moment in time are shown in green.



Here is short 30 second [MP4 video](#) clip showing you how the individual speakers turn on as the sound source traverses across the 3D space.

## A SCALED-DOWN BUILD

It is easy to scale down John's Reference Home Theater Build while still maintaining a high level of performance. John shared a specific example.

### **Projector**

[Sony VPL-XW6000ES](#) Native 4K HDR 2,500 Lumens 3-panel Laser Projector  
\$12,000

### **Screen**

Stewart Fixed Frame 2.35:1 Studio Tech 100 10' wide screen.  
\$6,500

### **Main Speakers (L, C, R)**

[Wisdom Audio Insight L8i](#), Line Source 48" Planer Magnetic Hybrid Speakers  
\$6,800 each

### **Surround Speakers (4)**

[Wisdom Audio Insight P2i](#) Planer Magnetic Hybrid Speakers  
\$1,800 each

### **Height Speakers (4)**

[Wisdom Audio Insight ICI6](#) In-Ceiling Speakers  
\$1,250 each

### **Subwoofers (2)**

[JL Audio E-Sub e112-ASH](#) 12" powered Sub  
\$2,500 each

### **Video Processor**

[MadVR Labs Envy Core](#)  
\$5,995

### **Audio Processor**

[Marantz AV10](#) 15.4 Channel 8K Dolby Atmos AV Processor  
\$7,000

### **Power Amp**

[Marantz AMP10](#) 16 Channel Power Amp with 200 W/Ch  
\$7,000

This 7.4.2 Home Theater can be built for a modest **\$76,095**.

For someone who wants to start with a basic home theater, there are plenty of options.

One could buy this [85" Samsung 4K UN85CU800](#) TV for \$1,398 and then add the [Nakamichi Shockwafe Ultra 9.2.4](#) channel Soundbar with dual 10" subs and 4 surround speakers for \$1400. Both are affordable, popular products with high customer ratings.

If there is not enough room to place 4 surround speakers, one can buy the [SENNHEISER AMBEO Soundbar](#) for \$2,499. I watched a demo of this when it was first unveiled at CES. They had this prototype Soundbar on a table below the TV as well as a discrete 5.1 surround sound setup with Neumann KH series speakers. They alternated between the two systems to show how close the Ambeo Soundbar came to mimicking the immersive sound from the 5 speakers.

From a basic \$2,798 setup to a full-blown \$500,000 reference system, there is plenty of room to experiment and mix and match components to satisfy the needs within any given budget.

This is where the expertise of John becomes invaluable. John can recommend the components that will squeeze out the best performance at any given budget.

You can reach John at (602) 796-4127 or via email [john@cinematichomeav.com](mailto:john@cinematichomeav.com)

## **2 Channel HiFi Demo**

In the latter half of the event, John demoed several of his 2-channel audiophile setups. This was a 2-channel setup with an 85" Sony Bravia 4K TV flanked by Wisdom Audio Speakers.

On the floor you see a pair of [Fyne Audio Vintage Ten](#) speakers.



On the top of the rack you see a [PrimaLuna EVO 300](#) Hybrid Integrated Amp on the far left followed by an [Estoteric N-01XD](#) SE DAC, a [PrimaLuna EVO 400 Tube Preamp](#) and a second PrimaLuna EVO 300 Hybrid Integrated Amp.

This was another HiFi setup featuring a pair of [Fyne Audio F502ST](#) speakers in gloss black.



On the top of the equipment rack rests an [Advanced Paris A12 Classic](#) Integrated amp next to the [Vertere DG-1S](#) Turntable. On the middle rack you see a [HiFi Rose RS520](#) Wireless Network Streamer & Integrated Amp. On the bottom rack you see an [Advance Paris X-CD9](#) CD Player next to a PrimaLuna EVO 300 Tube Integrated Amp.



This was yet another 2-channel audio setup featuring a pair of [Fyne Audio F1-8S](#) floor-standing speakers.



On the top of the rack you see a [HiFi Rose RS150B](#) High Performance Network Streamer placed in the middle between the [Advanced Paris X-A600](#) Stereo Amp to the left and the [Advance Paris X-P1200](#) Preamp to the right.



This was John's Reference 2-Channel Audio Room featuring the [Estelon X Diamond MK11](#) speakers in Blue Cobalt and the taller [Estelon Forza](#) in Violet Night.





They were powered by this massive [Vitus MP-S201](#) mk1 stereo Power Amp, delivering 500 Watts per channel of pure Class A amplification.



All associated electronics were neatly stacked in the adjacent equipment rack.



Resting on the top of the rack was the [Vertere RG-1 Reference Groove](#) turntable.



Sitting next to this, you see an [Acoustic Signature Tornado NEO](#) Turntable.



So how does John's Reference 2-Channel Audio System with the Estelon Forza speakers and VitusMP-S201 mk1 power amp sound?

John had 6 demo tracks cued up to showcase the transparency, resolution, smoothness, extreme dynamics and bass control of his system.

- The first demo track was “**Man in the Long Back Coat**” by Bob Dylan. This is a classic audiophile favorite that everybody is familiar with. Dylan's deep raspy voice was reproduced with striking clarity and presence that seemed to float in the center of the room while the background instruments filled up the surrounding 3D space.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> demo track was “**Bones Shake**” by Hazlett. This was an excellent example of reproducing a Male Voice with layers of harmonizing vocals.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> demo track was “**Our Roots Run Deep**” by Dominique Fils-Aime. I could clearly follow the bass line. The bass was tuned just right.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> demo track was “**The Curse**” by Agnes Obel. This was a good example of reproducing all the nuances of a Female Voice.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> demo track was “**Keith Don't Go**” by Nils Logfren. This is another audiophile favorite. The guitar transients and harmonics were handled with definition and authority. The live presentation was so real you could almost reach out and touch the guitarist.
- The 6<sup>th</sup> demo track was “**Make Us Stronger**” by Ghost Rider. This is a torture test for most speakers. Audiophiles hesitate to play this track at high SPL levels lest it damages their speaker.

The Forzas not only aced the test with flying colors, it actually sprang to life, justifying its \$190,950 price tag.

The Forzas effortlessly reproduced every synth note of the 6th track (“**Make Us Stronger**” by Ghost Rider), while the Vitus MP-S201 Power Amp (\$125,000) never ran out of juice, keeping up with the endless pumping of the deep Synth Bass track. The bass notes from the Forzas were tight and controlled. It put me in a trance.

This track delighted the audience. It showed what this system is capable of. The music was loud, yet I felt no ear fatigue because of the lack of any distortion. This is a true test of any Hi-Fi system.

John’s Reference 2-Channel system with all the associated electronics costs **\$524,042**.

How does this compare to the 2-Channel audio demo we heard last August during the Dan D’Agostino Master Audio Systems Tour? Bill McKeigan at D’Agostino was using pair of [Wilson Audio Alexx V](#) speakers powered by D’Agostino [Momentum M400 MxV](#) monoblock power amps with a [Momentum C2 Preamplifier](#) fitted with the Digital Streaming Module. Although different demo tracks were played, I felt Bill’s setup had the edge regarding extreme dynamics, bass impact, and ultimate transparency. However, the sleek and statuesque Forza Towers beat the Wilson’s by a mile when it came to aesthetics.

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

All of us had an unforgettable experience watching the movie clips at John’s Reference Home Theater. It gave us a glimpse of what is possible to build on a \$500,000 budget. The synergy between the components that John achieved pushes the envelope of current Home Theater Technology.

The BARCO projector was the star of the show. The all-immersive surround sound from the full array of Wisdom Speakers was breathtaking.

We feel fortunate to have such a unique showroom in Arizona.

All of this is the result of John’s life-long passion. He, along with his brother-in-law Joel, manages Cinematic Home A/V. John’s sister was the hostess for the evening. This is a family business.

John was kind enough to raffle a few of his unused equipment. We had a few lucky winners!



We each got to take home a 9-page color brochure that John made for us describing every system and the individual components at his showroom.

If you missed this event or just want to have John's expert advice on setting up your home theater or 2-channel audio system please feel free to drop by or call. He is a powerhouse of knowledge and super friendly.

On behalf of the Arizona Audio Video Club members, I thank John and his family for hosting this special event. This may well turn out to become the Event of the Year for 2025!

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:jparepair@yahoo.com)

Re-foaming Speaker Surround Service:  
Michael Mitchell 480-749-7003  
[mmiller43228@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto:worksbau@gmail.com)