



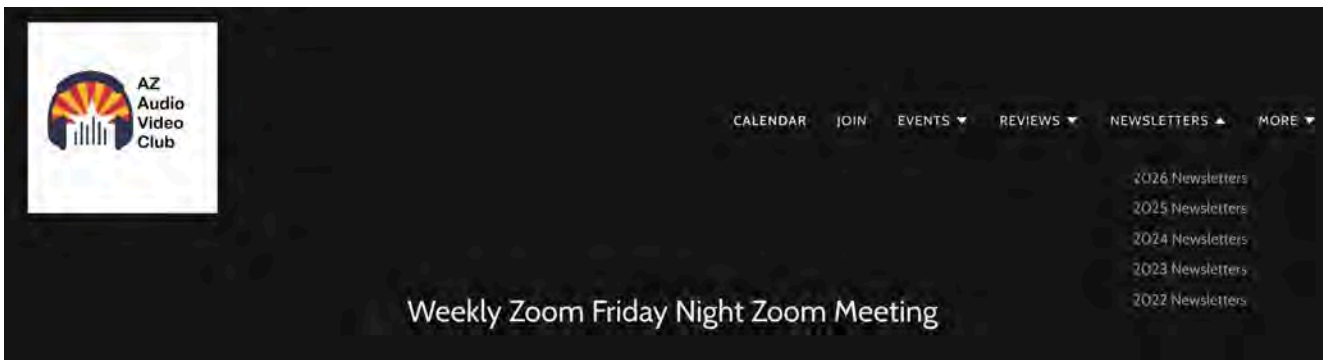
Newsletter

July 2026

In this issue:

- President's Message - John Harvell
- Next meetings
- Review of June AAVC event - David Das
- Review of Jeffrey Behr's system - David Das
- Dave's Record Review
- Wasting Time On The Internet - Jim Welby
- Wasting Time On The Internet Part 2 - David Hjortland
- My Diretta Journey - Jim Welby
- Paul's Playlist

Editor's Note: Back issues of the AAVC Newsletter can be found on the club's [website](#):



President's Message

By John Harvell

In the June 2026 newsletter the President's message asked club members to weigh in on whether they liked to participate in live music events and if so, what type of music events they prefer. We did this to try and figure out what type of events you might be interested in the future. From this query, I was inundated with a total of two responses out of approximately 60 current club members. Both responses were from people named Paul and both indicated that they like attending live music presentations. It's hard to draw very strong conclusions with such limited feedback. So, this month I'm trying a slightly different approach.

We have another event planned with Cinematic Home A/V in September and we are discussing three different options for that event. I would like you to help us decide which event the majority of club members would like to see most. So, please take a moment and rank the three options in order of your preference...

1. Want to see this most
2. Would prefer this one second
3. Least interest in this event

The three options we have casually discussed with Cinematic Home A/V

- A. Comparison of integrated amp / bookshelf speaker 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*, *Rose*

Please help us by sending back your preference identifying which option you would like most with a rating of 1 and least with a rating of 3 and send your choices to jharvell_1@cox.net. As always, if you have suggestions about future events, please pass them along too. Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Your current club president.

Next Meetings:

July Meeting: Final Model M35+ Speakers Demo Event on Saturday, July 18, 2026 from 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm at Faith Lutheran Church, Parish Hall:

801 E Camelback Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85014

See the club's [website](#) for more details (you should have received an email on this event earlier this month).

August Meeting: Scheduled for Saturday, August 22nd. The meeting will be a speaker cable evaluation. We will compare five sets of speaker wire (cheap to expensive). To isolate personal auditory bias, the evaluation will follow a rigorous, level-matched blind testing methodology. More details to come.

Future meeting ideas the steering committee is considering:

- September TBD - Cinematic Home AV vendor session - see John's president's message for more details
- October TBD LMC Scottsdale
- November TBD Multichannel Final Speaker Demo

- December TBD 2nd Annual end of Year Club Party (Pot Luck Event) - could be a member's home or at the church
- D'Agostino Tour
- Member swap meet
- Presentation on component isolation systems focusing on vibration damping and mechanical control
- DIY sound absorption panels

Please email the club president, John Harvell, with any club meeting ideas you might have. John can be reached at: jharvell_1@cox.net

LMC Tempe Amp Comparison Event

Review by David Das

I had the pleasure of attending the Amp Comparison Event at LMC Tempe on June 18, 2026.



This event was hosted by **Paul Henningsen**, Premium System Consultant at LMC Home Entertainment. The objective was to showcase the sonic differences between Solid State and Tube power amps using top-tier McIntosh gear.

This event generated a lot of interest amongst club members. We had a larger-than-expected gathering. Paul had to accommodate us into two listening groups. Club President **John Harvell**, along with Committee Member **Joe Roberts**, was in the second group.

I sat through both sessions, attempting to critically evaluate the differences. It only reinforced my findings that tube amplification adds an extra layer of warmth, smoothness, liquidity, and musicality to the presentation. Tube amplification has an unmistakable sound. It makes music sound more natural and relaxed. It opens up the sound stage. The moment you switch to solid-state, the sound stage shrinks, the music feels less 3D, and it sounds a tad brittle. The magic is gone.

Equipment List



Main Speakers

[Sonus Faber Electa Amator III](#) 2-way bookshelf speakers featuring a 28mm silk dome tweeter and a 6.5" mid-woofer.

This speaker got rave reviews on [HomeTheaterHiFi](#) and [Positive-Feedback](#). They have a Frequency response of 40Hz – 35kHz and retail for \$12,000 a pair.

Integrated Amplifier

[McIntosh MA12000](#) 2-channel flagship Hybrid Integrated Amplifier.

It features a tube preamplifier with a 350W solid state power amplifier.

Tube Power Amplifier

[McIntosh MC2301](#), 300W Vacuum Tube Mono Power Amplifier.

Digital Network Streamer

Linn Akurate DS/1 Digital Network Streamer. Here is a [review](#).

Speaker Cables

[Transparent Ultra](#) Speaker Cables.

The Ultra category sits right below the [Transparent Opus](#) and super-expensive [Transparent Magnum Opus](#) category.

Listening Session

Paul had charted out a plan. He selected 6 audiophile tracks that best reveal the differences between solid-state and tube amplification. He played all 6 tracks first, engaging the solid-state power amps on the McIntosh MA12000 Hybrid Tube Preamplifier. Then he switched over to the McIntosh MC2301 tube mono power amps while using the tube preamps on the MA12000.

Track #1 “*Done for Me (featuring Kehlani)*” – Charlie Puth

Track #2 “*Free Falling: Live at the Nokia Theater*” – John Mayer

Track #3 “*All Blues*” – Brian Bromberg

Track #4 Recomposed by Max Richter: *Vivaldi, The Four Seasons*

Track #5 “*What’ll I Do?*” – Chris Botti

Track #6 “*Nightshift*” – The Commodores

After we listened to Paul’s playlist of 6 tracks, once using the solid-state power amps and once using the tube power amps, he opened the floor for song requests from the audience.

Joe Roberts requested this track, and everybody loved it: “*Aged and Mellow*” – Catherine Russell

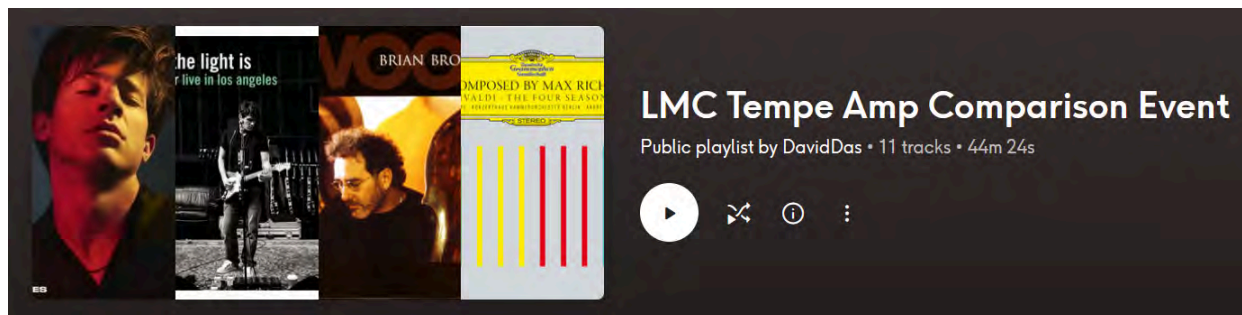
John Harvell requested this track, cautioning everyone about its racy lyrics: “*Hands on You*” – Ashley Monroe

Here were some of the other requested tracks.

- “On the Border” – Al Stewart
- “Anna Rose” – Vienna Teng
- “1br/1ba” – Vienna Teng

I made a **Qobuz Playlist** of the 11 tracks we listened to:

<https://open.qobuz.com/playlist/66440830>



Closing Thoughts

The sonic differences between solid-state and tube amplification are unmistakable. We had the opportunity to compare the best tube amplification with the best solid-state amplification from McIntosh. While tube amplification does not measure as well as solid-state amplification on paper, the extra harmonics from vacuum tubes impart a euphonic layer of smoothness, liquidity, and sweetness to the presentation, with a wider, more expansive soundstage. Tube amplification eliminates the digital harshness and glare from digital sources, making the music sound ever so relaxed, engaging, and non-fatiguing.

It is true that tube amplifiers cost significantly more than solid-state amps with the same power ratings. Solid state power amps deliver more punch at the expense of texture. A good compromise is to use a tube preamp to capture all the goodness of vacuum tubes while pairing it with an affordable, high-power solid-state power amp. The [McIntosh MA12000](#) 2-channel flagship Hybrid Integrated Amplifier does exactly that. There is a reason why Paul sells one of these units every month. This is the smart choice and the price is right.

On behalf of the Arizona Audio Video Club members, I would like to thank Paul Henningsen and his lovely wife **Laura** for being such gracious hosts. Laura's home-baked brownies were a hit at last year's event. She brought these delicious brownies once again along with several other treats and drinks.

It is always a pleasure to hear audiophile-quality recordings played back through hi-end gear at LMC. There is no better way to spend a relaxing evening in the company of fellow audiophiles while learning about ways to elevate your listening experience to the next level.

Everyone had a terrific time. We should do this again next year!

To see my comparative impressions of each test track and a virtual tour of the LMC Tempe Showroom, please read my [full 46-page review](#).

Best regards,

David Das

Jeffrey Behr's Audio System

Review by David Das

I had the pleasure of auditioning the audio system of former Club President **Jeffrey Behr** on Saturday, June 6, 2026.



This is what I would describe as Jeffrey's dream system optimized for playing Classical music, symphonies, and soaring movie soundtracks. This system represents the culmination of over 40 years of experimentation with dozens of

speakers, power amps, processors, and cables to achieve the best synergy for reproducing the genre of romantic classical music that Jeffrey holds dear.

Once Jeffrey began walking me through his system, explaining why he chose each component, I could see that this was a work of passion. The moment he played the first demo track, it became clear to me that this final iteration is an unqualified success.

Jeffrey has devoted much of his free time and resources since retiring in 1998 in the pursuit of perfect sound. I can only imagine the time, labor, and capital Jeffrey invested to reach this level of sonic perfection. I salute him!

Being a seasoned audiophile, Jeffrey understands the superiority of physical media over streaming. He has amassed a large library of SACDs, Blu-ray and 4K Ultra HD discs. He does not stream any music or movies.

Equipment List

Main Speakers

[SoundLab Majestic G7-5C](#) full-range Electrostatic Loudspeakers

Surround Speakers (for multichannel music and movies surround sound)

[HHR Polyradial Walsh Style TLS-5](#) Towers (x2)

Center Channel Speaker (for Movie and TV Dialogue)

[Magneplaner CC5](#) Center Channel Speaker.

Rear Ceiling Dolby ATMOS Speakers (for video)

[ELAC Debut B6](#) Bookshelf Speakers (x2).

Subwoofers

[GoldenEar SuperSub XXL](#) powered subwoofers (x2).

Power Amps (for the main speakers)

[Pass Labs XA60.8](#) Class A Mono amps delivering 60W into 8 ohms (x2).

Power Amp (for the surround, center, and ATMOS speakers)

[Emotive XPA-11 Gen3](#) 11-Channel Audiophile Home Theater Power Amplifier.

Pre Amplifier

[Marantz AV10](#) Reference 15.4-channel preamp/processor.

Universal Disc Player

[Oppo UDP-205](#) for playing CD, SACD, DVD, Blu-ray and 4K Ultra HD discs.

AC Regenerator

[PS Audio Direct Stream Power Plant 20.](#)

Interconnect Cables (between the pre/pro and the Pass Labs XA60.8 mono amps)

[SnakeRiverAudio Takshaka](#) Interconnects

Speaker Cables (connecting the Pass Labs XA60.8 mono amps to the SoundLab Majestic G7-5Cs)

[AudioQuest Firebird Zero](#)

Listening Session

I arrived at 3 pm. Jeffrey introduced me to this multichannel audio system, explaining each and every component in the audio chain right down to the custom electrical outlets and cable risers.

Then he dimmed the lights for the grand show. I took the sweet spot in the comfortable leather sofa.

Jeffrey played a collection of songs entirely from his physical media library as I marveled at the presence of these tall electrostatic panels.

The very first demo track was “*Tricycle*” by Flim & the BBs. I was startled by the bass slam. The twin GoldenEar SuperSub XXLs were effortlessly playing down to 25Hz with no trace of bass overhang. The bass was tight, fast, and punchy. I was impressed by the tonal clarity of every transient attack in the high registers. This is an area where electrostatic speakers rule. The transparency was breathtaking. I could see why Jeffrey chose this track to showcase his system.

Next we heard Rimsky-Korsakov’s “*Dance of the Tumblers*” by the Minnesota Orchestra. I felt I was in a Symphony Hall listening to an 80-piece orchestra performing live in front of me. The height and width of the sound stage projected by these SoundLab Majestic G7-5C towers were captivating.

The impedance of these electrostatic panels varies widely from 1.5 ohm to 35 ohm. The Pass Labs XA60.8 mono amps never ran out of juice. They handled the treble notes with crystalline clarity. Even during the dense orchestral movements, I heard no signs of any congestion or compression. I could precisely identify and locate every instrument on the sound stage.

Next, Jeffrey played a Super Audio CD recording of “*Symphony No. 1, Op. 55*” by Sir Edward Elgar followed by the “*Sonata for Organ, Op. 28.*” The amount of detail captured within this recording is breathtaking.

Next, we heard “*Miss the Mississippi and You*” by Rosanne Cash. I enjoyed how well this system rendered the texture of Rosanne’s voice.

Next, Jeffrey played “*Symphony No. 2*” by Rachmaninov, which he calls one of the best orchestral pieces ever recorded, preserving the natural balance between direct and reflected sound. I thought this was a spectacular 5-channel recording in its purest, natural form.

Next, Jeffrey played Jerry Goldsmith’s movie theme from “*Star Trek*” by the London Symphony Orchestra, followed by “*The Generals.*” It sounded grand. I could see why Jeffrey is so into movie themes, aside from his love for Classical music. He regularly attends live concerts performed by The Phoenix Symphony. Besides being an avid audiophile, Jeffrey is a musician. I took a photo of Jeffrey playing his Double Bass.



This was an enchanting evening. Four hours went by in a flash. Jeffrey has set up a cozy environment with the ideal equipment for enjoying romantic classical music and uplifting movie themes.

It is the culmination of a lifelong dream to enjoy a live orchestra from the comfort of your living room.

Every dollar spent in refining this system appears to be worth it.

I highly recommend spending an evening at Jeffrey's home to experience what he has built over the past 40 years. It is a labor of love. I left feeling joyful.

For a detailed equipment list with additional photos, please read my full [25-page review](#).

Best regards,

David Das

Dave's Record Reviews

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

For the AZ Audio Club ~ July 2026

#41

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band – Symphonion Dream
(LP & CD, United Artists, 1975)



The history of the Nitty Gitty Dirt Band spans some sixty years. They were formed in Long Beach, California in 1966, by its two longest-term members, Jeff Hanna and Jimmie Fadden. Originally something of a novelty, pop-oriented band, their style evolved over the years to include elements of folk, country, bluegrass, and rock. They are best known for their trio of genre-bending ***Will the Circle Be Unbroken*** albums, that gathered many different, primarily country artists to perform classic songs. (I did a brief review of the first **Circle** album in the column I was writing for the club in May '21.)

The group's catalog currently numbers some 38 entries, including compilations and live albums. Most are very worthwhile, though IMO there's a few that are not. (Their 2022 album, ***Dirt Does Dylan***, was truly unfortunate.) I was originally thinking I might write a review of their 1987 album ***Hold On***, a favorite of mine which is a bit more pop-rock than much of their other work and was (mostly) produced by the multi-talented Josh Leo. Then – I put this album on my turntable and quickly forgot all about reviewing ***Hold On***. It was obvious that this earlier album would be more appreciated by the more – ahem – refined tastes of AAVC club members.

Their ninth album, ***Symphonion Dream*** (sometimes listed as simply ***Dream***) displays the band's still-developing formidable talents and is an intelligent and engrossing presentation of diverse songs and instrumental numbers. Coming three years after the first **Circle** album in 1972, the boys enlisted supporting musicians Linda Ronstadt, Leon Russell, and (would you believe) actor Gary Busey, among others.

The album opens with a brief, quiet intro; a bell tolls, then a sort of whooshing sound joins in – apparently a wind harp. The next cut is also short, titled “*Raleigh-Durham Reel*,” it's a fun guitar-banjo-mandolin instrumental. Then things pick up with “*Battle of New Orleans*,” yes – the old song that was a major hit for Johnny Horton in 1959. The NGDB modernize it a bit, making it their own, and it was a minor hit that charted for them.

There are 17 numbers listed for the album and I won't attempt to comment on all of them, especially because many of them are short instrumental bits – almost though not quite interludes between other songs. But to mention a few other highlights:

“*Bayou Jubilee*” is something of a rocker; “*Grab your baby, dance 'til three, down at the Bayou Jubilee*.” Linda Ronstadt contributes a lead vocal on the Hank Williams country classic “*Hey Good Lookin'*.” John McEuen shows off his considerable banjo skills with a couple of his own compositions that frame a globally famous 1933 piece by Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona.

“*Ripplin’ Waters*” is a beautiful, easy-going piece that talks about the pleasures of love and down-home living, with philosophical depths to its simple lyrics:

*“Maybe in your vision you see how our mission is,
Slightly less than divine
You cut the telephone line and the story's the same.”*

The boys do “(All I Have to Do Is) Dream” for some reason, but they could/should have left that one in the past for the Everly Brothers. “*Joshua Come Home*” is a Caribbean-flavored tune about life on the islands and happiness when Joshua comes home. Yeah, I don’t know what all the allusions are but it’s a great song, one of the album highlights, with Leon Russell on backing instruments.

There are more, of course. The short instrumentals that are scattered throughout are quite fine. And the album closes with “*Solstice/Symphonion Montage*,” a 2½ minute instrumental that opens with sounds of a storm and closes with echoes of rain and (what I think is) more wind harp.

What we have here is an extremely talented group of musicians who work together to produce an outstanding result. I have to mention specifically John McEuen, who would go on to become a wonderful solo artist (often referencing the sobriquet “String Wizard”) and highly-regarded producer. Band members wrote 11 of the 17 numbers. They were not afraid to experiment, and to present the listener with a variety of musical experiences on one album. Admittedly some of the songs tilt more toward country than other genres, but they were certainly diverse as well. I would not expect everyone to like every cut on the album, but I think folks with an open mind and eclectic tastes should like a lot of them. Certainly this is a worthy album that should not be forgotten.

The original 1975 LP is available through Discogs embarrassingly cheap. The first CD version of it was billed as “remastered” and issued in 2003, which I have not heard. Attesting to my affection for the album I *do* have a 2017 Japanese SHM-CD of it I acquired a few years back that I can indeed recommend... OK, so I’m not going to interest you in that one. However the LP is certainly a most worthy investment! And of course – sigh – it seems to be available via streaming (CD quality:16-bit/44.1 kHz FLAC) if that is your thing.

WASTING TIME ON THE INTERNET

By Jim Welby

Club member David Snyder recently texted me a [Headphonstey article](#) titled “50 Essential 1980s Albums You Need to Hear at Least Once in Your Life.” This was right in my wheelhouse as I was a budding audiophile in my twenties in the 80s

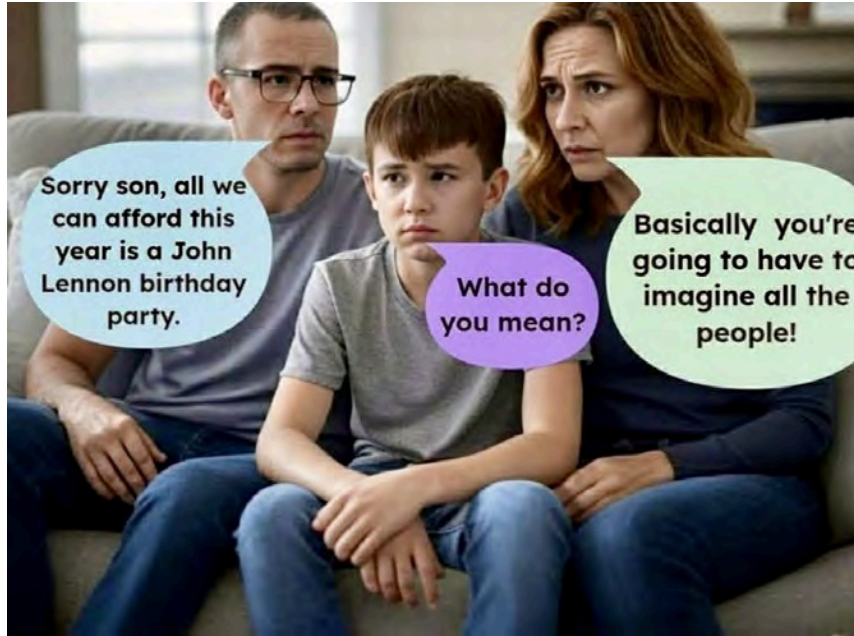
and was familiar with all the albums on the list. I love these kinds of lists as they help me discover new things. Not sure if it was intentional, but the list broke down into pop, rock, hip-hop, and indie rock in that order, with a few random genres in between. I have about 80% of these on vinyl or CD. It is hard to argue that anything did not belong on the list. But the fun is arguing about order and what is missing. Look at the list and email me (catchgroove@gmail.com) with your thoughts.

WASTING TIME ON THE INTERNET PART 2

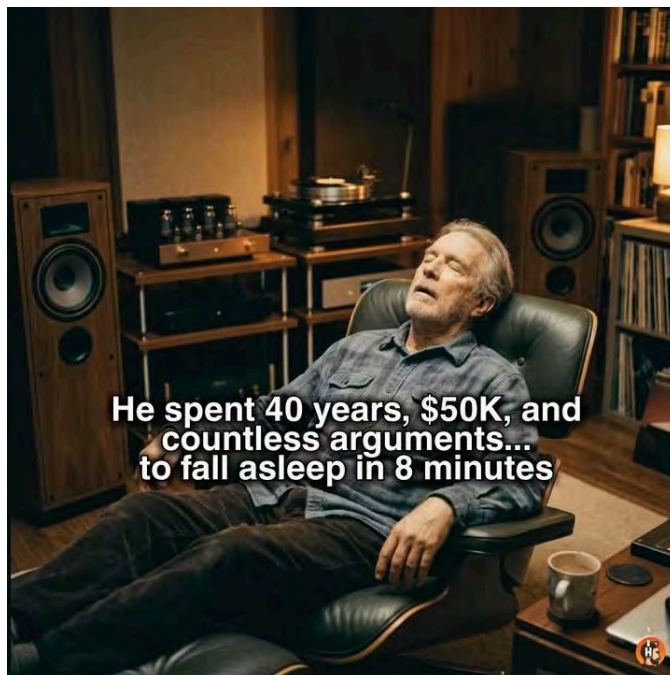
ROCK 'N' ROLL **Related Humor** **By David Hjordland**

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





Look forward to some more next month, and here one final one from my collection of audiophile memes:



My Diretta Journey

By Jim Welby

Last [month I wrote an article](#), with the assistance of club member David Snyder, titled: “*Are High-Resolution Files Really Better Than CDs?*” Working with David on the article motivated me to [take up an offer](#) that David has made to club members to help them implement a DIY Diredta solution for streaming. I plan to share my journey with implementing Diredta in my Minneapolis home (I am a snowbird) over the next several newsletters.

My first step when I returned to Minneapolis this summer [was to purchase a Schiit Mimir DAC](#) (which combines an ESS Saber ES9028 DAC chip with Schiit’s proprietary filters) for my Bluesound Node (which I use for streaming) and my Sony Blu-ray player (which I use to play CDs). The Schiit Mimir was recommended by Paul Johnson (club member and frequent contributor to this newsletter). Paul understood my desire to purchase a high-quality yet inexpensive DAC and my audio aesthetic, which favors warm vinyl and tube-amp sound. The Mimir has a nice warm analog sound, natural bass, and a wide soundstage. This is the perfect DAC for a vinyl-record/tube guy like me, and at \$300, it punches way above its weight.

Next, I ordered a mini-PC and shipped it to David, who worked his magic to turn it into a dedicated Roon server. David then sent the mini-PC back to me, and I added it to my home network. I have always been cynical about Roon - I could never imagine why I needed it. I have Tidal and a dedicated streaming device (a Bluesound Node) - why would I need another service and device like Roon to enjoy streaming? I understood that for most audiophiles Roon has become the gold standard for digital music management and playback, but not why. But I accepted that David’s Diredta solution required a Roon server - so I am going with it.

I assume many members of the club have been using Roon for years to play digital files and now high resolution streaming. As of this writing I am still getting used to the Roon after years of using Tidal’s app with my Bluesound. The Roon is interfacing with my Tidal account via the Bluesound Node over a Wi-Fi network. I have had a few glitches, but after some research it is pretty clear that the Node is a weak link in the chain - especially over WiFi. This is not the way to enjoy Roon. I have not detected a different quality of sound (better or worse) from the Roon and I have not done any A/B of Roon/Node vs. Tidal Connect/Node.

I look forward to the next step in the journey of setting up a Diretta host and target - hopefully by next Newsletter I will be singing praises of having reached the digital streaming Holy Grail!

Paul Johnson's Playlist

Allison Russell | In the Hour of Chaos

Ben Allison | Action Refraction | Buzz | Triological

Xiu Xiu | Eraserhead | Plays the Music of Twin Peaks

Al Di Meola | One of These Nights | Domus Solis | Across the Universe (Beatles Covers)

Jon Batiste | Black Mozart | The New Americana Collection

Paul Brady | The Paul Brady Songbook | Unfinished Business | Rural Oral

The Lone Bellow | Love Songs For Losers | What A Time To Be Alive | Half Moon Light

Houndmouth | Lordy | Good For You

The Barr Brothers | Queens of the Breakers | Let it Hiss | The Barr Brothers

Television | The Complete Elektra Recordings

Alela Diane | The Pirate's Gospel | Who's Keeping Time? | Cusp

Moriarty | Folge 23: Jagdinstinkt | Epitaph

Chastity Brown | Sing to the Walls | Silhouette of Sirens | Sankofa

Arum Rae | Made for Love | Loose Ends | Loners

Miko Marks & The Resurrectors | Race Records | Feel Like Going Home (Deluxe Version) | Our Vinyl Sessions

Vance Joy | Dream Your Life Away (Special Edition) | The Evolution of Vance Joy
| Nation of Two

Valerie June | Fade Into You | The Order Of Time | Owls, Omens, and Oracles

Michael Kiwanuka | Kiwanuka | Love & Hate | Small Changes

The Last Shadow Puppets | Everything You've Come To Expect (Deluxe Edition) |
The Age Of The Understatement | The Dream Synopsis

Hamilton Leithauser | I Had a Dream That You Were Mine | Black Hours (Deluxe
Edition) | This Side of the Island

Thomas Dollbaum | Wellswood | Birds of Paradise | Drive All Night

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/>

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](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 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