

Arizona Audio Video Club

Newsletter for July/August, 2022

Steering Committee Members

Members-At-Large	Roy Cook , John Harvell , Dave Hjortland , Jeff Kalina , Paul Righello , Ben Taylor
Secretary	David Snyder
Treasurer	Deb Snyder
Newsletter Editor	David Snyder
Activity Groups Coordinator	Walter Nash

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SpeakerFest 2022

After nearly a year of planning, SpeakerFest is finally a wrap! By all metrics, our club achieved everything we set out to do. The goal was to provide folks in the Phoenix metro area with a unique opportunity to experience at least fifteen pairs of affordable yet critically acclaimed loudspeakers. The speakers selected were generally not available for audition at local shops, and most have recently been popular with YouTube reviewers. Requirements were that they must be currently shipping stand-mount products available for under \$3,000/pair. Jeff and Paul overachieved, sourcing sixteen fine pairs spread across three rooms at the Fountain Hills Community Center.



The Exhibits included:

1. ATC SCM 11, Courtesy of Lone Mountain Audio, Brad Lunde, Leland Leard
2. KLH Model 5, Courtesy of KLH Audio, Jeff Dano
3. KEF R3, Courtesy of OmniClassic Recording, Ben Taylor
4. Sonus Faber Lumina II, Courtesy of Dedicated Audio, Dan & Matt Harmon
5. Totem Sky, Courtesy of LMC Entertainment, Mike Ware, Paul Henningsen
6. Philharmonic BMR Monitors, Courtesy of Philharmonic Audio, Dennis Murphy

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7. Polk Audio Legend L200, Courtesy of Polk Audio, George Klopfer
8. LSA Signature 80, Courtesy of LSA Audio, Walter Liederman
9. Tekton Design Impact Monitors, Courtesy of Woolsons Audio, Larry Woolson
10. Monitor Audio 100 Gold, Courtesy of Dedicated Audio, Dan Harmon
11. Buchardt Audio S400 MkII, Courtesy of Mads Buchardt
12. Triangle Comete 40th Anniversary, Courtesy of Frank Gazzo
13. GoldenEar BRX, Courtesy of Chris Volk, GoldenEar Technology
14. GR-Research X-LS Encore, Courtesy of Stephen Scharf
15. Falcon Acoustics Q7, Courtesy of Paul Righello
16. SpeakerLab Point 1+, Courtesy of Tom Hall

A secondary but important goal was to grow our club's membership which has waned over the past two years due to COVID lockdowns and related concerns. Before the event, **our paid membership was 57 audiophiles. It's now 142:** a nearly 250% increase! These are definitely exciting times; however, it means that we'll need to work hard on new club features and benefits to retain these members into 2023. If you would like to help us make this happen, **contact any current member of the Steering Committee about joining us.** We'll vote on a new Steering Committee in January, but anyone is welcome to start getting involved early.



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We gave folks the opportunity to write down their three favorite speakers from the event. Only about half of those in attendance submitted answers; here are the results:

SPEAKER MODEL	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Total Votes
ATC SCM 11	2	8	4	14
Buchart Audio S400 MK II	2	2	1	5
Falcon Acoustics Q7 kit	1	2	3	6
GoldenEar BRX	0	3	4	7
GR-Research X-LS Encore	0	2	3	5
KEF R3	3	6	5	14
KLH Model 5	0	5	4	9
LSA Signature 80	1	1	3	5
Monitor Audio 100 Gold	2	4	4	10
Philharmonic BMR Monitor	29	7	2	38
Polk Audio Legend L200	0	1	2	3
Sonus Faber Lumina II	0	1	2	3
SpeakerLab Point 1+	2	0	4	6
Tekton Impact Monitor	3	6	1	10
Totem Sky	1	2	2	5
Triangle Comete	6	2	4	12
TOTAL VOTES	52	52	48	152

Not surprisingly, **the Philharmonic BMR was the runaway favorite**. The ATC and KEF speakers tied for silver and the Triangle Comete 40th Anniversary earned a spot on the podium with a bronze rating. Of course, this is an unscientific survey that we took only for entertainment value. The fact that each of them received at least one

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first or second place rating indicates that these are *all* competent speakers and highlights the broad diversity of listening preferences represented. There truly was something for everyone.

Constraints in speaker positioning seemed to favor some speakers more than others. For example, most of us thought the Sonus Faber Lumina II sounded much better than the Polks at Jeff's place yet both garnered identical scores at the event. The Buchardt S400 MK II delivered jaw-dropping performance in our Loft (after thoughtful setup and some EQ) but also made a lackluster showing. I'll be treating the X-LS Encores to a ["Jim Smith" style tuning](#) next week. Members who don't mind driving up to Peoria are welcome to come by for a listen before I send them back to Stephen Scharf at the end of the month. Contact me for details.

I don't have a complete list of raffle items and winners, but I understand that Phil Jackson of Parasound and Jerry Willsie of Straight Wire pulled fourteen winning tickets. Among the prizes were the ELAC Uni-Fi Reference [UBR62](#) and [UFR52](#) speakers from the Orchard Audio room, [Zphono](#), [Zphono XRM](#), and [Zamp](#) products plus a selection of music from Parasound, and cables from Straight Wire. Attendees had better than a one in ten chance of walking away with more than just a good time. Thanks so much to Jerry, Phil, and ELAC for their incredible generosity!



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The only disappointing metric was the number of members who attended—only twelve plus nine volunteers. That’s about 37%. If you were in-town and decided not to join us, please let us know why. The feedback will be valuable for next year.

Here are a few more photos from the event:



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July Event Summary and Photos

About fifteen of us assembled at Faith Lutheran Church to explore the effect of adding time delay to the main speakers in order to achieve better subwoofer integration. The product featured to perform this feat was a [miniDSP SHD](#) on kind loan from member Paul Zidel. Loudspeakers were the GR-Research [X-LS Encores](#), which would be among the speakers exhibited later at SpeakerFest in August. The subwoofer was an SVS [3000 Micro](#), which proved to be plenty potent. A Topping [PA5](#) integrated amp and Topping [E50](#) DAC completed the setup.



David played a number of sine sweeps so that we could all see the effect of adding delay using the SHD's controls. Members in attendance were patient with the sweeps but grateful for them to end so that we could all enjoy music streamed from TIDAL and Qobuz for the remainder of the event. Here are a few more photos, some of which members had a chance to preview back in July (in case they look familiar):

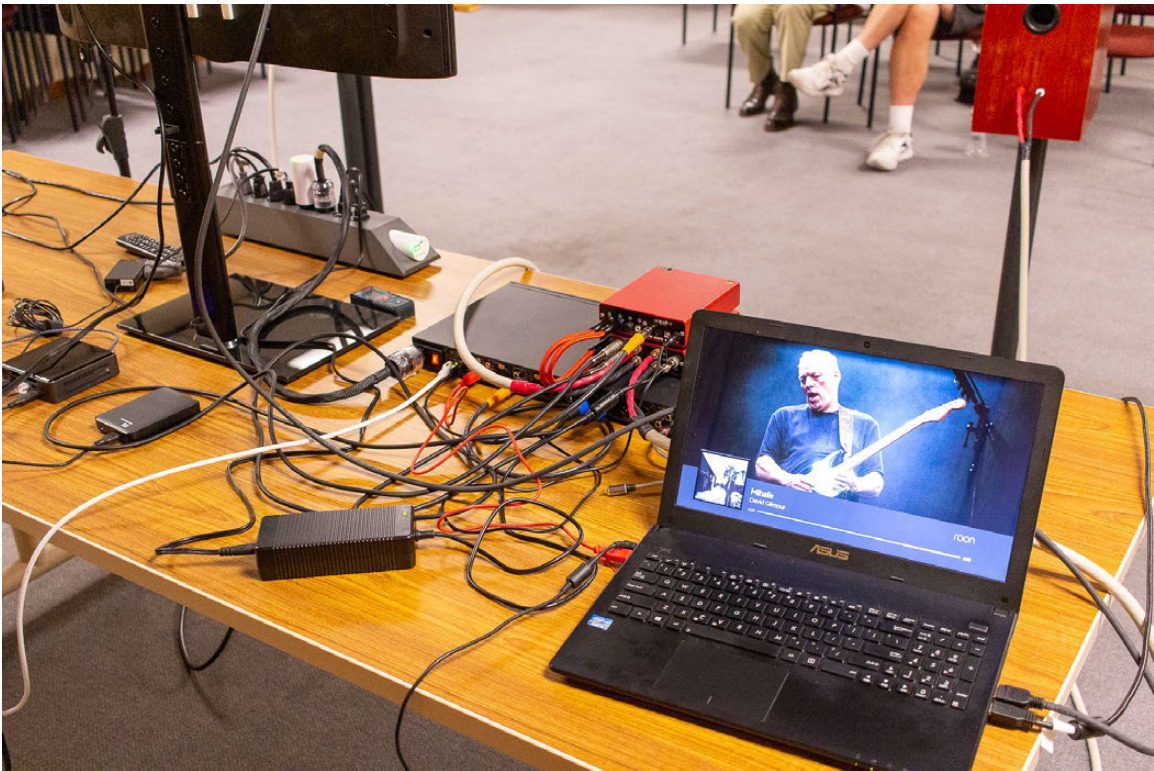
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Tentative 2022 Event Calendar

September:	TBD - Vintage Audio?
October:	Progressive Listening Night
November/December:	Swap Meet

This calendar is subject to change as we have many more great ideas coming in from members, so please stay tuned. I hope we can count on you to participate in 2022!

September Event Announcement

Coming off of the heels of SpeakerFest 2022, which was a massive undertaking, we're still discussing plans for the September event. A number of folks have suggested a Vintage audio event. If you have great sounding vintage gear that you'd like to showcase, please let a member of the Steering Committee know this week.

>>> [Click Here](#) to join or renew your AZAVClub Membership <<<

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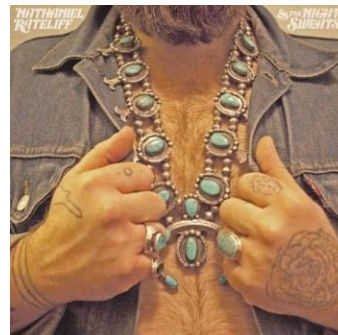
Dave's Record Reviews

From Dave Hjortland

[Nathaniel Ratliff & the Night Sweats](#)

(Stax, LP & CD, 2015)

Every so often I like to review a more recent album, just so the one or two folks who actually read my reviews don't get the impression that I only listen to music from the previous century. Perhaps I should be discussing one of the albums Ratliff has released since this 2015 album, his first with his current backing band. However I don't have those (at least not yet) and I do own this one, so...



Ratliff launched his Denver-based music career in 2002. He has performed and released albums both as a solo artist and with backing bands he has formed, of which Night Sweats is the third. He is a truly multi-talented man, and as well as writing most (all?) of his songs he offers up impressive vocal chops and is skilled on a number of instruments. His music can be said to be an amalgam of styles encompassing folk, Americana, and rock, and many listeners will identify strong elements of soul and rhythm & blues. This is not to imply that his music is all derivative – his sound is his own. Ratliff's albums and live performances have garnered him considerable critical attention, most of it favorable, and a dedicated fan base

The lead cut of this album is my favorite, "I Need Never Get Old," a killer R&B number complete with horns and a beat that will get couch potatoes movin' and groovin'. Ratliff is versatile in style, and other cuts attest to those elements of folk and Americana I mentioned. Side 2 closes the album with a cut called "Mellowing Out," which despite its title is not sleepy-time material – it's slower yet involving. But my other favorite cut on the album closes the first side, "S.O.B.," which was released as a single and achieved some success as a minor hit. It varies between a hand-clapping, gospel-inspired vocal and a pull-out-the-stops rouser chorus. If you have a heart condition you may want to check with your doctor before listening to this at any volume above a whisper.

It is appropriate that this record was released on the current reincarnation of the Stax record label. At certain moments you could almost swear that this is straight out of that legendary label's catalog from the 60's. But it is too modern for that. The production values alone – which are excellent – bring out depth and soundstage that that label never dreamed of. This is very much a contemporary product. I haven't heard and thus cannot attest to the sound quality of the CD, but the audio presentation of the LP is impressive indeed. Good Stuff.

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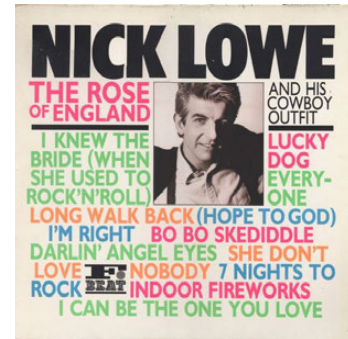
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Nick Lowe – [The Rose of England](#)

(Columbia/CBS, LP & CD, 1985)

If rock-pop music is of no interest to you, you may want to skip over the review of this album. I don't think you should, of course, but that is what this record is – basically pop music with its heart and foundation rooted in rock. At least for the most part.

Nick Lowe is an influential figure in the rock/pop genre of music, especially in his native England but also in the US and around the world. As well as enjoying a long and prolific solo career he has played with a number of bands, produced many records, and written many well-known songs covered by other artists. Many artists/songwriters claim him as an inspiration. I could write about pretty much any of his other solo albums with – ahem – my usual sparkling prose and impressive insight (cough). I choose this one simply because it is my favorite of his catalog, an extraordinarily well-done album that did not achieve the recognition it deserved.



The opening cut, “I Knew the Bride (When She Used to Rock and Roll)” is an out-and-out rocker, that he wrote for and was a hit for his band-mate Dave Edmunds on an album 8 years before this Lowe release. It has been covered by other artists, and it has its own Wikipedia page, as do certain other Lowe songs. While many of the songs here are, as mentioned, rock-oriented, that is not all that displays Lowe's talent. He does a cover of “Indoor Fireworks,” an Elvis Costello song, that is a sentimental, beautiful and touching reminiscence of love on the rocks.

But my nomination as the best song of the record is the title cut. The first time I heard it I thought, “Wow, this song is really crafted!” an impression that revisits me every time I hear it. It's a gently rocking song about WWI and the pathos of British families and soldiers during that great conflict. The lyrics, melody, and outstanding musicianship all come together to present a most engaging listen.

Again, any of Lowe's albums – some 15 LPs to date, I believe, or 21 if you include different compilations – have worthwhile music on them. He is one of the most influential songwriters in his field for good reason. Oh, and I probably needn't mention it, but the sound of the LP is superior to that of the CD.

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Dion – [Yo Frankie](#)

(Arista, LP & CD, 1989)

Dion (DiMucci) exploded out of the Bronx in the late 1950's to become one of the most popular performers of rock-pop music of the day. With his first group, the Belmonts, then with the Del-Satins and solo, he racked up no less than 39 Top 40 hits in the late 50's and 60's (thank you, Wikipedia). Though he continued to perform and record, his popularity waned in the 70's. In the 1980's his muse got religion and he came out with a number of Christian-music albums which were well-received in that genre but not what you would call commercially successful. Then in 1989 he returned to his secular roots with this album, which is nothing less than a glorious rock'n'roll achievement.



The first cut, "King of the New York Streets," declares in no uncertain terms that he has survived, he has triumphed, and he has returned to the music that made him famous. And that's just for openers. Ah, that wonderful, Bronx-flavored voice, with powerful backing by some of the best talents in rock music! What talents, I hear you ask? All but one of the cuts are produced by guitar master/rock producer luminary Dave Edmunds, who also plays on and sings background on many of the numbers. Also on board are some other major names who cite Dion as an influence, including Lou Reed, K.D. Lang, Paul Simon, Patty Smyth, Bryan Adams, and a number of other talented if lesser-known folks.

Other songs such as "And the Night Stood Still," "Written on the Subway Wall," "Drive All Night," and "Loving You is Killing Me" will impress the listener with the sheer power and talent on offer here. To be sure there are a couple of turkeys on the album, and to my mind the title cut would qualify as one of those. And if you want to quibble you might suggest that this album is somewhat over-produced. Maybe it is – a bit. However for the most part this is prime-quality listening – basically a triumph of a major talent supported by many other talents. It deserves a spot in the collection of anyone who claims to be fond of rock music.

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Classics Corner

Frank Sinatra – [Sinatra Sings the Select Cole Porter](#)
(Capitol, LP & CD, 1965)

Some of you may appreciate the music of this icon, others may share the almost inborn, instinctive dislike of him that I grew up with and only managed to shed later in life after the repeated efforts of a dedicated friend. As a human being, the “Chairman of the Board” was no paragon of virtue. As a singer, well... any list of popular vocalists of the last century will have to place him at or near the top. The songs on this album are by one of the greatest songsmiths the country has ever seen, without whose work the “American Songbook” would be much the poorer. The band/orchestra is directed by Nelson Riddle, who is acknowledged as one of the most accomplished practitioners of his art of the last century. And the records from which this collection was culled – and it is a compilation of previously released material – were recorded by Capitol Records in their considerable prime.



So – Sinatra. Porter. Riddle. Capitol. Quite an alignment of talent coming together here. And the result? Well, amazing is certainly a good adjective. Another reviewer (Karen Croft) states: “This is probably the best compilation of Sinatra songs available. Cole Porter's romantic wit, Nelson Riddle's sense of timing, and Sinatra's voice combined in these cuts in a way not bettered in the history of pop music.” Most critics would probably not be quite that effusive, but you get the idea.

These songs were recorded after his early work. He had achieved fame as a singer, evolved and honed his art as a vocalist, and was pretty much at the height of his powers. He would go on to found Reprise Records and continue his career as a singer and movie star. But his Capitol recordings stand as worthy of the label “classic” as anything he ever did.

“I’ve Got You Under My Skin” leads off the album, and if you have the slightest receptivity to this sort of music whatsoever, you will likely find this getting under your skin. It continues on with “I Concentrate on You,” “You Do Something to Me,” “Anything Goes,” and other songs, many of which are part of that aforementioned Great American Songbook – and those that aren’t are near-misses.

If you only own one Sinatra album, should this be it? Well, there are a couple others I might nominate for that honor (also from Riddle and Capitol), but you could certainly do worse than this and it’s the one that ignited my own interest in his work.

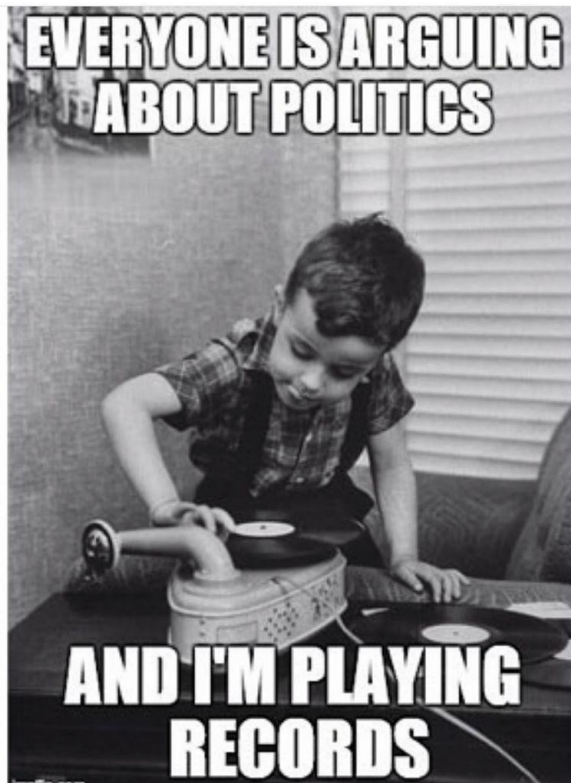
So, the LP or the CD? I compared my copy of the 1965 mono LP with the 1991 CD, and the sound of the latter actually compared quite favorably. (Neither of them bother to attribute which previous Sinatra albums these songs were taken from, an inexplicable omission to my mind.) The CD does add in 4 ‘bonus’ tracks not on the

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original album which are not attributed either, but other sources say they are from soundtracks of films that Sinatra appeared in. So – my recommendation would have to come in for (gasp) the CD.

Now you'll have to excuse me while I concoct a martini and retire to my system for another listen to this album.



*And that's all for this time, folks.
Keep those records spinnin'!*

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Dealer Area

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

Equipment Dealers:

[Acoustic Designs Group](#)

[Dedicated Audio](#)

[LMC Entertainment](#)

[Woolson Audio](#)

[Arizona HiFi](#)

[USA Tube Audio](#)

[Audio Video Excellence](#)

[Big Ear Stereo](#)

Vinyl:

[Record High in Phoenix](#)

[In-Groove Records](#)

Repairs:

James Koch

james@highendrepair.com

Audio Doctor

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

Jeff's Professional Audio Repair - also car stereo work

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Richard Jensen - Turntable Set-up and record cleaning

ANALOG resource

602 717 2399 | worksbau@gmail.com

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Humor

**My wife asked me to stop
singing "I'm A Believer"
by The Monkees because
she found it annoying.
At first, I thought she
was kidding.**

But then I saw her face...