Multichannel Final Speaker Demo Event

Review by David Das

I had the pleasure of attending the Multichannel Final Speaker Demo Event at Ravi Velnati's residence on Saturday, October 24, 2026. Ravi is the US Distributer of Final Electrostatic Speakers. This was a follow up event to the Final Model 35 demo on July 18, 2026.



Ravi had rearranged his spacious 18' x 24' living room with a 20' high ceiling to the best of his ability to give us a glimpse of the magic one can experience from an array of Final Electrostatic panels wired for multichannel sound augmented by 6 subwoofers.

I arrived early at 1:30pm to take all the photos and learn about all the gear he had configured and calibrated for this special event. Club President John Harvell and Steering Committee Member Joe Roberts came in at 2pm followed by Club Member Nick Mavrikos. A bit later another individual named Jason joined us who may become a future club member.

This was an intimate gathering giving each one of us plenty of opportunities to enjoy the best multichannel surround sound from the sweet spot.

I was quite overwhelmed by the amount of gear Ravi had on display in his residence that is serving double duty as his showroom for the Final, Coda and Starke Sound brands that he represents.

Equipment used in the multichannel demo

Main Left and Right Speakers

Final Model M7 Electrostatic Speakers.



Center Channel Speaker

Final Model M3 positioned horizontally as a Center Channel Speaker





Surround Speakers

Final Model M5 Electrostatic Panels.



Final Model M5 Rear View



Dolby ATMOS Height Speakers

Ravi had mounted 4 Final Model M1 Electrostatic Panels on stands to serve as Dolby ATMOS Height Speakers.



The Final M1 speakers mounted on the tall stands reached almost mid ceiling height.



Subwoofers

Ravi configured 6 Starke Sound SUB5 Flagship Subwoofers daisy chained together.

He had 3 units in the front of the room.



He had 3 units in the rear.



Each SUB5 unit features a massive 17” driver with an industry leading 120mm excursion housed in a sealed enclosure. These subwoofers play down to 8Hz and costs $7,500 each.





Jim Fosgate pure analog 7.1 channel surround processor

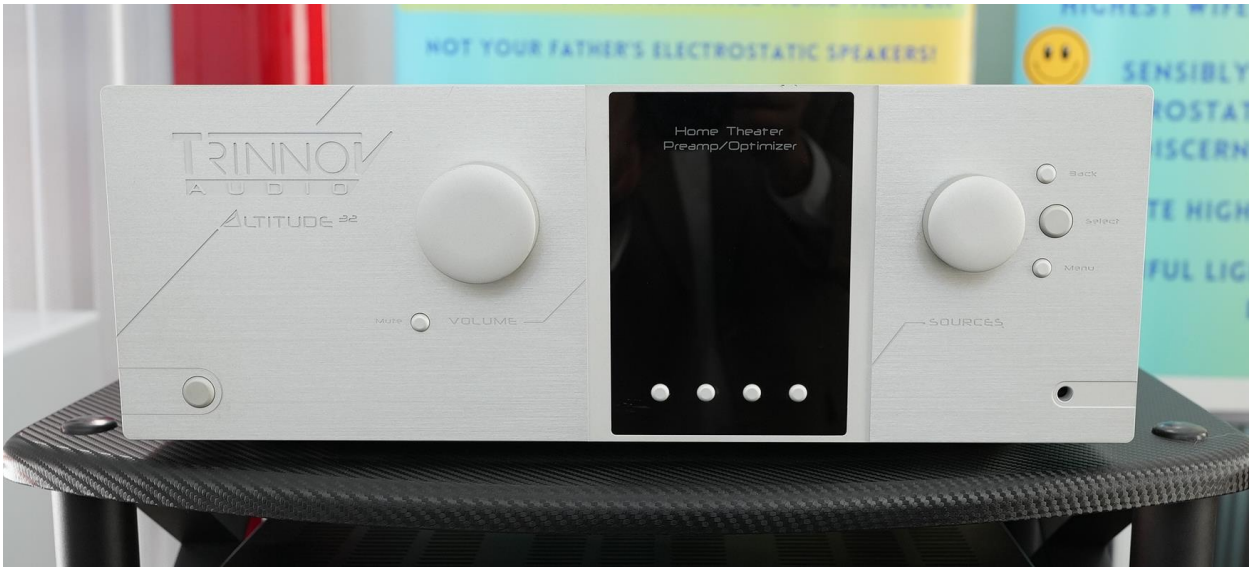
Ravi featured a rare pure analog all-tube Fosgate Audionics FAP-V1 7.1 surround sound processor/preamplifier designed by Jim Fosgate, inventor of Dolby Surround Sound.





Trinnov Altitude 32 processor

Ravi had a Trinnov Altitude 32 reference processor to showcase his full Dolby ATMOS 7.6.4 layout using 7 Bed-level Speakers, 6 Subwoofers and 4 Height Speakers.



McIntosh A/V Processor

McIntosh MX160 A/V Processor. This unit was not used for the multichannel demo.



Parasound Preamp

Parasound HALO P7 pure analog 7.1 channel audiophile preamplifier.



Parasound HALO P6 2.1 channel Preamplifier



Universal Disc Player

Oppo BDP-105 flagship universal audiophile 3D Blu-ray media player featuring dual ESS Sabre 32 Reference DACs.



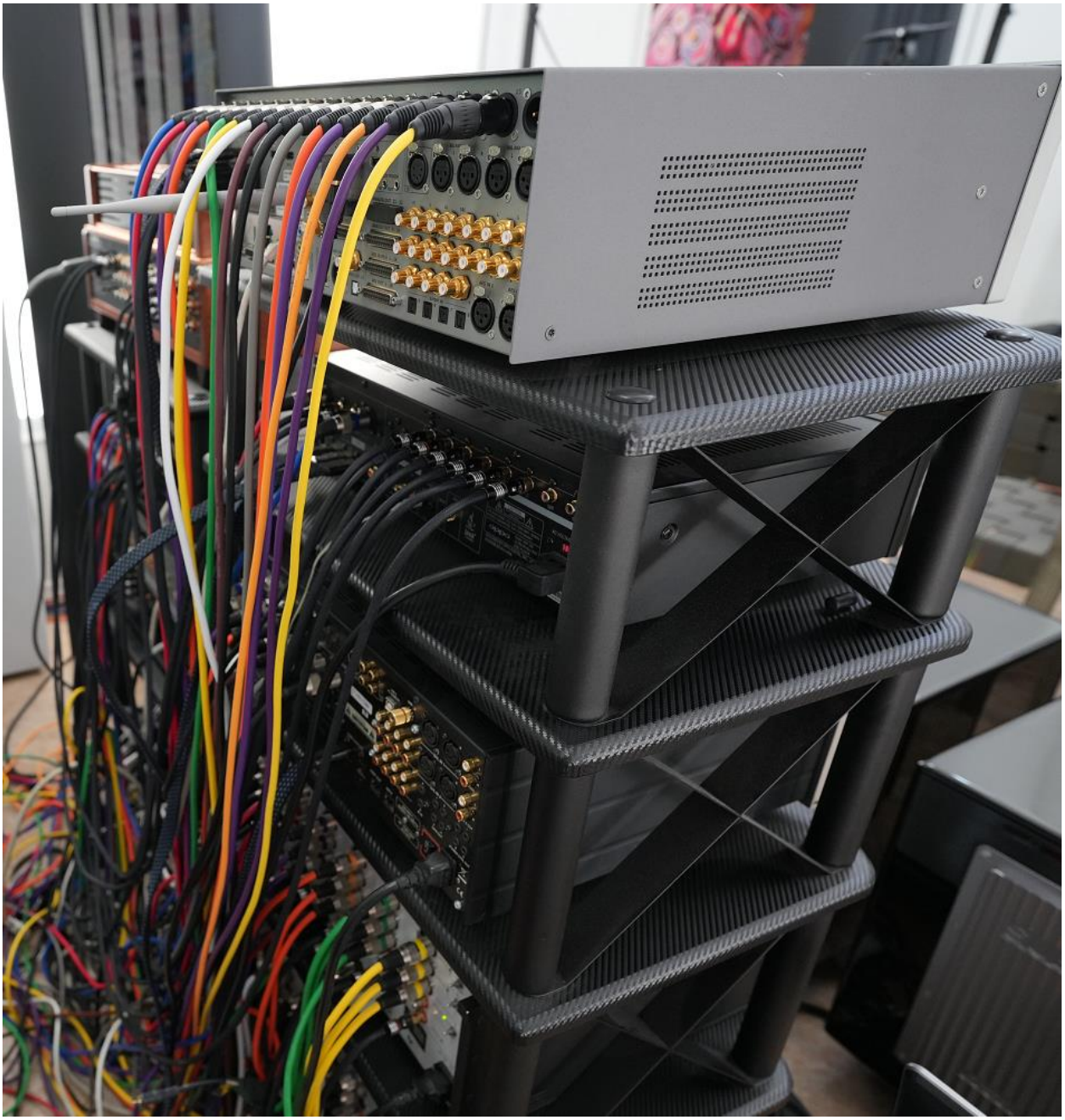
Power Amp

Starke Sound Halo A3 3-channel power amp rated at 620 W/Ch



Wiring

This photo gives you an idea of the complex wiring running through the Trinnov Altitude 32 processor.



Here are a couple of more photos of this impressive multichannel setup.





The multichannel demo

Ravi had indicated that he would be rearranging his living room for this special multichannel event. When I saw his setup for the first time I was overwhelmed with the sheer amount of electronics that he had managed to squeeze in. This was a monumental effort by Ravi and his teenage son Dhruv. I applaud the time, effort and patience it took to hookup, test and calibrate all the gear. This was a sight to behold.

Ravi proceeded to play a sequence of carefully curated multichannel high resolution DSD tracks. They were the best audiophile tracks to showcase the added realism and ambience from studio mastered multichannel recordings.

The Trinnov Altitude 32 did a fantastic job steering the multichannel audio through the 7.6.4 Dolby ATMOS setup. There is a reason why this unit is considered the industry reference.

When Ravi switched over to the pure analog all-tube Fosgate Audionics FAP-V1 7.1 surround sound processor/preamplifier, I heard some extra warmth and subtle details.

Between the Trinnov Altitude 32 and the Fosgate FAP-V1 it comes down to personal choice.

If you are an audiophile with an interest in multichannel audio you may prefer the Fosgate. It handles 7 bed channels and a subwoofer channel. It costs a fraction of the Trinnov Altitude 32.

If you are into movies, your top pick will be the Trinnov Altitude 32. It handles the Dolby Height Channels which the Fosgate cannot. The Trinnov comes with its unique calibration microphone that makes it a breeze to accurately calibrate all your bed level speakers, Dolby ATMOS height speakers and multiple subwoofers.

Ravi's multichannel setup would have been ideal in a larger room measuring 32' x 51' with a 20' high ceiling. The lowest fundamental note you can get in such a room is 11Hz. It would have been the ideal environment to test the potential of the 6 Starke Sound SUB5 subwoofers working in tandem.

Ravi's living room measures 18' x 24' with a 20' high ceiling. The lowest fundamental note you can hear is 23.4Hz. This was not the right environment to experience the full potential of the massive SUB5 subwoofers.

I mentioned to Ravi at the very onset that these subwoofers were not integrating well with the Final M7/M5 electrostatic panels. The bass from the subwoofers felt too overpowering to me. It prevented me from enjoying the delicacy of the electrostatic panels. Ravi proceeded to turn off all the six SUB5 units except one. Even then, with just one SUB5 in the mix, the bass failed to seamlessly blend into the lower mids produced by the electrostatic panels.

I have heard how well the 11" subwoofer in the Sonus Faber Lilium blends in with the mid-range and treble at John Harvell's residence. I was marveled at the texture and definition of each bass note. The integration is so perfect that you forget the mathematics behind the design architecture and get instantly drawn into the musical performance happening right in front of you.

It is true that the 11" driver in the Sonus Faber Lilium can only play down to 20Hz which is adequate for audiophile tracks.

The 17" inch driver in the Starke Sound SUB5 can play down to 8Hz. However, it lacks the articulation, texture and definition on the bass notes. They all sounded one dimensional to me. I felt the SUB5 would have fared better in a much larger room playing movie sound tracks where you want to hear and feel the power of explosions. It was not the right gear to augment electrostatic panels playing audiophile tracks.

Audiophiles who are into 2-channel audio love to hear a convincing recreation of a soundstage that is wide, deep and tall using only 2 speakers strategically positioned in their listening area. Once again, I would consider John Havell's Lilium speaker setup as the reference for projecting a soundstage that is natural, precise, wide and deep as present in the recording and emotionally satisfying for long listening sessions.

In Ravi's multichannel setup there were too many speakers placed too close to one another limited by the room dimensions. Sound was hitting my ears from all directions creating more confusion in my mind than the simple music I was trying to follow. John Harvell mentioned that he was missing the soundstage. I think the close positioning of the 7 bed level speakers and 4 height speakers in this crammed environment was the culprit.

The surround and height speakers needed to be placed further apart. Multichannel music works best as in the recording of a live symphony orchestra where the rear and surround microphones captures the subtle hall ambience and uses the rear and surround speakers in your room to add that subtle ambience back without overpowering your main speakers tasked with recreating the soundstage.

Of course, there are other fun surround sound recordings like the "On Air" DTS CD by Alan Parsons. The sound comes from 5 full range speakers positioned around you. You are meant to be inside this 360 degree sonic bubble where the sound ping pongs in every direction. I call this party mode. It is fun but the novelty wears off. You do need to have 5 full range speakers at ear level positioned on a circle around your listening position to enjoy the full effect.

Closing Thoughts

Ravi has acquired an impressive collection of high-end audio/video gear. You can tell this is his passion the moment you visit his residence. Ravi could have happily retired after his successful career at GM. However, driven by his quest for high-end multichannel audio he has taken an enormous financial risk to start his own dealership with CODA and Starke Sound and become the sole US Distributer for Final Audio.

At the moment he sells directly on AudioGon under his storefront name [HighResHiFi.]



Ravi has built quite a loyal following in 3 years. He has grand plans to open an acoustically treated showroom in the future where he could demonstrate the full potential of the brands he carries.

Ravi's residence is not the right environment to evaluate what is possible with a full blown FINAL electrostatic multichannel setup. Ravi rented a giant ballroom at the California Audio Show 2026 that took place June 26-28. He used the flagship Final M35 model along with other Final speakers, CODA amps, Starke Sound Subs and a Trinnov Altitude 32 processor/preamp in a multichannel demo. This was the only multichannel presentation at the show. It was highly appreciated by the show attendees.

If you wish to hear what is possible be sure to attend any of his upcoming Audio Shows.
Ravi can be reached at highreshifi@gmail.com

I think the Parish Hall at Faith Lutheran Church would have been a better venue to host Ravi's multichannel speaker event. I understand Ravi decided not to because of the logistics of transporting all the heavy equipment.

I think the best sound I have heard at Ravi's residence were from the Final M35 flagship speakers driven by the CODA CSiB Integrated Balanced high-end stereo amplifier.

Here you see the Final M35 panels flanked by a pair of Tekton 4-10 subwoofers.



The FINAL M35 panels are full-range electrostatics that play down to 35Hz. Pairing them with the Tekton 4-10 subs extends the bass response down to 20Hz. They are crossed over at 50Hz freeing up the electrostatic panels to perform their finest in the mid and high frequencies.

After hearing all the electrostatic speakers in the Final lineup, I would say the M35 model sounds the sweetest and most revealing and emotionally captivating. An external sub is not essential. The M35 covers the audible spectrum just fine for most audiophile tracks.

If you were contemplating on purchasing a pair of electrostatic speakers, this is the model I would recommend paired with a CODA power amp.

Best regards,

David Das