



Newsletter

November 2024

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President's Message

By AAVC President John Harvell

First, I would like to welcome the following new/returning members to the current AAVC membership roles:

- Barry Rosensteel
- Nicholas Mavrikos
- Ravi Velnati

These new members joined 17 other current club members on our tour of the impressive Dan D'Agostino Master Audio Systems facility. We are truly fortunate to have an opportunity to visit such a high-end design and manufacturing facility.

Second, please come out to the Faith Hall at the Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church during the evening of 13 November (plus minus 6-9 pm). We plan for this to be a social meeting where we can spend more time meeting and talking with the current club members. We plan to have water, a small supply of soft drinks, and some snacks available to members in attendance. It would be great if members bring along a snack to interact and enjoy each other's company. The plan is to have a streamer, an amplifier system, and a set of speakers to provide background music. So, bring some ideas about what music you want to listen to. Note: Do not bring any alcoholic beverages of any style.

Finally, we are always looking for ideas for club events and can always use ideas and help from participating club members. If you think of something, pass it along to anyone on the club steering committee. And, if you are motivated, we would love to have you join us on the steering committee or as a club officer to help us put together and support future club events.

Future Meetings

November Meeting - see the president's message above.

December Meetings—Although we don't have a date yet, [USA Tube Audio](#) has agreed to host an AAVC meet and greet at their store in Scottsdale.

Also, Greg's Audio Shrine will be revisited on Saturday, December 7, 2024, for a Dolby Atmos Music listening session (see Amp Challenge article below).

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

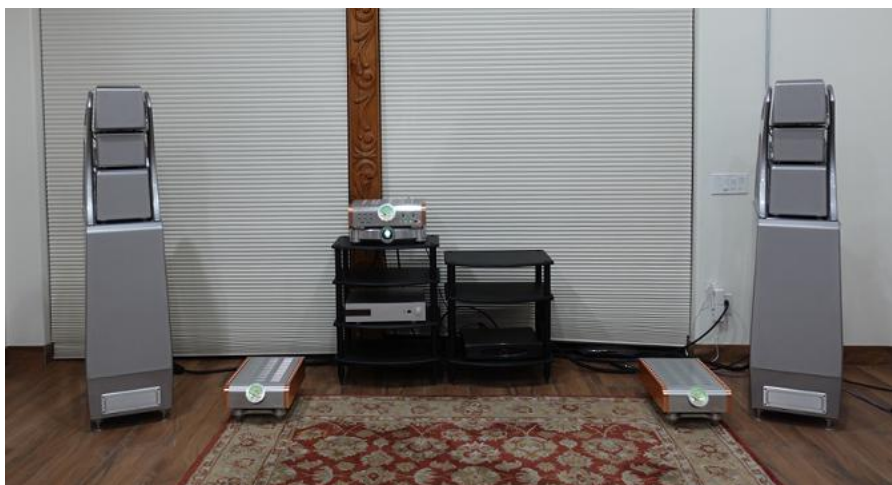
Recent Meeting - D'Agostino Master Audio Systems Tour

By David Das

I had the pleasure of participating in the Dan D'Agostino Master Audio Systems Tour with AAVC. It was a magical evening of audio demos, a walk through the production lines, and the story behind the making of the Relentless Epic 1600 Mono Amplifier narrated by the legend himself, Dan D'Agostino.

Dan greeted us at the front door and had trays of treats and drinks to get us comfortable. The tour began with Bill McKiegan, the company's president, ushering us into the demo room.

The Demo



The speakers used were a pair of [Wilson Audio Alexx V](#). These speakers have garnered raving reviews from [Stereophile Magazine](#) and [The Absolute Sound](#).



The Alexx V model, priced at \$135,000 a pair, is one step below the [Wilson Audio Chronosonic XVX](#).

Each Alexx V speaker was powered by a Dan D'Agostino [Momentum M400 MxV](#) (second generation) monoblock Power Amplifier.



These stunningly gorgeous works of art received outstanding reviews from [Stereophile Magazine](#) and [The Absolute Sound](#). Priced at \$79,500 a pair, these power amps deliver 400 Watts into 8 ohms with low distortion of 0.1% at full power.

The front end was a [Momentum C2 Preamplifier](#) fitted with the Digital Streaming Module, which retails for \$60,000.



A [Transparent PowerIsolator Reference](#) Power Conditioner (\$7,600) along with Transparent Cables was used in this system.



How does this \$282K system sound? Bill had five demo tracks lined up to showcase the level of performance this setup is capable of. It was jaw-dropping.

Demo #1

Ein Straussfest II – Cincinnati Pops Orchestra
Track 6: Magic Bullets Fast Polka, Op. 326



Ein Straussfest II
 Erich Kunzel - Composer : Various Composers

Released by **Telarc** on February 28, 1993
 Classical • 15 Tracks • 01h 07m 34s

Available in
 16-Bit CD Quality
 44.1 kHz - Stereo

The sheer crack of the bullets startled me. The impact was solid. This was the ideal demo track to experience the extreme dynamics and bass control the Momentum M400 MxV monoblock Power Amps could achieve.

Demo #2
 Saxnbass – Markus Philippe
 Track 3: Invitation



Saxnbass
 markusphilippe

Released by **iMusician Digital** on November 24, 2012
 Jazz • 13 Tracks • 56m 16s

Available in
 16-Bit CD Quality
 44.1 kHz - Stereo

I was fortunate to be sitting right on axis. When the breathy sax kicked in, I felt I could reach out and touch the player standing before me. The realism, resolution, and imaging were uncanny.

Demo #3
 Money For Nothing – Dire Straits
 Track 9: Private Investigations



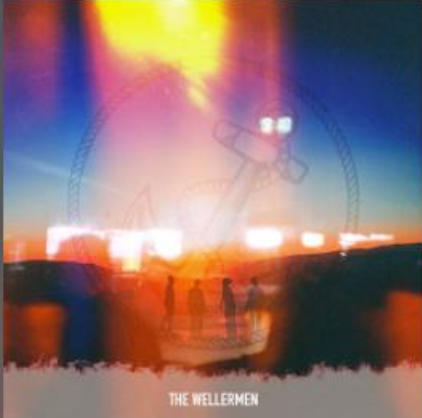
Money For Nothing
Dire Straits

Released by **Rhino - Warner Records** on June 16, 2022
Rock • 12 Tracks • 01h 06m 37s

Available in
Hi-Res AUDIO 24 bits
192.0 kHz - Stereo

The smoothness of the vocals and the guitar licks impressed me.

Demo #4
The Wellermen
Track 5: Hoist the Colors



The Wellermen
The Wellermen

Released by **Tenwest** on February 9, 2023
Folk/Americana • 13 Tracks • 42m 54s

Available in
Hi-Res AUDIO 24 bits
44.1 kHz - Stereo

The Bass Vocals amazed me.

Demo #5
Inferno - Hedegaard
Track #1: Inferno



INFERNO / Ratchets
Hedegaard

Released by **OneHundred** on November 23, 2023
Dance • 2 Tracks • 05m 19s

Available in
Hi-Res AUDIO 24 bits
44.1 kHz - Stereo

This has some aggressive synth bass lines that require a system of this caliber to do it justice.

All of these 5 Dan D'Agostino Demo Tracks are available on Qobuz. I played them back on my system and could immediately tell the night and day difference the Wilson Audio/D'Agostino pairing makes.

The Momentum power amp/preamp combo delivers astonishing dynamics, resolution, and clarity with very low distortion. You need a capable transducer like the Alexx V to exploit the full potential of these amps. The synergy between the Alexx V speakers and the Momentum amps was perfect. It was a match made in heaven. I could see why Wilson Audio features Dan D'Agostino Amps in all their marketing brochures. Dan uses Wilson Audio speakers to test his amps. He uses Wilson Audio speakers at home as well.

The Factory Tour

All the components are manually assembled on the production floor.



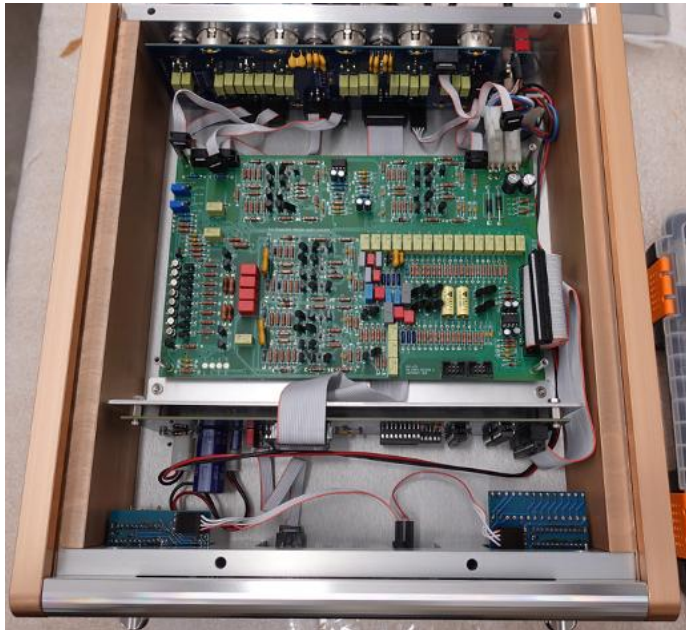


The aluminum and copper casings are milled and polished by selected third-party vendors.

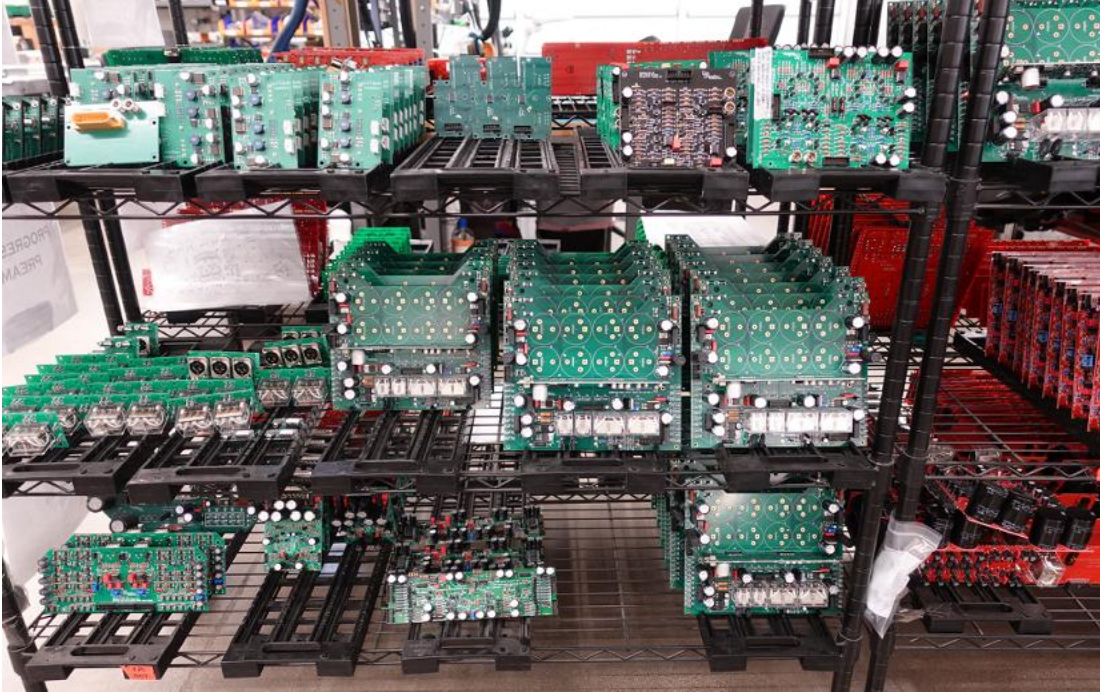
Here are some photos of several products in various stages of assembly.



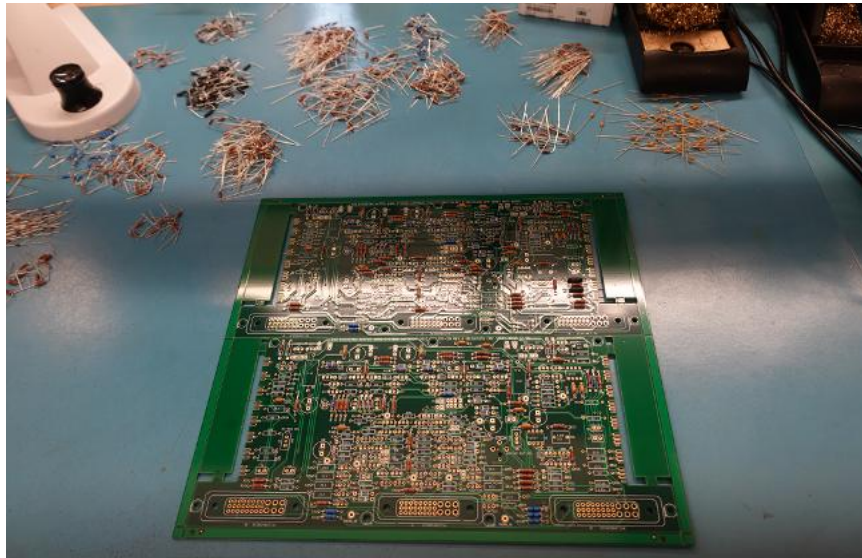


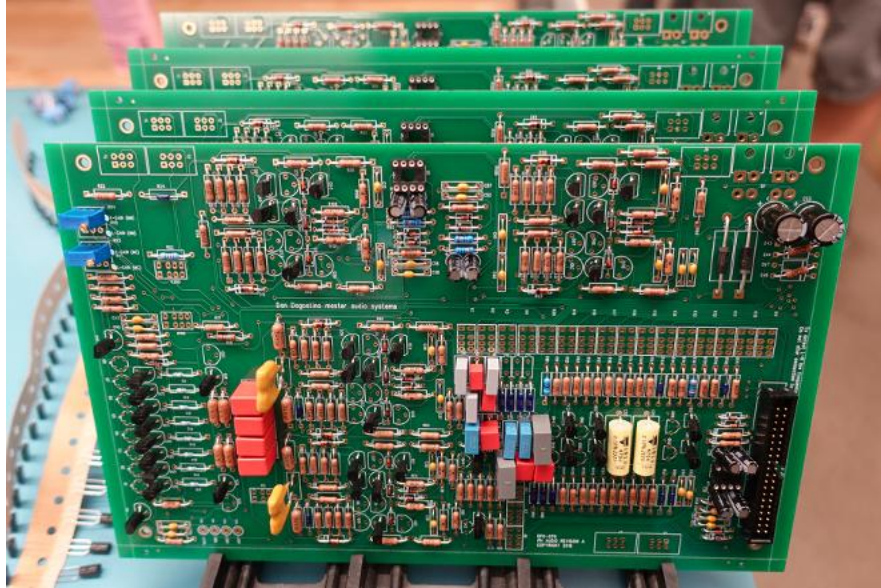






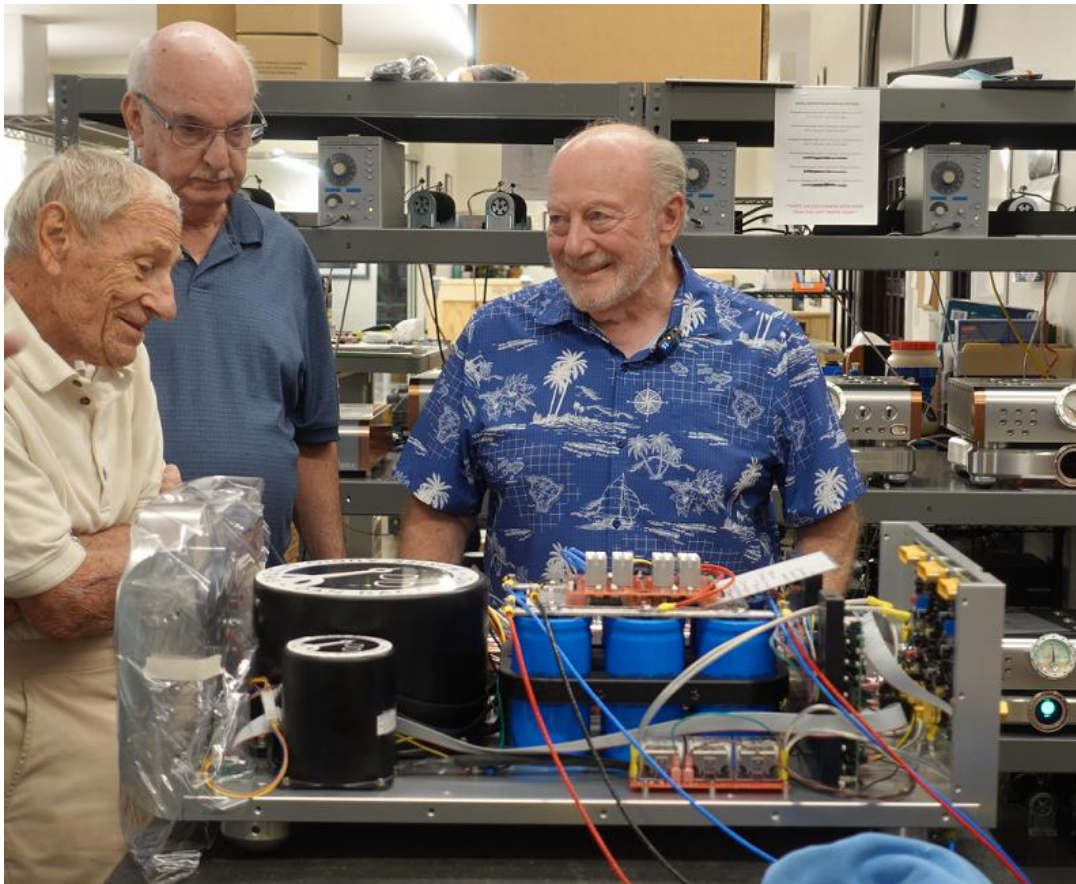
Each resistor, capacitor, inductor, and transistor is soldered by hand one at a time.





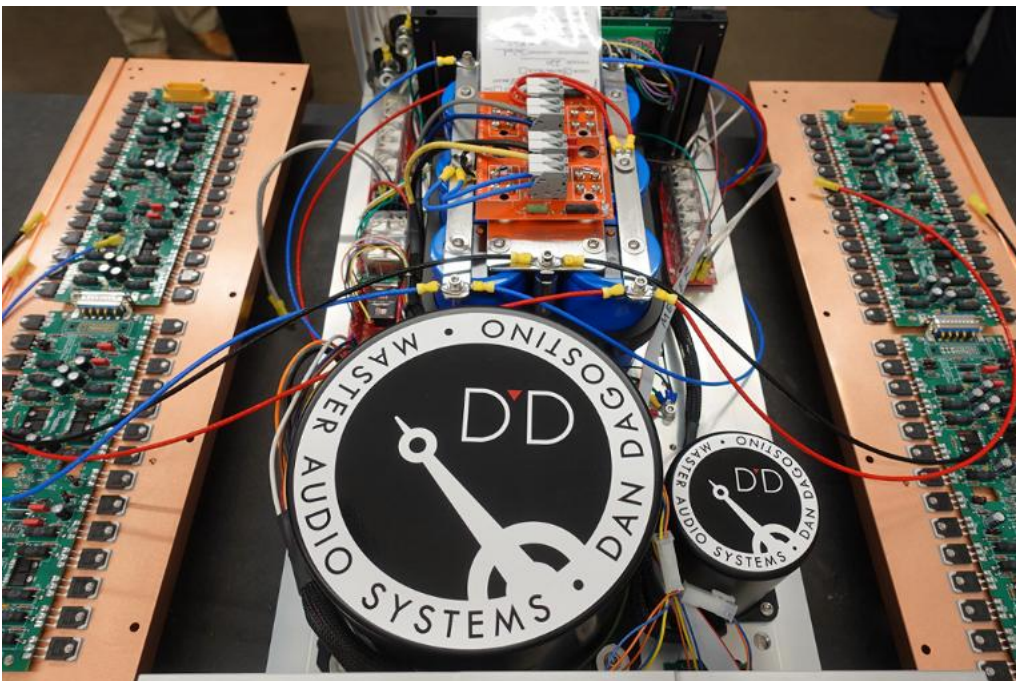
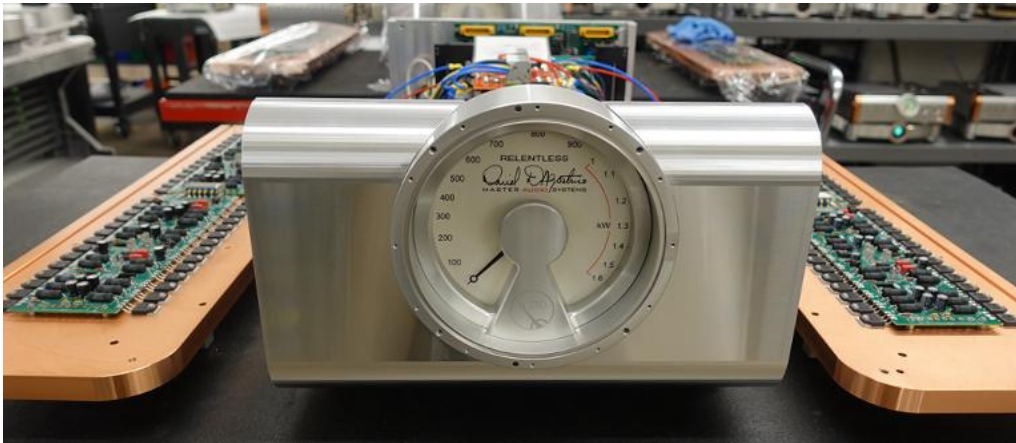
The making of the Epic 1600 Relentless Mono Amplifier

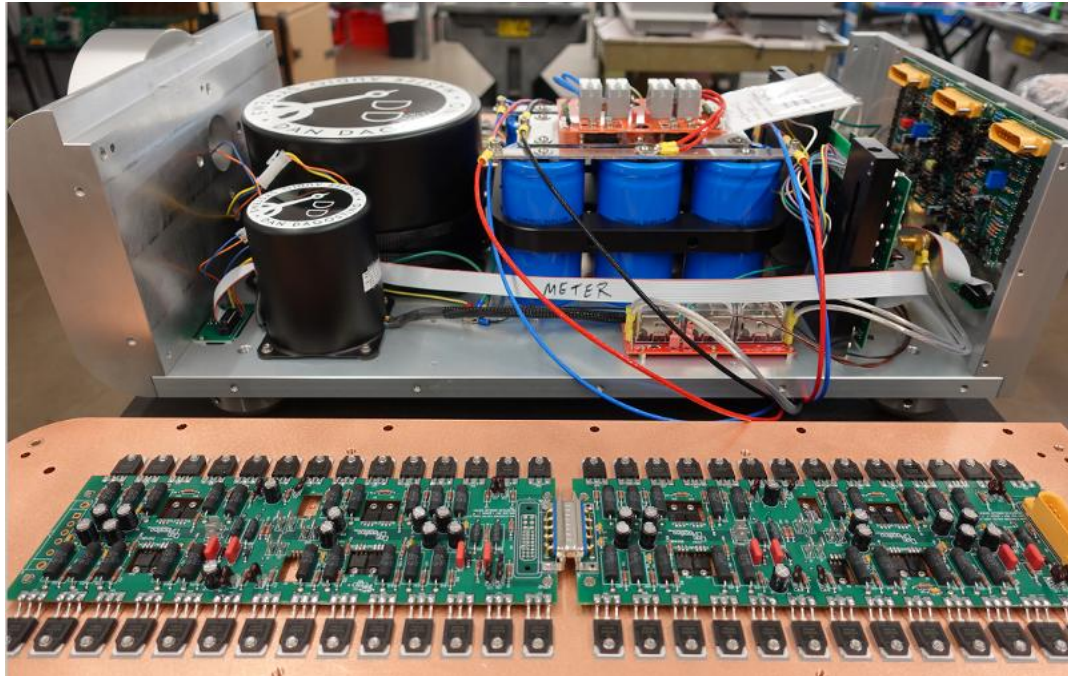
The [Epic 1600 Relentless Mono Amplifier](#) is the pinnacle of Dan's achievement in amplifier design. Dan gave us the back story behind this statement product from concept to creation.



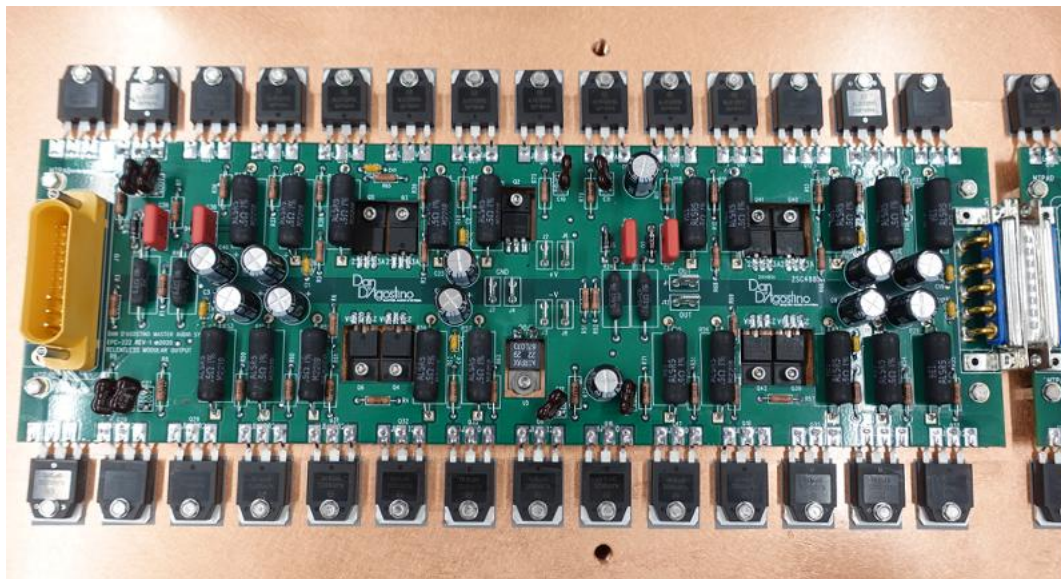
How was Dan able to achieve this incredibly low distortion of 0.007% while driving the amp at full power, delivering 1,500 watts at 8 ohms? The secret lies in having a purely balanced design with identical positive and negative halves, which, when combined, cancel out the distortions completely.

The signal-to-noise ratio exceeds 113dB, and the power supply is extremely quiet. There are 100 Output Devices. The voltage on the output stage remains constant whether the amp is run at full power at 8 ohms or 2 ohms.





You will find the Dan D'Agostino signature everywhere.



This amp delivers 1,600 watts into 8 ohms, hence the name. Its output power scales linearly to 3,200 watts at 4 ohms and 6,400 watts at 2 ohms. At idle, the amp outputs 100 watts of pure Class A power. This means that if you have an efficient speaker, the amp will predominantly operate in Class A mode.

Copper has the highest thermal conductivity of any metal. The thick copper side plates serve a dual purpose. They absorb the heat generated from the output devices on the inside while dissipating the heat to the surrounding atmosphere on the outside.

This makes it possible to maintain a steady temperature even if the amp is powered on for two weeks.

Of course, the thick aluminum base and top plates and the copper side panels contribute to the enormous 570 lb weight of these beasts. To make it easy for the customer, these amps are placed on a platform with wheels. They can be rolled out from the shipping cartons.

The heavy copper side plates can be detached by removing a few screws. Dan told us how a customer in Italy asked for help in moving these Relentless Amps down a narrow staircase leading to his basement. Bill flew to Italy and to his customer's astonishment, showed him how simple it was to disassemble the amp by removing the side panels, making it much easier to move.

Bill McKiegan has worked with Dan since 1994, when he became the President of the company. He has seen every product improvement and iteration that Dan has released. He is always cheerful, friendly, and ready to answer any user questions.

I asked Bill if he fears damaging the expensive Alexx V speakers by playing these demanding demo tracks so loud. Bill explained that speakers get damaged when paired with underpowered amps. When such amps are asked to deliver more power, they clip, sending a DC that typically ruins the tweeter. On the other hand, D'Agostino amps like the Momentum M400 MxV are designed to output 400 watts into 8 ohms, double their output to 800 watts into 4 ohms, and double yet again to 1,600 watts at 2 ohms. With so much reserve power, it is highly unlikely a connected speaker will ever receive a clipped signal.

I asked Dan if he could have used internal fans to help with the cooling, thereby making thinner copper plates possible and reducing the weight. Dan explained that he was not willing to accept fan noise on such a state-of-the-art product. He mentioned how quickly it ruined one of his test amps when he tried using a ¼" thick copper panel instead of a ½" copper panel.

I asked Bill about the significance of the Damping Factor. Companies like Parasound and Yamaha make a big deal about this. Bill explained the industry is awash in fooling customers with dubious specifications like High Damping Factor, High Current, Total Harmonic Distortion, etc. which have no standards of measurement. Any Damping Factor above 50 is all you need to see. Damping Factor can be a consideration for Tube Amps. This is not an issue with Solid State Amps. They all measure above 50. What is really important is for the amp to be able to double the power output linearly from 8 ohms to 4 ohms to 2 ohms, all while maintaining a low distortion level at full power.

Dan was asked about his thoughts on Class D power amps. Dan said all his amps are Class AB designs. This is a mature technology with over 50 years of history behind it, while Class D is relatively new. Class D amps, while being lighter and consuming less power, do not have the same level of refinement as Class AB amps. Perhaps in another decade, things may change.

Dan D'Agostino Master Audio Systems is a small company with less than 20 dedicated employees. It is privately owned, which allows Dan the freedom to follow his relentless passion in the pursuit of perfection. A single Epic 1600 Relentless amp takes 3 weeks to

hand-build. Dan would never compromise on anything. All his creations are a statement of power, finesse, and beauty.

Bill's daughter, Reagan McKiegan, was the hostess for the evening. Reagan documented the entire event using an iPhone mounted on a handheld [Hohem Gymbal Stabilizer](#) and [a RODE Wireless GO II wireless microphone](#) system. She plans to upload the entire video recording for those who could not make it. Reagan is the company's Marketing Executive.

We feel privileged to have Dan and his dedicated team in Arizona. This was a rare occasion to meet with a living legend and understand the philosophy, craftsmanship, and attention to detail that goes behind every handmade product at this Cave Creek factory.

Member's Corner

My Path Through The Audio/Video Experience

by AAVC President John Harvell

Like many things in life, I got what might be considered a late start in the audiophile game (not that I consider myself an Audiophile). At 15, my parents made the mistake of buying me an all-in-one audio system for either my birthday or as a Christmas present. That first system was a composite design made by Capehart which looked something like the image below. It had a built-in turntable and an FM tuner, and in some configurations, it came with one of those new-fangled 8-track tape systems that I thumbed my nose at. This system came with its own speakers, which made noise but were clearly suboptimal with composite walls that were about ¼" thick, really cheap drivers, and some lamp cord speaker wires that were directly wired to the boxes.



As impressive as this new system was, I decided that I could improve things by replacing the speakers delivered with this system with speakers of my own design and fabrication. No, I didn't know anything about speakers or box design... but why let that stop me? I went down to local Radio Shack and found what looked like better drivers and a crossover circuit. Then, I went about building myself a new set of speakers. I wish I had a picture of what I ended up with, but the cell phone camera hadn't been invented yet. Since the bar that the Capehart speakers set was so low, just about anything would be better. I'm surprised to say that my upgraded speaker design and construction turned out to be a significant improvement over the speakers that came with my Capehart integrated system. At that time I recall placing my speakers into the window of my bedroom and blasting music across my side yard at the maximum volume I could generate into the playground of the little grade school while sitting on the playground equipment with my friends. When my father got home, he quickly explained the error of my ways while directing me to turn that music off. At this point, I was hooked and my journey through the audio marketplace began. However, in the same vein as the tortoise in the fable my journey was a slow one. Why? I didn't have any money and had lots of other interests, which provided a drag on that limited budget.

My next audio equipment experience was modifying a 69 Ford Club Wagon van to include four additional speakers in the ceiling and a new Sony cassette tape player. I had already read enough to understand the limitations of the more popular 8-track tape systems, so I was willing to deal with the requirement to rewind tapes in the interest of improved sound quality.

During this time, I spent a lot of time at the local Tech HiFi, checking out and listening to all of the equipment that cost much more than my budget would support. In 1974, I entered college at the oldest private military school in the country in Northfield Vermont. This gave me the opportunity to interact with other students and compare notes on audio equipment. Note: That was only after the first year as initially, we were not allowed to have any music, TVs, or any other type of convenience or entertainment while we were freshmen. Once we were authorized to have music again and after I moved into my junior year, I was able to use the 100/month I got from ROTC commitments to begin to subsidize my audio gear acquisitions. So, the Capehart system gave way to a new Sansui 6060 Receiver and new Thorens TD160C turntable, and I bought a used pair of ESS AMT1B speakers from another student. My total expenditure was less than 800 dollars.



I've recently seen the vintage Sansui 6060 Receiver advertised for somewhere between 1400 and 2600 dollars. I guess I should have held onto it.



Believe it or not, I still have this turntable with the original cartridge and stylus (an ADC 101QE) in the original box. However, I remember wanting to replace the cartridge with a Stanton 681EEE cartridge (again, I was capital-limited).

Finally, the ESS AMT-1B speakers were a notable improvement with the novel Heil Air Motion Transducer. This driver had two strong triangular side electromagnets with a folded ribbon suspended between them. Note: If you ever have a pair of these, I do not suggest that you ever try to point out the ribbon element with a graphite cored

pencil. Ask me how I know. The high-frequency driver in this speaker was phenomenal, but the midrange was deficient, and the bass was a bit tubby. But I enjoyed them significantly while in college, playing all kinds of rock and blues music from bands like the Eagles, Aerosmith, The Moody Blues, Super Tramp, Led Zeppelin, Chicago, Neil Young, James Taylor, Fleetwood Mac, Jethro Tull, The Who, Styx, The Doors, etc.

My most notable experience was coming back to my room after a beer blast and rocking out with music playing on the stereo in my room in the dorm. At 1 o'clock, I heard a strong banging on my door and the regimental duty sergeant and officer told me to turn the music down. In my current state of enjoyment, I directly told them no. To which they stated that they would give me ten direct tours if I didn't. I told them to go ahead and give me the direct tours and get out of my room. So, they obliged and went on their merry way. I continued to play music to my heart's content until about 3 am that morning. Of course, the downside was that at 6 am, I was up again, dressed in my service dress uniform, and ready for open ranks inspection on the steps of the administration building. Following inspection, I had the privilege of marching on the tour pad for an hour for each of the ten direct tours I was given five hours before. But even then, it still felt like it was a good trade at the time. Or at least that is what my brain told me at the time.



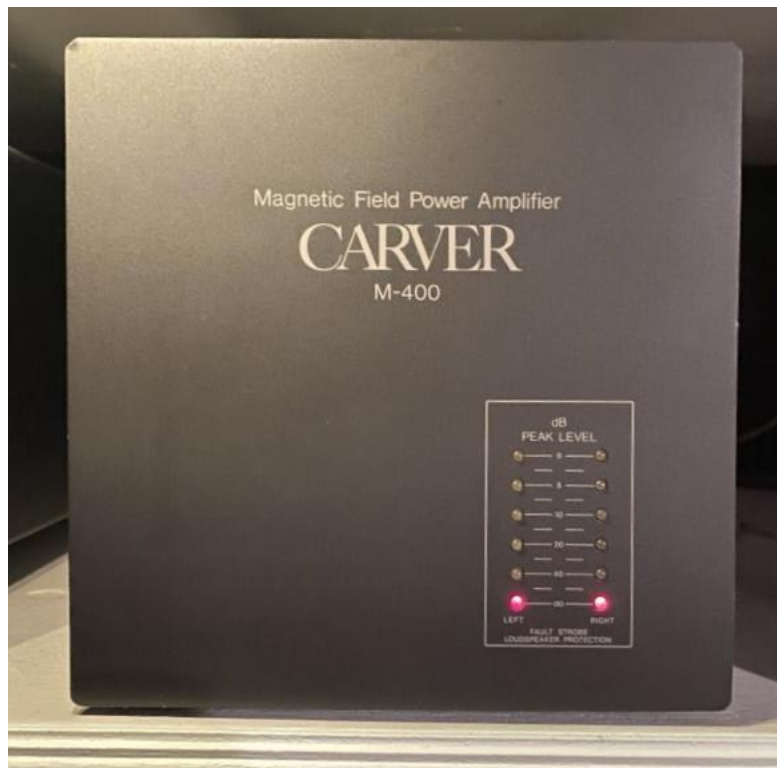
During this period, I continued to spend a lot of time at Tech HiFi in Nashua, NH and regularly lusted over upgraded speakers like the Ohm F Walsh System, the early

Infinity series. I nursed this system through Air Force assignments at Eglin AFB in the Florida panhandle and the jaunt through Wright-Patterson AFB in sunny Dayton, Ohio, before moving to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. However, in the early 80s, I was an early adopter of the new CD format due to the dramatic improvements in the noise floor for music and the elimination of snaps and pops from LP playback. So I added a 5-disk Sony CD player, and as we acquired new CDs, we progressively migrated to one of the 300-disk Sony CD carousels.

While at USAFA, the audio bug dug deeper into my heart, and I regularly went down to the local high-end stereo stores. I recall listening for hours to the Infinity IRS Beta system, which tipped the scales at somewhere between 10 and 12k. As is the story of my life, I never found that I had the money to afford these toys. So, I went out looking for other options and found a magazine called Speaker Builder. This DIY enthusiast publication was for those who think they can come up with something good for a much better price than buying the as-built systems from various audio companies. So, I read Speaker Builder regularly, educated myself a little bit, and bought multiple references like a book on the Thiel Small Parameters and how they affect speaker designs. In the 4th and 5th publications of the 1988 year, I came across an article about a speaker design that was supposed to be able to play at 120dB with 200 watts of input power and was supposed to compete with commercial speakers in the \$5k price range. So, of course, I studied this pair of articles carefully and proceeded to order all the drivers, electronics, the pedal coupler, and the materials to fabricate the boxes. I used the modeling hobby shop at the Air Force Academy to cut out all of the speaker boxes and glue them up in the basement of the house I lived in on base. After a few months of effort and about \$650 of expenditures, I had a new set of speakers to try out. However, part way through the construction, I realized that I would need some additional electronics as these speakers were bi-amped thus requiring additional power. So, I bit the bullet and acquired a new Yamaha DSP A1 surround receiver with preamp outputs.



I also found a pair of Carver Cube amplifiers, in my case, the earlier M400 model. The surround receiver was on the expensive side, but the Carver amps I got used for \$250 for the pair.



These Carver Cubes were a novel new design with very little onboard energy storage; however, the switching circuit was designed to grab all the power they needed from the wall on demand. They were designed to deliver 200 watts per channel into 8 ohms. Fun fact: Later, I found that on aggressive music passages, the lights would dim in the room when these amplifiers were playing hard. During this time, my wife and I also migrated into the surround sound world and added a laser disk player to the music system. I'm pretty sure we splurged on a fairly high-end Pioneer LD player at the time, and yes, the picture was hands and feet above anything available in a VCR at the time... and you could find a rent all of the current feature movies for a reasonable price. Additionally, I acquired a used Adcom GFA 555 amp, which I ended up using as the midrange amplifier for my Swan IV speakers. I used the Carver Cubes to power the bass modules.

One story I should tell is the first break session for my brand new Swan IV home-built speakers. I had acquired a few Telarc CDs which are known to have a very high dynamic range and strong dynamic content to demonstrate the system. In fact, the speaker builder article had specifically identified the location in the track of these recordings, which would have strong inputs. So, I hooked everything up, and I set the volume levels.... At the time, I had no idea what the volume would be as there was virtually no noise or hiss coming from the speakers. I think I was playing the aggressive section of the Assent track of the Telarc Time Warp CD, and when the

strong bass passage began to play... the speakers played at about 110 dB, my wife screamed at me, and the room instantly became very quiet. I was sure I had destroyed things... however, after placating my wife, checking the speakers, and looking at my new Yamaha surround processor, I realized that I had blown the fuses in both of the new to me Carver Cubes. Needless to say, after that I was much more careful with setting volume levels on this system.

A note should be made here: I always felt that the music I was listening to was covered with a veil during this time. I even shared some emails with the designers of the Swan IV speakers about them sounding a bit on the bright side. To say the least, this was not their experience, and they suggested that I look further for the cause of my perceived speaker sort of comings.

I moved to Virginia during the late 80s and early 90s and hooked up with a couple of fellow audio enthusiasts while at Virginia Tech. During that time, I had a chance to bring my electronics and speakers to a friend's house. The system included a Bryston Preamp and 4B power amp playing into a set of Dahlquist DQ20 speakers. When playing his system, I immediately noticed how much more open and airy his Bryston electronics were compared to my surround processor and the Adcom GFA 555. Additionally we noticed that the Dahlquist DQ20s were sadly lacking when it came to bass extension. So, of course, we mixed and matched. We ended up using his Bryston preamp as an input into my active crossover and the Bryston power amp to drive his Dahlquists. Then, we supplemented his setup with my Swan IV bass modules, powered by my GFA 555. This turned out to be the best of both systems. Ultimately, I gave him a copy of the Swan IV speaker design articles, and he built a pair of the bass modules to supplement his existing system. Shortly after this experience, I had a chance to buy a used Bryston 4B amp from Tweeter Etc in NH for \$450, and I blew it. I didn't make the purchase, and every time I've seen them since they have been at least twice that price.

Well, I got out of the Air Force and moved to Arizona and began having trouble with my Yamaha surround receiver. Every six months or so, it would become very noisy. Apparently, it was running too hot and regularly creating cold solder joints. After too many resoldering repairs, I replaced it with a Denon AVR4800 and was happier. However, that veil I had noticed in the past was still there.

The next big system upgrade came about with a move to a new company, Siemens Westinghouse, in 2001, where a signing bonus allowed me to purchase an entirely new speaker setup. I migrated to the Martin Logan Ascents for Front Left and Right, the Theater center channel, with the Aeries speakers used for left and right surrounds.



I was generally happy with this system for about 14 years, and then I got the bug again. While in Indianapolis, I started looking to finally get some higher-quality gear. I listened to a variety of equipment, which was still more expensive than I was willing to spend. Then I bumped into aftermarket sales storefronts like Audiogon. I started trolling the component listings and found a used Classe SSP800 surround processor to replace the Denon AVR4800.



Upon receipt of this there was a noticeable improvement in the sound quality. Much of the veil was finally being cleared away. The next upgrade was to replace my older amplifiers with a Balanced Audio Technology (BAT) VK6200.





The one I bought is a beast with five of the six channels populated. Each channel is rated at 200 watts into 8 ohms and includes completely independent circuitry after the input power cable. It tips the scale at something like 160lbs in five-channel mode. Again, this peeled back even more of the veil and provided an airy, delicate sound with a much-improved soundstage. I added an Oppo BDP95 Blu-ray disk player to the mix, which improved our enjoyment of movies and enhanced the audio playback quality over the Sony multi-disc player.



Then, I went after another speaker upgrade, purchasing a set of new Martin Logan CLX speakers, followed shortly later by a pair of Martin Logan Balanced Force 210 subwoofers.



During the middle of all of this I ripped all of my music CDs to FLAC files and placed them on my computer system that I dedicated to music and movie server. However, I could clearly notice the limitations of using that computer as a source for my music system. The combinations of the CLX and BF210s really provided a dramatic improvement in my music system. The imaging and sound stage is now very good and presents a delicate but focused image with a large amount of differentiation and clarity in the musical presentation. However, it is very revealing and I've found that much of the earlier rock music I listened to in the past demonstrated that they were truly often very poor-quality recordings. As a result, my music listening interests have migrated to music recorded to a much higher quality standard. The last bits I have changed are the addition of a DIY-based fan-less PC music server (stay tuned for this story) and an Auralic Vega G1 USB streaming DAC.



Am I done? Probably not... but I am reasonably satisfied with the current system. If you haven't been out to listen, I would be happy to have you stop by... if you have, then I would invite you to come again and bring your choices of high-quality music to listen to. Potential changes in the future: I may try a lightweight entry back into the vinyl marketplace and do some tailoring to get back to a strictly stereo listening system. Who knows, I could just grow a separate two-channel updated system in one of the bedrooms upstairs. Stay tuned.



An Uncommon Audio Store...

By Dave Hjortland

You might not expect to find an audio store in a nondescript, single-story brick building in an out-of-the-way business area, much less one with little signage and nothing to differentiate it from scores of other anonymous businesses in the area. Yet that is where, in south Phoenix, you will find what is probably the most unique audio dealer in the southwest – possibly in the entire country.



How unique? Well, how about the fact that Woolson's carries no new lines of audio gear whatsoever and sells only used and "vintage" stuff. Not truly unique, you say? How about the fact that it is only open on Saturdays, and consistently fails to make anything resembling a profit? Those factors certainly bring it into the realm of uniqueness in my mind.



Larry Woolson opened his first store in 2004 and has been doing this for twenty years now. (I was tempted to subtitle this article, "Celebrating 20 years of losing money!") A little-known fact—at least I was surprised to learn it—is that he's currently in his fourth location, having moved into it about a year and a half ago. He is semi-retired from his "real" job in trucking operations management, work which has presumably underwritten his endeavors in audio.

Larry sells (and buys) used audio gear of many types, pretty much high-end and mid-fi stuff, and you never know what you'll find when you walk in the door. Amps, preamps, integrated amps, receivers, a great variety of speakers, and of course, turntables - I'm always interested in the nice 'tables on display. Along with well-known current brands, those of us of - ahem - a certain age will likely recognize some names of companies that used to be well-known but are no longer with us. Blake Hocevar, known to many area audiophiles from other retail work, serves as Larry's right-hand man at the store and is always ready to help customers or just chat about anything audio-related.



In his immediately previous location (and possibly in the earlier two, for all I know), Larry had a selection of used LPs that he displayed and sold. They made the move but are nowhere to be seen at present. When I asked Larry about them, he said they were packed away, but he might get around to getting them out one of these days—possibly in December.

So why does Larry keep doing what he's doin' despite losing money at it? Of course I had to ask Larry that, and his reply was: "Only an idiot would do this to make money. I do it because it's fun!"



And stopping in to see what gear is currently on hand and chatting with Larry and Blake is fun for customers, too. I always enjoy dropping in when I can. And if you – or a friend – is in the market for good hi-fi gear that won't require a second mortgage, well... I'm sure Larry wouldn't mind losing a little less money.

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Dave's Record Reviews

By AAVC Member Dave Hjortland

Arlo Guthrie – Outlasting the Blues

(LP & CD, Warner Bros, 1979)

I became a serious Arlo fan with the release of his 4th album, **Washington County**, in 1970. (Yeah, I know – I'm an old guy. I'm trying to accept that.) I have most of his albums and saw him in person as circumstances would permit. (And he was wonderful in concert!) I would assert that all of his albums have good stuff on them, though they vary in overall listenability – there are a few that I love and a few that do not measure up, in my not-very-humble opinion. But this album is a candidate for his finest work.

And that's saying a lot. Throughout his career – he has now retired – Arlo turned out some 29 studio and live albums, plus videos and assorted related projects. Wikipedia classifies this as his 10th album, though in my counting, I include a compilation and an album he did with Pete Seeger and call it his 12th. As I listen to it, I am impressed in so many ways – the meaningful lyrics, the craft and musicianship, and – I confess – some

doses of rock'n'roll. And though I find his vocals enjoyable... well, I grant that others may not. A good friend of mine can't stand Arlo's music because of them. I regret that, but I get it – I have a like problem with a couple of singers.

I had no idea of the backstory of this album for several years after it came out, and I'll just briefly allude to that: When this album was being produced, Arlo was a family man with a wife and three kids and a fourth newly born. But he had lost all 4 of his older siblings and was seriously concerned that he was of an age that the genetic disease of Huntington's Chorea might also take him. Apparently, he had recently become interested in Christianity. So he was giving a lot of thought to many heavy topics that influenced this album. If you're curious, the album has its own lengthy Wikipedia page, which is interesting to me, though it may tell you more than you may want to know about.

Anyway, the first time my phono needle hit the groove of this record, I knew this was a different Arlo than the one in his previous work. The lead cut, "*Prologue*," kicks the album off – lifts it off – with:

*"In the event of my demise, be sure to include this statement
When you are bent on closing my eyes, thinking about what my life meant"*

"*Prologue*" is a great song, my favorite on the album, an intriguing personal reflection on events Guthrie had experienced in his life and what would endure when he was gone. It succeeds both for its music and lyrics. It's followed by "Which Side Are You On" – probably the most rocking song on the album, but it's also very meaningful, with the message that it is important to consider major choices – what side to be on – in life. There is a reference here to Jesus and the two thieves nailed on crosses in the song, but I must stress that this is **NOT** a Christian, "preachy" album! It has spiritual elements, yes, but they are very much more reflections on God, love and death than promoting or proclaiming Christian faith.

There are a number of good songs here and only a couple of turkeys, and it's tempting to do a run-down of all of them, but to mention just a few others: "*Wedding Song*" is a beautiful reflection on married love; "*Just me and you, outlasting the blues*." "*World Away from Me*" is a delightful, gently up-tempo song about coming home after a time away and love of family. "*Telephone*" might be called a more typical Arlo song, poking fun at the numerous telephones in his life (even in this time before cell phones). "*Carry Me Over*" is meaningful (there's that word again) but rockin' song about loneliness and the wish for relief from it.

Extremely capable backing is provided by Shenandoah, Arlo's touring band at the time, and production – if not stellar – is very good. All-in-all this is an excellent album, a very worthy listen for anyone with any appreciation for Americana music. (Granted, that's a rather broad tent.)

As well as the original 1979 US LP, it was released in CD format first in 2010 – which I have heard and is best avoided – and in a remastered CD (on Guthrie's own record label, Rising Son) in 2016. I have not heard the latter but would guess it's probably pretty decent. I do know that the sound of the original LP, while not upper-echelon audiophile quality – is pretty good and is available through Discogs for not much money.

Editors Note: Please contact me (catchgroove@gmail.com) if you want to provide an album or artist review to share with members via the Newsletter.

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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

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

Re-foaming Speaker Surround Service:

Michael Mitchell 480-749-7003

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