



Newsletter

October 2025

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President's Message

By AAVC President John Harvell

Hello again, AAVC membership. We're coming into the home stretch for 2025 and hope to finish things with some fun activities.

On the leadership front, Joe Goswami has indicated that he is willing to take over the club president role if no one else steps up and volunteers. Lacking that option, I will work closely with Joe to transition the club leadership information to Joe during the 4th quarter of this year. Joe, the new club president, will need support from other club members. If you have some free time, consider stepping up to help plan events, support meetings, set up and tear down, and participate in future club events.

Coming up:

1. Thursday, 23 October, at the Church, 7-9 pm, will showcase an interesting comparison to answer a simple question. Can you improve an analog signal presentation by converting the signal from analog to digital format to implement appropriate room correction processes before playing it into the speakers? So, we've structured a meeting to compare the two options (with and without room correction). See the article below for more details.
2. Saturday, 8 Nov, from 1-3 or 4 pm at Cinematic Home AV, we will help to host DAC it Out II, where each of us will have a chance to listen to several different DACs across a fairly wide price range on a high-quality audio system.
3. In early December (specific date is TBD), we plan to have an AAVC Christmas party to enjoy some music and catch up with club members. This may be hosted at a club member's home and will give folks a chance to hear and enjoy their fine

audio system—more info to come soon. We would like to make this a potluck-type event with club members bringing a snack dish to share with others.

As always, we all get the most benefit from this club when we regularly interact with other club members, so reach out and make some friends, make suggestions for club events, help out with event setups, participate in club events, make us aware of audio opportunities, and share in the enjoyment of this hobby.

Until next time,

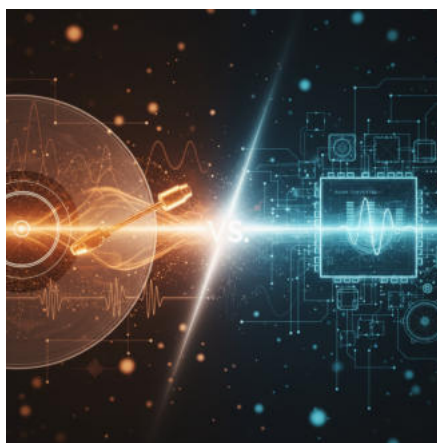
John – your current club president.

October Meeting

Event Announcement: An Analog vs. Digital Vinyl Shootout!

Vinyl lovers, this one's for you! But digital enthusiasts, you won't want to miss this either.

By David Snyder



Join the Arizona Audio/Video Club on **Thursday, October 23rd**, for a special vinyl playback event with a fascinating twist. We encourage you to bring one or two of your favorite albums on vinyl to share as we explore some of the biggest questions in audio.

Our demonstration will feature a Rega Planar 3 turntable with a classic Denon DL-103 cartridge. From there, the signal will face a crucial fork in the road, pitting two distinct phono preamp philosophies against each other.

Round 1: The Phono Stage Face-Off

We will conduct A/B comparisons between a traditional analog phono preamp (Cambridge Audio CP2) and a modern DSP-based phono preamp (Parks Audio Puffin). This comparison gets to the heart of a classic debate: Which approach adds more undesirable character to the sound? Is it the subtle phase errors and distortion inherent in analog RIAA equalization circuits, or the act of analog-to-digital conversion itself? We'll find out which device

provides a better match for the venerable Denon cartridge and which sound signature the group prefers.

Round 2: The Ultimate Question – Purity vs. Power

For our main event, we will take the comparison to the next level. We'll pit the pure, untouched analog signal path against a sophisticated digital chain featuring state-of-the-art digital room correction.

Using the Puffin's digital output, we will stream the vinyl signal into Roon, apply powerful 66,000-tap room correction filters created with Acourate, and play it back through our reference DAC. This raises the ultimate question for analog loyalists: Is the benefit of correcting for loudspeaker and room interaction "worth it," even if it means converting the precious analog signal to digital?

This second signal path challenges the "shortest path is best" mantra, as it travels through a Raspberry Pi, a network, a Roon server, and the Diretta protocol before reaching the DAC. For many, this may seem like heresy, but the results might just surprise you!

The System:

- **Turntable:** Rega Planar 3 with Denon DL-103 Cartridge
- **Loudspeakers:** JBL 308P MkII Active Monitors
- **Preamplifier:** Topping Pre90
- **DAC:** SMSL D-6s

As always, the primary goal is for Phoenix area audio enthusiasts to enjoy fine music, fellowship, and fun. Come with open ears and an open mind for an evening of great tunes and lively discussion.

We look forward to seeing you there!

'70s Themed Members' Music Night (September AAVC Event)

Review by David Das

I had a terrific time at the '70s Themed Member's Music Night Event held inside the Parish Hall of the Faith Lutheran Church on Thursday, September 25, 2025.

The highlight of the evening was the sound from legendary JBL L65 Jubal Loudspeakers, manufactured between 1974 and 1977.



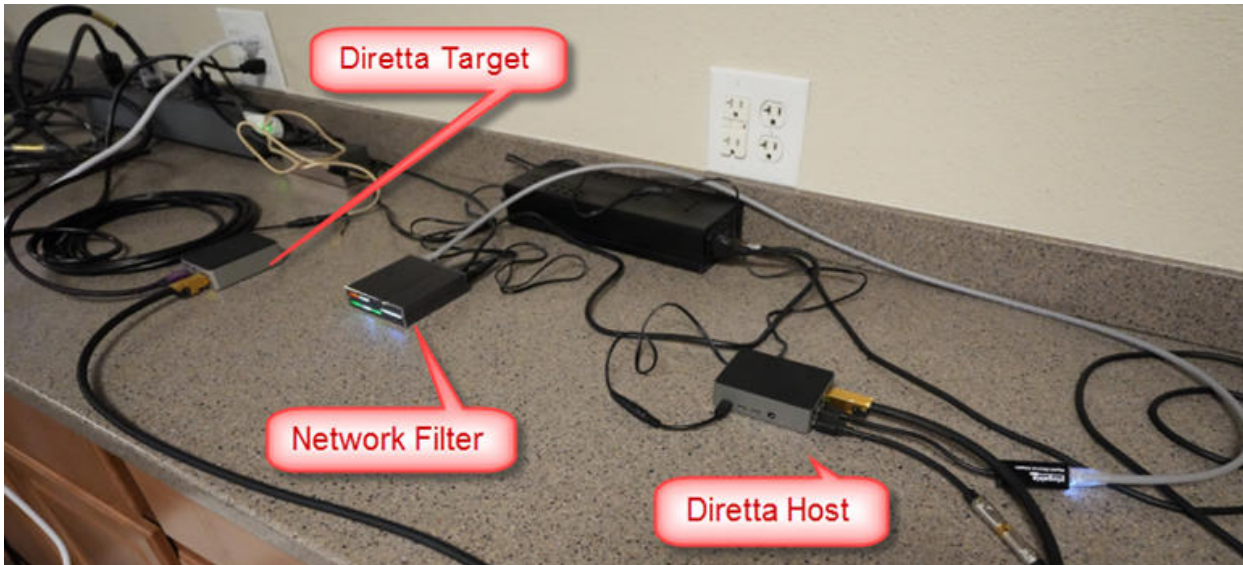
JBL L65 Jubal Loudspeaker

Each JBL L65 speaker features a 12-inch 126A Woofer with a 3-inch copper voice coil that handles the low end. The critical vocal midrange is handled by a powerful 5-inch LE5-5 cone transducer. The crown jewel of the JBL L65 is the legendary 077 "Crystal Slot" tweeter with a horizontal radiation pattern spanning 130 degrees at 15kHz.

This event was hosted by Club Secretary **David Snyder**. He came in early to set up his portable streaming solution with Diretta, working with the JBL L65 speakers.



This picture shows the Network Filter Box, Diretta Host, and Diretta Target.



David began the listening session promptly at 7 pm after a brief introduction by Club President John Harvell.

David offered each member a chance to sit at the sweet spot, listen to one of their favorite tracks, and briefly discuss the reasoning behind their specific selection of music from the 70s.

The JBL L65 Jubal speakers did a spectacular job bringing back nostalgic memories from the 70s. From the very first song that was played, you could tell these speakers were meant to rock. They easily filled up the entire Parish Hall with clean, undistorted sound.

There is a reason why these speakers became legendary. They would cost \$2,000 in today's dollars.

David Snyder's next-door neighbor, **Craig Kreml**, is also an audiophile. Craig was kind enough to loan his pair of JBL L65s for this Club Event.

David put in a lot of effort to host this special event. He, along with Club Treasurer **Paul Johnson**, came in early to set up the room, position the speakers, connect all the cables, test the streaming network with the Diretta Transport Protocol, tune in the subwoofer, and have everything ready to roll by 7 pm.

The event ended at 9 pm. Everyone had an enjoyable evening listening to favorite tracks from fellow Club Members. It turned out to be an interactive event with personal stories from all who were present.

Here is the [link](#) to the full 35-page review, which includes all the high-res photos of the gear, the equipment list, Tidal and Qobuz Playlists for all the songs that were played, and a "Show Stoppers" Playlist containing 70 great audiophile tracks to show off your gear.



Dave's Record Reviews

For the AZ Audio Club

#32

John Stewart – **Punch the Big Guy**

(LP & CD, Cypress Records, 1987)



John Stewart (1939–2008) was a giant of Americana music. He had a long career as an artist and songwriter, including several years as a member of the Kingston Trio, which, along with other groups/artists, had hits with songs he wrote. When the Trio finally called it quits in 1967, he began a solo career that spanned more than 40 years and over 60 albums. His greatest commercial solo success was the album **Bombs Away Dream Babies** (1979), on

which he was supported by friends Stevie Nicks and Lindsay Buckingham. It was... well, quite good, but his 1995 album, **Airdream Believer**, was far better than that IMO, and was one of the first albums I reviewed for the club. Since that review was over four years ago, I figure enough time has passed for me to review another excellent album of Stewart's now...

Punch the Big Guy was Stewart's 23rd solo album, and I believe it was his last that was issued in (the superior) LP format. All of Stewart's considerable talents are in evidence here – as songwriter, musician, vocalist, producer, etc. He was unquestionably a songwriter of great talent, as attested to not only by the songs on his own albums but also hits that other artists had with songs he wrote. (Just one example: He wrote “*Daydream Believer*” for the Monkees.)

While he was conscious of and desiring commercial success, none of the songs here exhibit the humor or light-hearted tone that he was capable of and occasionally exhibited elsewhere. (If there is any humor involved, it would be in the album title, apparently the result of his asking his young son, “What should I title my next album?”). The songs of **Punch the Big Guy** lean heavily into social issues, other concerns of the day, and occasionally personal angst. Indeed, some reviewers criticized the album for its overall serious tone. Stewart wrote all the songs and co-produced the album. Among the notable supporting musicians were Rosanne Cash, Bela Fleck, Sam Bush, and members of the group New Grass Revival.

As usual, I will avoid the temptation to comment on every song on the album. Overall, they are excellent and very strong, although, as usual, there are a couple I might say are below par. The album leads off with “*Angels with Guns*,” a mid-tempo song with a surreal vision of angels coming out of the east – armed, of course. “*Strange Rivers*” is next, which raises the intensity a bit and also raises the philosophical bar as Stewart relates the choices in life to “strange rivers” upon which “*We are sailors, you and me.*”

“*Hunters of the Sun*” is a moving song about wars and man's conquest of other men through the ages, and how those who fought were and are “*hunters of the sun and catchers of the rain.*”

“*Midnight of the World*” picks up the pace as Stewart declares that these are “*the last days of the world,*” and suggests that he and his love “*can dance together in the midnight of the world.*” I don't find this song to be as dystopian as it might seem on the face of it, though.

Side two (of the LP, of course) has some of Stewart's very best work – which is saying a lot – in the form of two of his finest songs. “*Ticket to the Stars*” is a highlight of the album, a stellar (sorry, I couldn't resist) and meaningful song with marvelous... well, audio presence.

“Ah, there is a train and it runs by my room. And the train is called reality, and it's coming way too soon. Way too soon for a guy, who is living on the lies. Looking for the shortcut, and the secrets to survive.”

I once played this song on my main system for a non-audiophile friend. When it finished, he turned to me and said, “You know, I think I can finally understand your interest in hi-fi...”

And there is “*Runaway Train*,” a great song by any measure. Rosanne Cash apparently thought so too, as she recorded it and it was one of her biggest hits – certainly more so than it was for John.

"I'm worried about you and I'm worried about me. The curves around midnight aren't easy to see. The flashing red warnings unseen in the rain. This thing has turned into a runaway train."

I have Rosanne's version as well, and while her version is quite fine, I do prefer John's.

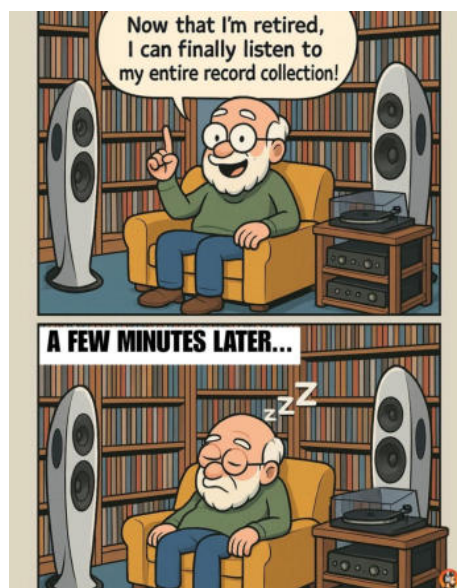
I mentioned Stewart as a giant of Americana, and while some of his albums are more folk-oriented, this one is certainly more of a rock album. His vocals throughout are fascinating – he conveys genuine feeling for the lyrics he is singing. The backing vocals and musicians are excellent, and the production is first-rate. Are you getting the idea that this is a truly fine album...?

Punch the Big Guy was released to mixed reviews. Those nay-sayers who disliked it cited its lack of humor and Stewart's focus on "liberal breast beating." Those who did like it liked it a lot. The Denver Post said, "...one of the finest folk-rock albums of the 1980s, an overlooked gem of evocative lyrics and striking melodies." (You know I'm quoting that because I agree with it, right?) Unfortunately, that fickle body known as the general public failed to appreciate it in great numbers, and it only sold about 25,000 copies in its first six months.

I have copies of both the LP and original 1987 CD. The sound of the CD is surprisingly not terrible for a product of that era, though unsurprisingly it is left in the audio dust by the LP. Discogs tells me that the Shanachie label, which released some of Stewart's later titles, did a re-issue of this one in 1993. That I have not heard. Anyway, **Punch the Big Guy** is available from Discogs in both LP and CD formats at very reasonable cost, and it may occasionally be found used at record stores. I recommend it *highly* for anyone with any sensibility whatsoever for rock-pop-Americana music.

ALSO RECOMMENDED by John Stewart:

- **Airdream Believer** (1995, Shanachie) Here Stewart re-recorded some of his best songs, only better than the original versions. This is a top ten pick for me.
- **Wires from the Bunker** (2000, Appleseed Recordings) At age 61, Stewart demonstrated that he was not too old to rock'n'roll! Not easy-listening stuff.



Paul's Picks

By Paul Johnson

I have been listening to several new artists and old favorites that have put a smile on my face. New music discovery is the best “tweak” for any audio system. The reason we collectively have quality audio systems?

Bernard Butler | Good Grief | For All Our Days That Tear The Heart | Butler, Blake and Grant | Crossroads Of Music | Live At The Green Note | Live at Rough Trade East

McAlmont & Butler | The Sound Of McAlmont And Butler | Bring It Back

Brian Dunne | Clams Casino | Loser On The Ropes (Deluxe)| Now That's What I Call Now That's What I Call Fantastic Cat (Deluxe) | Selling Things (Deluxe) | Max's Kansas City

Laufey | A Matter of Time | Bewitched | Everything I Know About Love | A Night At The Symphony: Live at the Hollywood Bowl

Jens Lekman | The Linden Trees Are Still In Blossom | I Know What Love Isn't |

Don Was | Groove In The Face Of Adversity | Backbeat (O.S.T.)

Fink | Wheels Turn Beneath My Feet | Resurgam (Live) | Beauty In Your Wake

Public Enemy | Black Sky Over The Projects: Apartment 2025

Patti Smith | Horses (50th Anniversary) *I'm really feeling old here.*

Yao Si Ting | Man Jiang Hong | Endless Love II | Wu Zhu

Susan Wong | Kamereon | Close To Me | My LIVE Stories

Supertramp | Live In Paris '79 (Live) | Brother Where You Bound | Free As A Bird | *Thanks to John Harvell for the reminder that I have all of their releases.*

Robbie Fulks | Gone Away Backward | Upland Stories

Pete Droge | Fade Away Blue | Under The Waves | Skywatching

The Lone Bellow | Then Came the Morning | Love Songs For Losers | S/T

Paul Cebar | S/T | Upstroke For The Downfolk

The Chris Fillmore Band | Elevations | In Concert w/ Meena Cryle

Brandon Whyde | Silver Apples of the Moon | On the Run | Self-Medicating

Curtis Mayfield | Curtis (Expanded Edition) | Live in Europe | Superfly (Deluxe)

Les Rita Mitsouko | The Eye | Vari ty | La Femme Trombone

John Scofield & Pat Metheny – I Can See Your House From Here (Tone Poet reissue)

By Jim Welby

Editor's note: In light of our October AAVC meeting (see above), which is focused on digitizing vinyl, I thought I would resurrect a review from my blog (catchgroove.com) that focuses on vinylizing digital.



180-gram LP

*Mastered by Kevin Gray at Coherent Audio from the original master tape
Plated and pressed at RTI*

This is one of my favorite albums from two of my favorite guitarists: John Scofield & Pat Metheny. ***I Can See Your House From Here*** is a worthy candidate for the Blue Note Tone Poet series. Per Blue Note:

“The Blue Note Tone Poet Series was born out of Blue Note President Don Was’ admiration for the exceptional audiophile Blue Note LP reissues presented by Music Matters. Was brought Joe Harley (from Music Matters), a.k.a. the “Tone Poet,” on board to curate and supervise a series of reissues from the Blue Note family of labels.”

First, this is an excellent performance by Scofield and Metheny. Second, each of the guitarists brought great compositions to the session. Third, the rhythm section of Steve Swallow (bass guitar) & Bill Stewart (drums) could not be more perfect. Finally, the sound

quality of the recording is audiophile reference quality. The original CD from 1994 sounded fantastic – this vinyl record sounds even better. In a recent [post](#), I said:

“...which sounds better, vinyl or digital? I can give you a definitive answer: it depends on the specific recording. How an album was recorded, how it was mastered, and how it was transferred to the final state (a vinyl record or a digital file) can make a vinyl record sound better than the digital file and vice versa.”



Spinning at home in Minneapolis

This Tone Poet release is an excellent example of the art of mastering to vinyl. In the hands of an expert artist, the vinyl medium can't be beat. Unfortunately, it is rare that such care is taken. This version is perfection – all the care was taken, it sounds gorgeous. This will be my go-to vinyl reference recording. Ironically, this vinyl is sourced from digital (in this case, 88.2 kHz/24-bit) as this was originally a digital recording. But even with a digital source, a vinyl craftsman can work their magic. I look forward to listening to more of the Tone Poet catalog.

John Scofield is heard on the left channel and Pat Metheny on the right of this stereo recording. Despite two guitar wizards, this is not a cutting contest, but rather a freewheeling conversation between friends. I have a kind of synesthesia when it comes to music – I can taste certain sounds – this is one of those tasty albums.

It was recorded in one of the greatest Studios – The Power Station in NYC – a piece of art itself:



Although you won't get the full experience of an audiophile LP, you can still appreciate the beauty of the performance and compositions on the stream, which, at least on my service Tidal, is Redbook (16-bit/44.1 kHz), AKA CD-quality.

Dealers Corner

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

Equipment Dealers:

Acoustic Designs Group <https://www.adgroupaz.com/>

Arizona HiFi <http://tubeaudio.com/>

Audio Video Excellence <https://www.audiovideoexcellence.com/index.html>

Cinematic Home AV <https://www.cinematichomeav.com/>

Dedicated Audio <https://www.dedicatedaudio.com/>

LMC Entertainment <https://www.lmche.com/>

Woolson Audio <https://www.woolsonaudio.com/>

USA Tube Audio <https://www.usatubeaudio.com/>

Mythic Home Theater <https://mythicsls.com/>

Vinyl/CDs:

In-Groove Records <https://www.theingroove.com/>
They also sell audio equipment per the store's website.

Zia Records <https://www.ziarecords.com/> Zia has several stores throughout The Valley.

Stinkweeds <https://www.stinkweeds.com/>

Repair Work: The editor recently contacted these repair providers to confirm they are still in business. As of the newsletter's publication, he has not heard back from all the companies.

James Koch - confirmed James is still in business
james@highendrepair.com
480-398-7362

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 it is something that I think I can help you with. Located in Tucson. Your device might even be featured in a YouTube video. Confirmed in business.

Jeff's Professional Audio Repair [602-274-0794](tel:6022740794) - Also, Car Stereo work was emailed on 9/9/24 to confirm if still in business - did not hear back jparepair@yahoo.com

Re-foaming Speaker Surround Service:
Michael Mitchell 480-749-7003
mmiller43228@yahoo.com emailed on 9/9/24 to confirm if still in business - did not hear back