

Coming April 10th: ...Doc Bottlehead presents the Tape Project...

Audioletter

A PUBLICATION OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST AUDIO SOCIETY • APRIL 2008



Loudspeakers
Loudspeakers

That Sing!
That Sing!

MARCH 13th MEETING RECAP Text and Photos by Bruce Brown

We had a meeting of the Pacific Northwest Audio Society on March 13th. I knew that 13 was an unlucky number for me. I had a motor vehicle accident the previous Thursday and was really not feeling that well. My vehicle had been totaled and I'll be going to PT for the next 3 or 4 months. But I digress.

It's always exciting to come to

the meetings. I get to bond with close friends and hopefully meet new ones. Several people had express interest in attending one of my mastering sessions and/or recording sessions. A couple people have taken me up on the offer and I do hope they came away with a better understanding of what mastering is all about.

A couple of months ago we had a couple of new guest at one of the

meetings.

An exuberant Mr. Jiang (Peigen) approached us about auditioning his new loudspeaker his company had been working on. We had briefly heard his new speakers at the end of a previous meeting and decided to let Peigen showcase his new speaker at a future meeting.

Eficion LLC. is a new start up company on the outskirts of Seattle.

(Continued on page 2)



The company was started by devoted audiophiles and tweekers who were tired of listening to the mass-market fluff that we see in our local Best Buy. To keep the cost down; the speakers are manufactured in China.

The product lineup consists of the Ficion F200 the C20 center channel and the S20 surround speakers. Offered in Rosewood and Cherry, the fit and finish are impeccable.

The loudspeakers that were up for auditioning were the Ficion F200. A 2-way vented box with matching stands, they are unique in that they utilize a proprietary aluminum ribbon tweeter with honeycomb structure and a 6.5" non-woven carbon fiber sandwich cone woofer assembly. Speaker dimension are 17"x10"x13.6" sans matching stands. Priced at \$2500 the pair without stands, Eficion LLC. offers an incentive for potential customers. Purchase a pair of F200's and re-

ceive a 20% commission on any pair that is purchased by a customer because of your demo. Can't beat that!

Tracks by Jessica Williams – Live At Yoshi's Vol. 2, Celine Dion/ Andrea Bocelli and Rickie Lee Jones - Pirates were played.

Another loudspeaker that was set up for listening was the MHI Evidence, from Musical Heart Instruments a division of Micro Home Installation, Inc of Corona, CA. This too uses a cabinet manufactured in China but uses a full-range Mogami Paper midrange/woofer (50-10 kHz) and true ribbon super tweeter (10-100 kHz) sourced from Pioneer of Japan. A crossover controls only the two-inch long super tweeter. At a diminutive 6"x 7"x9", these were definitely outclassed by the larger F200. At only \$650 pr., they should. But, augment both speakers with a decent subwoofer and the playing field starts to level out!

While both loudspeakers feature ribbon tweeters, you can definitely tell the F200 is a more refined speaker. Both speakers will shine in an appropriate setup, but only you can decide what is right for you. ■

Eficion LLC.

Peigen Jiang
19480 SE 28th Place
Sammamish, WA 98075
TEL: 425.220.4769
Email address: info@eficion.com

MHI Evidence loudspeakers

Distributed by KOSMIC in Washington State
Contact Joe Pittman
206-878-3833
www.kosmic.us



Eficion Ficion F200 2-way loudspeakers retail for \$2500.00 per pair not including stands.

MHI Evidence Loudspeakers have a real piano black finish and retail for \$650.00 per pair, the sand filled and modified Epos stands are \$400.00 per pair.



TITLE TRACK

By Jerry Pomeroy

I thought the ice and snow was over for the year at the end of Feb, I really wasn't expecting snow accumulations in the south sound region during the last few days of March. I was glad to have a good collection of tube gear in my house to help warm it while sipping coffee and watching the snow fall. One of the great performance finds I came across this winter has been the new Genalex Gold Lion KT88 tubes, these are "readily" available because they are currently in production. I am told in making these tubes they reverse engineered them with great detail, I don't have a set of the originals for comparison but they are a big step up from Melody tubes that were in the Genesis I60 originally. I initially set the bias and played some music. The things I initially noticed were the increased amount of upper mid to high frequency detail, and an incredible improvement in the detail of the bass. After a few hours of playing CDs to burn in the tubes I reset the bias, then started to evaluate the change. The overly bright edge I had initially heard was gone, I could hear detail that I had never experienced before on my system. Everything was more distinct, on several recordings I could distinguish between instruments in the bass. Cymbals and triangles came out of the speakers and seemed to float in the room. Since the tubes are in production you can get them several places, I ordered my matched set of four from Jim McShane. Jims web site is <http://pages.prodigy.net/jimmcsbane/>

Doc Bottlehead at April Meeting

The April meeting will feature Doc Bottlehead (Dan Schmalle) from The Tape Project. He will bring some Reel to reel tapes copied from studio masters. Tape 001 they put out was

Jaqui Naylor who will be in concert at VSAC in Vancouver. This is a rare opportunity to get extremely close to the master tape. The audio quality should be impressive and well worthy of inviting discriminating listeners. You won't want to miss this meeting. More info see www.tapeproject.com

Elections

We will also be electing officers for the upcoming year at the beginning of the meeting. If you have considered a position in the club, this is your opportunity to be a member of the executive committee. President, VP and Treasure are all up for election. Bring your platform to the meeting, get elected and help lead a successful and growing club.

John Tucker at May Meeting

John Tucker; the chief engineer from Larry Stewart Audio (LSA) and owner of Exemplar Audio will be sharing some of his equipment with us at the May meeting. Exemplar makes Audiophile Servers, CD players, DACs, Phono pre-amps, Pre-amps, Amps and Speakers. LSA makes speakers and integrated amplifiers. I have an Exemplar CD player and am very happy with it, I think Johns DACs in his CD players or standalone are some of the most analog sounding outputs of any digital source. More info see

www.exemplaraudio.com

www.thelsagroup.com

See Ya



the Tape Project



Tape 001 Jaqui Naylor

Tech Stuff

by Jerry Pomeroy

Tech Junkies

Cleaning flat panel displays; If you purchase a LCD or Plasma flat panel TV the recommended way to clean the front of the panel is to use water and a Micro-fiber cloth. Don't use a solvent-based cleaner on the display; this includes Windex, it may discolor the plastic film that exists on most LCD panels and on some plasma displays. I found three 15" square Micro-fiber cleaning cloths in a box at Fred Meyer for about \$15. Monster markets a Screen Clean Kit; they claim it will cut fingerprints better than water. What ever you choose to clean your screen keep the cloth from being contaminated by grease or solvents that could be picked up if the cleaning cloth is used for other things.

Life after HD-DVD

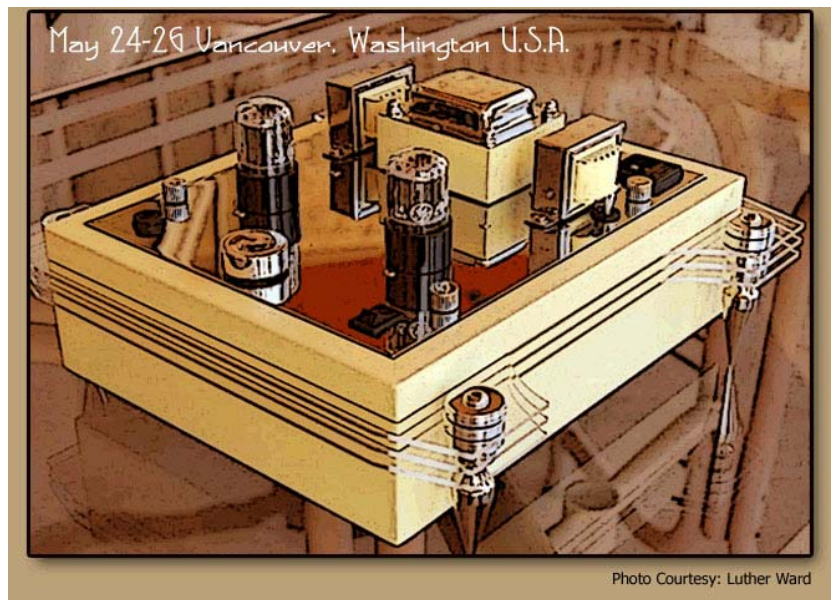
Microsoft announced they are not planning on releasing an X-box with a BluRay drive in it. This was no surprise; they previously announced there were no plans to put a HD-DVD drive in the game console. The Redmond based company and Toshiba both feel there is little market for movies on a high capacity video disc, they are banking on more videos being downloaded from the internet. The world's largest software manufacture will start pursuing BluRay as a media for future software releases.

VSAC

May 24-26 Vancouver, WA.

Besides the show the concerts will start on Friday evening (5/23) for those who come early and will continue throughout the weekend. Performing talent will include Jacqui Naylor, John Standefer, Johnny B. Connolly and Traci King. The show will comprise 3 floors of the Hilton hotel in Vancouver, including one of my favorite displays; the Craftsman room. This is an event you will not want to miss regardless if you have tubes in any of your equipment or not. Get more details on the website.

www.vsac2008.com



I have seen the future and it's downloads

by Joe Pittman

Since using the Squeezebox for over a year now and recently the Transporter, I've grown very fond of listening and using a music server based system. The 1GB of network accessible storage (NAS), has allowed me to store my entire CD collection, and allowed me to enjoy the music collection that I already have. Over the years, I've definitely gotten into the rut of listening to just a hand full of my music collection. OK, I've gotten lazy.

But this new listening paradigm would be for not if the Squeezebox and Transporter were less than state-of-the-art. I am a card carrying audiophile after all. But after countless listening, I'm convinced that the network accessible DAC's (NAD's) are the future. Last fall when I was at the Rocky Mountain Audio Fest in Denver, I had the opportunity to hear a demonstration of Linn's new Klimax DS, which is a pure NAD, so pure in fact that it only has an Ethernet input! After hearing comparisons between Linn's previous CD12 flagship CD player and the new DS, it became clear that one of the biggest problems with physical

CD's is the optical drive. Streaming data directly from a hard drive in a NAS or computer, is inherently better sounding. Part of the trick is to rip identical copies of your CD's to the hard drive. This is possible by using programs such as Exact Audio Copy (EAC) which can make an exact bit-for-bit copy of you CD in lossless compression file formats such as FLAC or uncompressed file formats such as WAV. (Due to the relatively inexpensive cost of large hard drives these days, I save my files as WAV).

The revelation at the Linn demo wasn't the superior sound of Red Book CD FLAC files played back on their DS, no, it was playback of the original 24 bit 96 kHz file used to create the Red Book CD in the first place. Gee what a concept, and of course, is the point of this article. Why are we killing our selves and spending massive amounts of money trying to squeeze the most out of Red Book's 16 bit 44.1 kHz limitations, when we should be trying to get our hands on the original master file? And so it is no coincidence that Linn Records and others are starting to provide access to their master re-

cordings as high resolution downloads.

When it comes to quality in digital sound, the more bits the better. Just about every recent CD that exists was probably created from a 24/96 or DSD master or better. A considerable amount of information/quality (data) is thrown away when going from the master file to a CD replication file. Subsequent creation of the physical optical CD media creates more distortion and data loss in creation of the glass master, stampers and injection moulded CD's. (No more need for demagnetizers, edge cutters, edge paint, optical cleaners/polishers.)

Mastering engineers are also progressing, some such as Bruce Brown's Puget Sound Studios are going to 32 bit and even 64 bit and sampling rates of 192 kHz, 384 kHz and more. This is very encouraging in that the future of high resolution high quality audio is bright.

If you look at music software of the past, it has always been about delivering music at the highest quality within current technology at the lowest cost. For many years now, recording were created on the finest

analog tape recorders and recently digital tape recorders. But it has never been economical to distribute copies of these tapes to the mass market. And so there have been many physical mediums developed such as records, cassette tapes and CD's to distribute music. But the new high resolution download is a real paradigm shift in that original master recording quality can be obtained without the costs of the physical medias requirements of Mastering to a lower resolution, physical replication, printing, packaging and distribution. Theoretically the cost for a downloaded copy of a high resolution master file should be

cheaper than a mass produced and inferior CD copy!!!

If the current trend by the majors of NOT using digital rights management (DRM) continues, then the future of high rez downloads is assured. This has been the major stumbling block of this emerging technology.

There are other benefits to this new high rez digital future. I have been using the Squeezebox as my primary source and preamp by running it straight into my power amps. Because it is a 24 bit processor, when using the "digital" volume control, the affects of digital truncation are hardly noticeable when playing

16/44.1 CD's. The gains in transparency, lower distortion and increased dynamics significantly outweigh any downside of digital truncation. You really need to hear it to appreciate it. We audiophiles have been brainwashed to think that digital volume control is bad. I don't think it is.

In closing, if all of your music was a copy of the original master that could be obtained at a reasonable price, that you could access instantaneously, at random, and reproduce it without distortion with state-of-the-art sound quality on affordable equipment, wouldn't you want to do it?



The new **Squeezebox™ Duet** debuted at the 2008 CES in January and was awarded the Best of CES award from c/net. They have just started shipping and I have had one now for over a week. The Duet consists of a hand held WiFi Controller with 2.4" color screen and Receiver unit similar to the classic Squeezebox, but doesn't include a screen. Like the Squeezebox, the Receiver can be connected by Ethernet or WiFi. The Receiver

uses a Wolfson 24 bit DAC (Linn's new Klimax DS network DAC uses a Wolfson DAC). The Duet like the classic Squeezebox allows you to access internet radio and your music files.

This is one of the coolest products in the history of audio in my opinion. And has similar features of the \$12K Sooloos system, but with a street price of \$399.00, is also one of the greatest bargains in audios history!

Coming Attractions

April 10, 2008

PNWAS Meeting

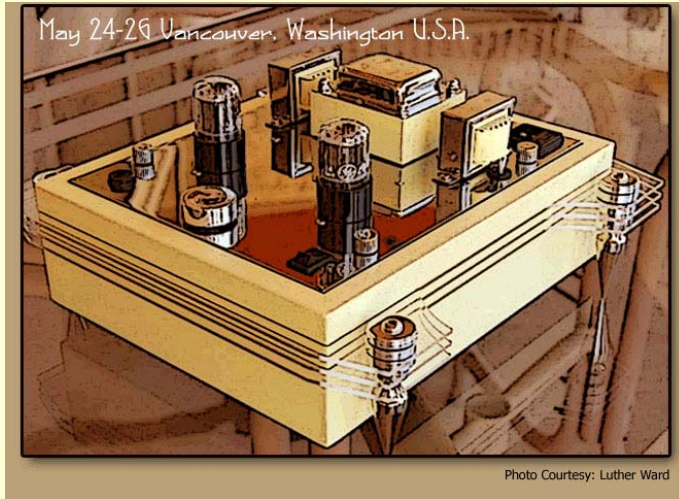
Dr Bottlehead will tell us about The Tape Project. These reel-to-reel tapes are painstakingly made directly from the master tapes, they are as close to the source as you can get. This is a rare opportunity to get this close to the studio masters so the sound quality should be very impressive.

available.

May 24-26, 2008

VSAC

Looks like VSAC (Vacuum State of the Art Convention) is back! It will still be in the Northwest but it may not be in Silverdale. There isn't a web site yet but we will post more details as they become



Classified Ads

Ads are free to members and will run for three consecutive issues unless renewed. Please limit ads to make, model, short description, condition, MSRP, asking price, contact information.

I have been remodeling my Theater/listening room and have some things for sale and will pass on a even better deal to any club member. I have 60" x 80" wall mounted Stewart Studio Tech 1.30 screen. The studio tech 1.30 was developed for Joe Kane as a color neutral reference screen to evaluate projectors on, it still is the standard in the industry and Joe Kanes favorite screen for evaluation. This is 1.33:1 aspect ratio screen not a 1.78:1 widescreen. The screen material is in excellent condition, the frame has a rub spot in the black felt. The screen is still on the wall but have all the original packaging. \$325 non club members. I have a matched set of Target B series five shelf steel equipment racks, current model is HF-570 MSRP of \$399 each. These are very solid the shelf frames are welded to the corner post with carpet spikes on the bottom and black wooden shelves. These are in good shape with a few abrasion marks but none go through the black powder coating. None member price \$300 for the set. I also have a Target Pro turntable wall shelf, this has a 22 x 24" shelf, it has never been installed \$100 non member price. Denon DVD-3910 with silver finish, like new aprox 100 hours on it, I was going to modify this but bought another exemplar already modified so it has been setting in the box. This is a highly rated DVD player with very good scaling and audio DACs, Non members \$550.

Jerry Pomeroy 253-350-3916
enhancedsystems@earthlink.net

Echo Buster's Room Treatment

1 pr. Absorption Panels 18x48 List \$390, Sell \$185
1 pr. Absorption Panels 24x48 List \$470, Sell \$225
1 pr. Diffusion Panels 18x48 List \$530, Sell \$250
All in excellent condition. No other improvement compares with the bargain of treating your room. Buy these and I'll help you plan it out.

Dick Mueller - dickm@HomeloanNW.com
425-450-4070

Club Discounts

Northwest Sinfonietta

The Northwest Sinfonietta (classical chamber orchestra) provides discounts to members of our club for performances of the 2007-2008 season. The regular single ticket price of \$38 will be only \$20 per person per performance at the door (or by phone or mail). Just tell them or note on your order that you are a member of the Pacific Northwest Audio Society. Information and order forms are also available at their website: www.nwsinfonietta.org.

First Impression Music

www.firstimpression.com
order through club president Jerry Pomeroy.

KOSMIC

www.kosmic.us
Contact Joe Pittman
206-878-3833

Pro Sound and Vision

Contact George H. Pro
425-889-9499
425-445-3308 (cell)

Visitors Welcome!

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at 4545 Island Crest Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

PNWAS Mission Statement

- > To bring together people with a common interest in hearing music reproduced at its best, for their mutual edification and pleasure.
- > To facilitate the exchange and dissemination of accurate data concerning audio equipment and musical recordings.
- > To promote, sponsor, and cultivate the highest quality reproduction of music in the home.
- > To encourage maintenance of high standards in the performance, recording and transmission of music.

PNWAS Objectives

1. Provide a forum for meeting other audiophiles and exchanging information on musical recordings and audio equipment.
2. Demonstrate and compare such equipment and recordings.

3. Give members opportunities to become familiar with the techniques of audio manufacturing, testing, repair, recording, broadcasting, etc.

4. Explore related avenues as the membership deems appropriate.

Club website

www.audiosociety.org

E-mail

info@audiosociety.org

U.S. Mail

Pacific Northwest Audio Society, P.O. Box 435, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Annual dues

\$60 due each January. New members pay a prorated \$5 per month for remainder of year.

Executive Committee

President: Jerry Pomeroy 253-350-3916

Vice-President: Bruce Brown

Treasurer: Andrew Kosobutsky

Editor: Joe Pittman

Equipment Committee Chair: Dick Mueller

Music Committee Chair: Renan Jeffereis

Volunteer: Leo Hrechanyk

Editorial

Editorial submissions are welcome.

Content must be audio-related or of general interest to the club. We reserve the right to edit for style, content, and length.

Editorial deadline: two weeks before meeting date.

Publishing any editorial material is contingent upon the approval of the Executive Committee.

Editor: Joe Pittman 206-878-3833
email: joe@audiosociety.org

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**Pacific Northwest
Audio Society**

Bringing Audio Enthusiasts Together Since 1978

P.O. Box 435 Mercer Island, WA 98040