

A Dirty Job, but someone's gotta do it!



RMAF 2009

By Jerry Pomeroy

Attending an audio show sporting a press badge is work. Even before you board the plane to leave, an endless barrage of invitations arrive in your E-mail "come and see the latest product: it will shatter the world". Although I didn't see anything earth shattering, there was some really good stuff at the show, including the roaming tank tops that said "Tight Bottom End"

I had never been to (RMAF) Rocky Mountain Audio Fest. I had talked about going for years and finally decided to try the little spatiality trade show, rather

than CES in Las Vegas. I enjoyed the small show atmosphere of VSAC in Silverdale and the 2008 show in Vancouver. While VSAC would bring in less than 2000 people, RMAF has grown to 3700 attendees with 470 companies exhibiting in over 150 rooms. All of the rooms are at the Denver Tech Center Marriott. I don't remember getting any invitations off site.

I didn't know what to expect as I boarded the plane from Sea-Tac headed to Denver International. I had booked a room at the Hyatt just two hotels down from the conven

tion. Since I had never been there, I figured best to play it safe and stay at a hotel very close. The Denver Tech Center seems to be nothing but a series of hotels in a few blocks. There is no major convention center, only the ones in each hotel. There are no souvenir shops in walking distance nor is there good public transportation. I did almost all my souvenir shopping at the airport. If you go, don't plan on doing much outside the show unless you have a rental car.

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I got down two days before the show started so I could get established in my room and would be able to help set up with the Genesis crew on Thursday morning. I meet Gary at the Marriott and started unpacking speakers and equipment. The Genesis System on display was the 7.1f speakers, GR360 Genesis Reference Amplifier, a prototype Genesis Pre-amp, the Genesis Server, Esoteric SA-50 CD player and a Turntable system on loan from the Soundsmith himself, Peter Lederman. After a few hours, we had the system put together and ready for tweaking. Gary

pre-amp that will compliment the Reference amplifiers. The price point for the new pre is supposed to be around \$4K. The concept was to offer a remote control pre with audio qualities similar to Steve's VR-1. Like most things, the quality and price keep going up during development, expensive parts are added and when it all gets done, there will be some



and I left the room and headed for breakfast while Vic finished tweaking. Gary and I went out for breakfast where I ordered a Denver Omelet. I was shocked when I got it. It was big, it was the shape of an 8" sauté pan about 1" high. After a good meal we went back to the room and listened to some music as Peter Lederman set up the TT. The TT took a long time to set up, but he got it sounding pretty good. The system continued to get better throughout the show and sounded best when it was getting torn down. This is normal at shows.

Steve McCormack designed the new Genesis pre-amp that was functioning as the control center for the Genesis system. The idea of the product was to offer an affordable

admit my bias toward products from people I know and have dealt with in the past but I have dealt with them because they have done good stuff at reasonable prices.

Since the show is all about 2-channel audio, there was little video presented. I thought this would be interesting to see what was out. Since Blu-Ray is capable

of 24/192, I figured I would see a few. Ayre Audio has a BDP coming out with a target price of \$8-10K with a USB input. The transport and video side are from Oppo. Burr-Brown DACs and power supply are all by Ayre with no digital filters or switching power supplies. John Tucker/Exemplar Audio is now upgrading Denon 3800 & 4200 BDP. He didn't have any at the show but was great fun. Here are some pictures and some commentary on things that really stuck out to me. I

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The Kimber display was



really good. They demonstrated changing cables using a TAD Reference One Speakers system. The system was nice and smooth. Holly Cole's "Bright Sunny Day" was a breath of fresh air after spending almost 3 hours on the floor that day.

Jones Audio of Enumclaw, is a new amplifier & Pre-amp manufacturer. They were using small B&W speakers in the room. These large high-powered amps are dynamic and don't run out of juice. I should make a trip out someday for a test listen, not at a show. It is always

Stillpoints room was really good. It helps when Bruce Brown is playing master recordings from his studio equipment. The small Usher monitor speakers are really good and fooled most people when they came in the room. It just doesn't seem that much sound can come out of a little box. FYI, Bruce had some equipment



fun to see people start local audio companies.

EAR Acoustics had a really good sounding room using Marten Bird speakers from Sweden. The sound was very natural and easy to listen to. I could have stayed in this room for quite some time.

One of the dealers, Blue-Note Audio, had the Ayre Acoustic line and also the new Avalon loud speakers. These were 2 way and not requiring stands as the cabinet sides went down below the speaker to form legs. They have the Avalon sound and are very pleasing, no lack of detail. It was good to see a few dealers at the show.

The Usher/JPS Labs/Belles/

in shipping but his room was a hang out for audio club members.

The April Music room, featuring Stello equipment, was great for the money. I didn't realize Stello made an upper line of equipment. I had never seen or heard their aluminum finished full size case equipment. The design/build quality was impressive.

A speaker that caught my attention was the Bamberg Series 5 TMW. The System uses a two way monitor in a black cabinet that if it wasn't bolted into the bass cabinet, it would be a great bookshelf speaker. The XLS subwoofer uses a 370 watt amplifier with active crossover. I thought the design concept was great. They weren't efficient but they were engaging, so I liked the system.

The i-Fi

company offers a surround sound chair. The chair was pretty comfortable and a delight to set in after hours of note and picture taking. The chair was unique in that the front speakers were mounted on posts that sat very close to 1 meter from your ears. They offered it in a base model and an audiophile version with upgraded speakers and cables. This would be kind of a cool product if you were stuck living in apartments with a game console. It sounded pretty good for what it was. The only time I have experienced convincing tactile transducers was the Crowson Technology demo which were at the club several years ago.

Intuitive Designs was really good and easy to listen to. These granite boxes are very musical. Dale



has a new AC line conditioner. I sat and listened for a good 30 minutes and it wasn't fatiguing. Cable research has a new cable package out and the little system sounded really good. I don't mind omission in smaller low cost systems. It was musical and used a \$600 Glow Audio tube amplifier

I had never really listened to headphones much but decided to take a break from listening. Some of the headphone systems sounded very good! This is serious stuff. Woo Audio and the Ray Samuels B-52 and SR-71 headphone amps were really good. I also got to hear a set of Sony R10 headphones. These were "take your breath away" good. I have never given much credence to headphones listening but will from now on. There are some obvious advantages to removing the room from the acoustic equation.

A real-ly cool display was by another local company, J-Corder custom R2R tape decks. These rebuilt/modified tape decks are incredibly beautiful. These old R2R decks are some of the coolest looking things audio has ever given us. What I couldn't figure out was why they had the room so dim. I couldn't even see what I was taking a picture of till my flash went off.

There was so much going on in the small room that I couldn't hear anything to make a statement, but since I have heard these before at Mike's Barn in North Bend, it was OK with me.

One of the products I have been very impressed with are Stillpoints. The company has some new products, like a standoff for OEM



mounting of circuit boards and stands. Stillpoints were all over at the show. One room I really liked was the Exemplar Audio/Eficion/Stillpoints/Audio Marketing room. The Exemplar DAC, Transport, Pre-amp and John's new active cables



sounded great going to the big Berning, Class A, zero feedback mono blocs. This system was very dynamic and listenable. I was impressed with the sound of this sys

tem. It was one of my favorites at the show. I had never heard the top of the line Eficion speakers before. They were very good. Exemplar and Eficion are local Puget Sound companies.

I admit my bias, but the sound in the Genesis room was really good, especially the end of the show. The Genesis team went up and tweaked the system a bit more on Saturday night and it all came together.

One of the most interesting things I went to at the show was the Nordost/Vertex measuring seminar. They have been working with the military to measure time distortion and had charts showing differences between a CD player with the stock powercord and a good aftermarket cord. These were repeatable measurements. Measuring stuff like this is new and they are not sure if they are measuring what people are hearing, but this was a really cool seminar.

This show was fun but I still look forward to going home, turning on my own system and playing records. I scored an original pressing of Joan Baez "Diamond and Rust". Some of the music I heard in rooms I noted: Return to Forever by the Eagles, Autumn Shuffle by Peder Af Ugglas, Kill to get Crimson by Mark Knopfler, No Promises by Carla Bruni. All was fun and I look forward to going again next year.

Genesis 7.1f loudspeaker named as CES Best of Innovations 2010 Design and Engineering



Seattle, WA – Genesis Advanced Technologies, manufacturer of high-end luxury loudspeaker and amplifier systems is happy to announce that it has been named an International CES Innovations 2010 Design and Engineering Awards Honoree for the Genesis 7.1f loudspeaker. Products entered in this prestigious program are judged by a preeminent panel of independent industrial designers, engineers and members of the media to honor outstanding design and engineering in cutting edge consumer electronics products across 36 product categories. The judges also awarded the G7.1f it one of the highest scores in its product category, hence, honoring the G7.1f as Best of Innovations in its category.

The G7.1f is a high-end audiophile loudspeaker with full-range musical performance in a small-footprint svelte and elegant enclosure. A built-in servo-controlled 8” subwoofer delivers bass down to 22Hz, while the famous Genesis ribbon tweeter ensures perfect high frequencies to 36kHz.

The prestigious Innovations Design and Engineering Awards have been recognizing achievements in product design and engineering since 1976. It is sponsored by the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA)[®] of the USA, the producer of the International CES, the world’s largest consumer technology tradeshow, and endorsed by the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), the voice of industrial design, committed to advancing the profession through education, information, community and advocacy.

“We are particularly honored to be receiving this award,” said Mr. Gary Leonard Koh, President of Genesis Advanced Technologies. “The Genesis 7.1f was designed and engineered to be a value priced product in the Genesis line. In particular, it was designed to be beautiful and elegant and to fit into the family room. That the CEA and IDSA recognized the G7.1f as Best of Innovations is a great honor to us. We are proud that a high-end product from a small, specialist US-based manufacturer can be competitive in the large consumer electronics marketplace.”

Products chosen as an Innovations honoree reflect innovative design and engineering of the entries. Examples may include the first time various technologies are combined in a single product or dramatic enhancements to previous product designs.

Earlier this afternoon, I received a message on my answering machine from my long time Magnolia A/V sales rep inviting me to an impromptu preview of the TAD Reference One Loudspeaker at the Bellevue store this afternoon. What a surprise!

I arrived to discover Andrew Jones, Chief Engineer Technical Audio Devices Laboratories (a subsidiary of Pioneer) and party were there from Southern CA with the TAD Reference One loudspeakers (and another set of less expensive full range loudspeakers being demoed for Magnolia A/V). For my money the eye candy star of today's see and hear preview session were TAD's brand spanking new Hi-end (\$50K/pr) 200 lb/ea mono/stereo amplifiers. There are two sets of outputs on these mono's/stereo's. I was told by one of the Magnolia sales guys a pair can actually drive 4 speakers so they must be stereo. Today they were seeing duty as a pair of mono's.

The amp is to be offered to the public and demoed next January at CES (Venetian Tower room 34-208) as part of a complete TAD system if I understood Andrew correctly. The amp has an integral amp stand made from cast iron with excellent damping properties. The combo looks stunning to me. At first sight I didn't realize the amp and stand were integrated and then the assistant reached under the front of the amp stand to turn on the amp. Andrew told me definitely NO Pictures of the amp today. Darn. These amps appeared to be in complete control of the bi-wired Reference One's. Last time I saw a picture of these Reference One loudspeakers they were bi-amped not bi-wired as today. I suspect these new TAD amps are gorgeous audio equivalents of the 800 pound gorilla. Unfortunately today's preview room setup was definitely less than optimal for this caliber of gear. Based

on Andrew's comments I suspect his setup at the Venetian will be more appropriate.

Andrew strikes me as very outgoing, articulate, well spoken and personable. He graciously played all 3 selections I proffered. I told him I wanted to start off with something sweet followed by a mean and nasty (to his equipment) selection and then close with another ear pleasing selection. He said he was up to the challenge. He allowed me to control the sound level in the 60/75 DB range I prefer. I suspect these babies would go loud enough to deafen us all and bring down the rafters but I came to listen to music not play teenager.

We started off with Track 1 (Symphonic Dance no. 1) from Fim's K2 HD. The sound produced from this spectacular recording was excellent as expected. Next up was my 'unwelcome to play at audio club meetings CD' (just kidding) Hadouk Trio's "Live a FIP", track 4. I consider this CD to be an excellent system test CD. I have come to rely on it to reveal any obvious shortcomings in sound from the music reproduction chain being observed in action. This CD is definitely going with me to CES in January. Notably many tracks on it tax all of a loud speaker's transducers simultaneously since you're hearing a complex sound ranging from ca. 20-20K hertz all at once. Today's amps and speakers did a fabulous job with this CD. However, on track 4 there is a sequence of sound field centered tunes each followed immediately by a right sound field area response from a similar sounding instrument. Unfortunately, this sound sequence confused the DAC on the still under development CD player used today and instead we heard a series of sweeping full left to full right back and forth sworling sounds as though a complex wave of sound was sloshing back and forth during this sequence. Fortunately the DAC in today's CD player is still under

development. Other than this misstep the instruments playing sounded very much as I would expect to hear them live.

The literature I've read says a properly implemented high quality DAC doesn't allow non-manipulated sound from stationary instruments recorded with stationary mics to appear to move about in the listener's perceived sound field, period, when using this type of loudspeaker. Stat speakers excepted.

Saint Mark's Cathedral Choir's performance of "Now there lightens upon us" (track 3 from "how brightly shines the Morning Star-Music for Epiphany" Gothic records) was very close to my experience of actually being there at Saint Mark's for a choral concert. I find Saint Mark's has a distinctive 'house sound' strongly influenced I surmise by all of the hard concrete and tile surfaces I observe there. I've heard harsh ringing overtones from the soprano voices of excellent choirs during live, unamplified performances there. To my ears the TAD system was as true to the live sound of this venue as I've ever heard. I'm ignoring some faint room wall reflections we all observed when I say this.

I asked Andrew if he ever brought his 300 pound speakers and 200 pound amps to audio clubs. He handed me a copy of a TAV vol 13, no 4 reprint of a review by Arnis Balgalvis from a meeting of The Audiophile Society of New Jersey. Apparently Andrew kept this group of 40 spellbound for 6 hours for what was supposed to be a two hour meeting demo of the speakers.

Fresh out from the Rocky Mountain Audiofest, Steve McCormack came up as a special guest speaker to the club last month. Steve brought up a VRE-1. We used the VRE-1 and a Genesis 360 reference amplifier in the club system. There were also some cable changes but the difference in the system was breathtaking. Steve offered us the VRE-1 that he brought up for \$7000. This is a really good deal but the club doesn't have that much money. I am willing to put up \$800 toward the purchase of the pre-amp and hope that others will follow. At the November 12th meeting, there will be a vote to go for the VRE-1.

The last month has been very full and I just don't have the time to recap the last meeting. Steve told some great stories and I will get all my notes out and into the next newsletter.

The November meeting is all about HD video. We will have a 1080P projector and all concert material will be sourced from Blu-ray disc. I was hoping to have some discs with 24/192 audio but they are still very rare. This year we will have a three channel audio system. Joe is bringing his Levinson #40 processor and we will have two Oppo BDP83 players to cut down the load time between disc. I look forward to this meeting every year.



Panasonic is moving ahead with \$4.5 billion purchase of Sanyo electronics Corp. Panasonic started this last Nov and has waited till all antitrust issues were approved.

LG plans to be shipping a 15" OLED display by the end of this year, a 20" next year followed by a 30" in 2011.

ReVolt Technology of Switzerland has been working on a new Zinc/Oxygen Battery. The company hopes to get the new rechargeable energy cell between 500 and 2000 cycles for electric or gas/electric hybrid cars. This could be a battery storage that will work well for audio amplifiers.

Blu-ray player sales are up 112% from last year.

Consumer Electronics industry is talking about UHD: Ultra High Definition TV. Just like 3D, no standard exists at this time. For several years movies have been digitally mastered at 4K, which is approximately 4 1920x1080 images. Manufactures are talking about resolutions above this to allow 3D images. The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) will have their first meeting developing standards for 3D TV by the end of the year.

Best Buy and CinemaNow joined to develop an internet movie download service. Best Buy in house brand, Insignia, has a Blu-ray player that offers streaming access to Netflix via the Blu-ray player.

A product I keep hoping for is a portable Blu-ray player with the ability to plug in an outside source in any ATSC resolution.

JVC pocket camcorder, the Picso GC-FM1, is an 8-megapixel still cam

era. The camcorder will record ATSC resolutions up to 1080p on flash memory and output them via

HDMI. The camera also has USB for downloads directly to a computer. These are the size of a small full featured cell phone with an MSRP \$199.

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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.

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Please contact Bruce @425-369-1392

Club discounts

Northwest Sinfonietta

The Northwest Sinfonietta (a 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 PNWAS. Information and order forms are also available at their website: www.nwsinfonietta.org.

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)

Revolution Power

[Www.revolutionpower.com](http://www.revolutionpower.com)
Contact: Ken Garza

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 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 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

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Annual dues

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

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Action Committee Chairs:

Equipment: Vacant—Volunteers?

Refreshment: Vacant—Volunteers?

Editorial

Editorial submissions are welcome.

Content must be audio-related or of general interest to the club in plain text or Word document format without automation (macros or scripts). 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.

Disclaimer

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