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# Ah, fall is here....

Yeah, we can nevermind those who didn't believe in climate change, as we saw how much the temperature and all the recent anomalies are indeed caused by all these drastic changes including temperatures felt over 49.5 C, lightning igniting more and more forest fires, torrential rains causing landslides, and so on. We certainly enjoy the nice weather, but sometimes this beautiful summer hot and humid weather can also be too much and cause several deaths in its path. We must conclude that we are entering a very turbulent period, at least as far as the weather is concerned. Hopefully, the fall season will be milder for all of us.

Of course, in terms of the gradual reopening as a result following COVID-19, as long as younger people aged 18-39 continue to come forward to receive their 2nd dose, we might be in better position. However in each province, numbers of infected people are increasing. Slowly, we will eventually return to the way things were before but we do have to hang in there and get with it.

It is not easy for anyone, because everyone has a different level of tolerance. Let's remember that we all thought, a year and a half ago, that if you got this virus, it could mean imminent or near death, at least for older people and those with certain health problems. But now, we are elsewhere... We can go out and meet each other with masks, sometimes without... or almost. It depends on many factors

Everything I've said from climate change to the current pandemic situation leads me to a couple of observations. We have to learn to live again. What I mean is that we will most likely have to constantly adjust the way of living either with or without a mask, or the imposition of new restrictions or the opposite. We must and will have to learn to constantly adapt to changes in health and the environment, as our various behaviours have consequences that were not previously taken into account. Once you are aware of this fact, adopting new ways of doing things will quickly become second nature.

It is important to remember that when you are feeling too many emotions, you can relax by taking a break and listening to your favorite music. Without realizing it, as if by magic, music relaxes and calms us in a way. It allows us to refocus on what is most important, the present moment. We focus on what we can control, one thing at a time. A worrisome scenario will not solve anything. In fact, we can take the motto sport people who focus on one game at a time. Many of our sport heroes have doubted at some point in time. Even if the hope is slim, it is there and nothing is impossible. Again, one thing at a time.

Reading can also be a blessing. I invite you to browse through each page of this edition that we present to you for the months of September and October 2021. And relax. See you at the beginning of winter, God willing! Have a great Fall Season!

*Beauchamp*

Lucie Beauchamp  
Coéditrice et responsable des relations publiques

# Trends Electronics & Design -An Encore

INSTALLATION-INTEGRATION BY SENSATION MUSICALE

## A LIVING SPACE WHERE ONE CAN RELAX ...

By *Lucie Beauchamp*

For this August-September issue of TED Magazine, we will visit a peaceful haven located in the Eastern Townships. The installation of a sound and video system had to be perfectly integrated and easily controlled from a wall keyboard, a computer or by an application installed each member of the family's smart phone. The house has undergone major renovations and the entire interior has been redone, allowing for a large room to be used as a living room/family room where it is nice to relax with family and friends in all seasons. The owners' goal was to have a place to recharge, relax and re-energize. Their house being

Photos: Cuvremont Photography



# Trends Electronics & Design –An Encore

INSTALLATION-INTEGRATION BY SENSATION MUSICALE



**S**implicity and harmony are the terms that presided over the elaboration of a complete audiovisual system of which the ramifications were to extend throughout the house. This objective was achieved by consultants of the **Sensation Musicale** store in Granby. The client's desire was for the system to integrate cleanly and intuitively with the contemporary style of his second home, so the choice of control system was made in collaboration between the client and his advisors. They opted for **Nuvo's** music management system. Since the client had already dealt with **Sensation Musicale** for other projects, it was only natural that he turned to them again when he undertook the renovations of this residence.

## **Good planning is essential!**

The client first met with **Gerry Poulin**, owner of **Sensation Musicale**, and then



with **Vincent Beaulieu**, the store's installer, and explained his project and needs to them so that everything would be well integrated into the main renovation plan. Since the owner is quite familiar with the real estate business, he knows how to surround himself with reliable and experienced people to properly plan and orchestrate each step of such a project. When all parties involved are well planned and agreed upon, the renovation-building process can proceed smoothly, which is important for peace of mind as the work is spread out over eight months.

The devices selected had to be able to blend in with the decor of the residence while ensuring quality performance. As you can see on the pictures, they are almost unnoticeable. For example, **Monitor Audio's** three-way in-ceiling speakers have an ultra-thin magnetic grille, allowing them to

blend into the ceiling. The set-top boxes, for cable TV, were all installed in the basement and the appropriate *HDMI* cables were run through the walls and ceilings of the house during the renovation. No one knows!

The different brands were selected according to the specialization of each manufacturer in terms of the use for which the devices were intended, and according to the customer's needs. For example, for outdoor terraces, water and moisture resistant speakers by **Monitor Audio** were chosen. Elsewhere outside, the stone-shaped *RS6* speakers by **Niles** were selected. For the home theater system in the living room/family room, they chose a radio frequency remote control by **PRO Control**, a division of **RTI**. It is good to remember that the store's consultants, with whom you are dealing, often know better than anyone else which product is best suited for a particular

purpose. Of course, as **Gerry Poulin** explained, it is always preferable that the choice be the customer's, but if the customer makes a mistake, it is his duty to intervene, because ultimately, it is the customer's satisfaction that is at stake in the short, but especially, in the long term.

### **Programming - an important point!**

An initial programming must be done on the management system in order to obtain the results expected by the customer. In this case, Mr. **Vincent Beaulieu**, from **Sensation Musicale**, took care of this step. Once the customer has become familiar with the system and its operation, it is customary to perform a general audit to improve the efficiency of the system and to fine-tune certain settings to make it even more user-friendly. **Vincent** is a tradesman who

# Trends Electronics & Design -An Encore

INSTALLATION-INTEGRATION BY SENSATION MUSICALE

loves what he does, and when the customer likes his system and feels completely comfortable with its operation, he feels a great sense of pride, because he has a sense of work well done.

## Style and decor

As you can see, the interior of the house's decor is contemporary, and it was important that the selection of noble materials, such as wood, stone, terrazzo tiles, and the choice of a sober and elegant furniture, invite relaxation and calm. The neutral colors chosen for the walls are conducive to relaxation, although there are a few touches of bright colors here and there that enhance the whole with taste and finesse. Everything is measured and just right. This is very successful interior decor!

## Objective achieved!

Congratulations to the owners and to **Sensation Musicale**, because both customer and installer have achieved their respective goals. Let's think of our hosts first, whose second home is so welcoming that sometimes weekends are stretched by an extra day or two... and then of **Sensation Musicale** of course, both of whom have arrived at the satisfaction of a job well done in this custom audiovisual installation.

I'll leave you with these images that show how a second home can become a contemporary-style slice of paradise where you can relax and recharge while offering additional entertainment and escape opportunities with user-friendly electronics that enhance the comfort of your lifestyle!





## List of Equipements Used

### Inside

**Monitor Audio** CT380IDC In-Ceiling Speakers (6);  
**Monitor Audio** CT180IR In-Ceiling Speakers (4);  
**Samsung** H5500 32-inch LED TV (1);  
**Samsung** H5500 40-inch LED TV (1);  
**Samsung** H5500 46-inch LED TV (1);

### Home Theater-Family Room

**Cambridge Audio** Azur 751R Home Theater Receiver (1);  
**Cambridge Audio** 752BD Universal Player (1);  
**Monitor Audio** A10 Speakers (6);  
**Monitor Audio** A40 Center Speaker (1);  
**Monitor Audio** AW12 Active Subwoofer (2);  
**Samsung** 9000 4K, Curved TV, 65-inch (1);  
 Large screen cabinet, **BDI Cavo** 8167 (1);

### Home Automation System

**Elan** A2 2 channels Power Amplifier, (1);  
 Multi-room Amplificateurs / Servers *iPad* and  
**Nuvo** P200 Smart Phones (4);  
**Nuvo** P300 Preamplifier / Player (1);

### Outside

**Monitor Audio** Climate 80 Speakers (4);  
**Niles** RS6 Pro Stone Speakers (4);  
**Niles** GSS10 Underground Subwoofrs (3);  
**Niles** SWA-500M Outdoor Subwoofer Amplifiers (2);

### Other items

**Pro Control** Pro24.r Remote Control (1);  
**Pro Control** ProLink.r Processor (1);  
**APC** AV J 25BLK Power Conditionneur (1).

# CLASSICAL MUSIC

By CHRISTOPHE HUSS

## RECORD OF THE MONTH

### BART NAESSENS CLAVIORGANUM

Händel's *Concertos and Sonatas*  
Il Gardellino

Passacaille, 1060

Interpretation : \*\*\*\*\*

Technique : \*\*\*\*\*

It is very rare to discover an instrument, interesting moreover, which opens true musical perspectives. This was the case with the reconstruction of a basset clarinet, played in **Mozart's** *Clarinet Concerto* by **Lorenzo Coppola (HM)**. The contribution is even more eminent here, with an unusual instrument of which the first traces can be found around 1450 and which seems to have spread, especially in England, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century: the claviorganum. The claviorganum couples a harpsichord and a small organ. The harpsichord or the organ can be played separately, or, most interestingly, a device can be used to combine the two. The combination's interest: to relay the blown sound of the organ by a real marked attack of the note. **Bart Naessens** plays here a claviorganum, reconstructed in 2002, in **Handel's** *Organ Concertos Op. 4 Nos. 4 and 5 and Op. 7 No. 1*, coupled with a *Suite*, a *Flute Concerto* and the *Concerto grosso Op. 3 No. 6*. A very endearing record without any equivalent.

## SOUND RECORDING OF THE MONTH

### ANDRÁS SCHIFF JOHANNES BRAHMS

Two piano concertos

András Schiff (piano and direction),  
Orch. of the Age of Enlightenment

ECM, 2 CD, 485 5770

Interpretation : \*\*\*\*\*

Technique : \*\*\*\*\*

**Stephan Schellmann** and **John Barrett** were faced with a very interesting challenge in the **Abbey Road Studios**: to relay exactly the aesthetic intent of an interpretation that seeks to renew our listening to these concertos. An 1859 piano and an orchestra of 50 musicians is what **Brahms** had at his disposal. Is it still relevant in 2021?



Not necessarily in concert, in a hall of 2,000 spectators designed precisely for instruments with more sound output. Yes, in a smaller room or for a record experience, if transparency, colors and proportions are preserved. It's very striking that when we started recording **Beethoven** with chamber orchestras, the sound engineers would make the sound bigger so that the listener wouldn't feel like they were missing something. The sound was the opposite of the process. Here it goes hand in hand with **Andrés Schiff's** exceptional choices and the perspectives they open up

## NEW RELEASES

### ALINA IBRAGIMOVA NICOLA PAGANINI

The 24 Caprices

Hyperion, 2 CD, CDA, 68366

Interpretation : \*\*\*\*\*

Technique : \*\*\*\*\*

As in our last issue, a large disc for solo violin. After **Eugene Ysaye**, another record born of the pandemic, since it was the CEO of **Hyperion** who was behind it, telling his artists, *Now is the time to sit down and make the recording you've always dreamed of*. **Alina Ibragimova** dreamed of the *Caprices* of **Paganini**. Not us. There are already enough version and *Caprices*, for someone who is not a violinist, can be quite off-putting. But **Alina Ibragimova** is doing something else. She scrutinizes the silence and no longer takes the *Caprices* as exercises, but as sound sculptures

forged at the same time. And the works acquire totally new poetic dimensions (*Caprices nos 6, 7, 12*, for example). The complete *Caprices* here lasts almost 1 hour and 45 minutes compared to the usual 1 hour and 15 minutes, but both CDs are sold for one. The experience is unique.

### RAPHAËL PICHON JEAN-SÉBASTIEN BACH

Les Motets

Harmonia Mundi, HMM, 902 657

Interpretation : \*\*\*\*\*

Technique : \*\*\*\*\*

Released at the end of 2020, this record came to us several months late. We decided to talk about it anyway because of the importance **Raphaël Pichon** has taken in the baroque world. The French conductor emphasizes the impetus and the jubilant aspect of the works at the expense of the shadows preceding the lights in **Bach**. The record is spectacular, brilliant, sumptuously recorded by the magician of sound recorders **Hugues Deschaux**. **Raphaël Pichon** chooses to accompany the *Motets* with a modest instrumental ensemble, in which **Tomas Dunford's** archlute is clearly audible. Overall, the approach is part of a movement to make religious music more fluid, a music that has long been approached in a much more solemn manner. It is extremely charming. For a more spiritually grounded journey, one can listen to **Herreweghe (Phi)** or **Suzuki (Bis)**.

### HOPKINSON SMITH JOHANN SEBASTIEN BACH

Cello Suites For Lute

(lute and theorbo transcription)

Naive, 2 CD, E 7385

Interpretation : \*\*\*\*\*

Technique : \*\*\*\*\*

The greatest lutenist of the last half-century has expanded **Bach's** lute works by transcribing for his instrument or for theorbo the *Sonatas* and *Partitas* for solo violin, and also the *Cello Suites*. The work on the *Cello Suites* has been documented in three phases: the 5<sup>th</sup> *Suite* in the 1980s, two more in the 1990s, and the first three in 2013. This album is therefore a reissue, but a capital reissue that brings together what should have been for almost ten years. A dream album by a legendary performer.

### TRIO WANDERER ROBERT SCHUMANN

Complete Piano Trios.

Quartet & Quintet.

Phantasiestücke op. 88.

Harmonia Mundi, 3 CD, HMM 902344.46.

Interpretation : \*\*\*\*\*

Technique : \*\*\*\*\*

**Trio Wanderer** has been for several years the reference trio on the musical planet, the one that you just have to follow (like the **Beaux-arts** in the past) to build up a reference record library. After **Rachmaninov** and **Shostakovich**, we return to the German repertoire with the three piano trios, augmented by **Schumann's** *Piano Quartet*, *Piano*

*Quintet and Phantasiestücke* for piano trio. Listening to it shows what has changed from the **Beaux-arts Trio** era. Whereas the latter juxtaposed three noble and magnificent instrumentalists on equal terms, the **Wanderers** have a greed for dialogue that makes each of them agree to step aside before coming back with full force. The playfulness and intimacy of these works, composed largely for his wife **Clara**, is a major element in **Schumann's** work. A reference album and milestone of chamber music.

**ALBRECHT MAYER**  
**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**  
Works for oboe and orchestra  
Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie  
Bremen.

DG, 483 8232

Interpretation : \*\*\*\*

Technique : \*\*\*\*

The propagation of certain repertoires is closely linked to certain interpreters. For a long time, the works with a oboe soloist were recorded by **Heinz Holliger**, who is also a composer and now a conductor (he is recording the complete **Schubert** works for **Sony**). The two oboists of the hour are **Alexei Ogrintchouk** of the **Amsterdam Concertgebouw** and **Albrecht Mayer** of the **Berlin Philharmonic**. **Mayer** continues a series of discs for **DG** with an admirable **Mozart** program that omits... the *K. 314 Oboe Concerto!* The transcriptions (with **Verum, Exultate, Jubilate**) feed a program articulated around a skilful adaptation for oboe and harpsichord of the *K. 299 Concerto for flute and harp*. A nice summer record.

**TEODOR CURRENTZIS**  
**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

*Symphony No. 7*

Musicaeterna

Sony, 19439743772

Interpretation : \*\*

Technique : \*\*\*\*

Greek-Russian conductor **Teodor Currentzis** is one of the most prominent musicians in the world. He conceives his records as events where every detail is meticulously calculated. The problem is that the sum of the intentions draws

the attention more to him than to the composer. There are in this *7<sup>th</sup> Symphony* (you will notice that **Currentzis** considers himself so important that his *CD* has no supplements) many good ideas in the balances or in the enhancement of orchestration details. But there are just as many completely indefensible or bogus approaches, such as the beginning of the *2<sup>nd</sup> movement* which evolves for long seconds on the edge of inaudible because it is so pianissimo. The question of pedantic dynamic deviations arises almost identically in the *3<sup>rd</sup> movement*. So you have to constantly sort out the good ideas from the bad ones. In short, **Currentzis** puts on a show...

**THE BOX SET OF THE MONTH**

**CLAUDIO ABBADO**

Recordings with the London  
Symphony Orchestra

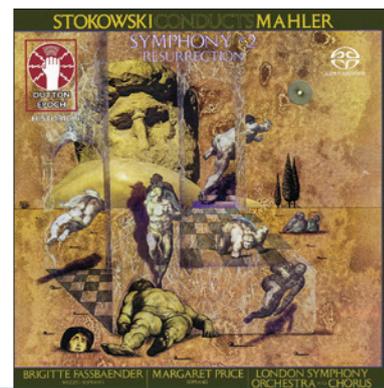
DG, 46 CD, 483 9589

Interpretation : \*\*\*\*

Technique : \*\*\*\*

**Abbado** fans who have been waiting for the **Abbado-London** cube after the **Abbado-Berlin** (disappointing) and **Abbado-Vienna** (not imported in Canada) box sets will be both happy to see the best recordings of the Italian conductor (**Abbado's** famous **Bartók, Stravinsky, Prokofiev** and **Ravel** can be found here) and sad not to have the original sleeves.

The content is obviously splendid, mixing the London legacies of **DG** and **Decca**, i.e. illustrating in particular **Abbado** at the beginning of his career, in the years 1966-1970, a more biting conductor. Obviously, many things have been available and often reissued, **Carmen** and the **Rossini** operas, for example. The box set also includes the **Mozart** concertos recorded with **Serkin** and, as a bonus, two *CDs* with the **New Philharmonia: Tchaikovsky's 2<sup>nd</sup>** and vocal works by **Brahms**.



**DUTTON'S MULTI-CHANNEL GAMBLE**

This is what is called going against the wind! English label **Dutton - Vocalion** releases on its **Dutton Epoch** label, in multichannel *SACD*, quadrasonic recordings from the **Sony / BMG** catalog.

Our attention was drawn to the presence on the market of records by **Leonard Bernstein** (*Rite of Spring*), **Pierre Boulez** (*Daphnis et Chloe*, **Bartók**), **Leopold Stokowski** (**Mahler, Beethoven**) and the complete **Beethoven Piano Concertos** recorded by **Arthur Rubinstein** under **Daniel Barenboim**.

In practice, the approach is exactly the same as that of **Pentatone**, 10-15 years ago, which reissued **Universal's** quadrasonic catalog, for example **Colin Davis' Tosca**, **Bernstein's Carmen**, **Kubelik's Beethoven** (except for the *3<sup>rd</sup>* one, of which the tape is too damaged).

The difference today is that even labels that are fervent supporters of the *SACD* format (**Pentatone** in particular) are abandoning it, because the pressing costs are too high, the player base is deficient and studies have shown that part of the clientele does not even play their releases in *SACD* quality.

So what are **Dutton Epoch** records worth? The publisher sent us **Boulez's Daphnis et Chloé**, **Bernstein-London's Rite of Spring** and two **Stokowski's Beethoven's Eroica** and **Mahler's 2<sup>nd</sup>**, the latter two corresponding to our wishes, somewhat out of fetishistic admiration for the conductor. This admiration is a joy, for **Mahler's 2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony**, which had a boxy sound on the **RCA** release, emerges transfigured and revitalized from the treatment (also in stereo) and gains an indisputable aura, which is very pleasing for the **Mahlerian** posterity of this conductor who gave one of the first performances of *Symphony No. 8* (of the *Thousand*). The *Eroica* was less deficient in the first place, but the work is there also neat, for a serious interpretation.

**Bernstein's Rite of Spring** is not as good as the earlier one in New York and points out that when a recording is very large and lacks a bit of focus, multichannel may amplify this diffusion. The *Rite* is coupled with **Poulenc's Gloria** and **Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms**: a very blocky choral recording and rather superfluous appearance.

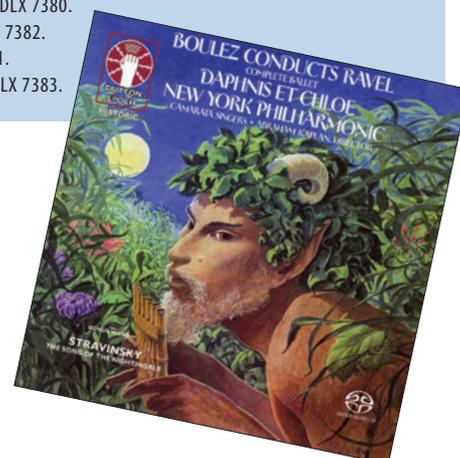
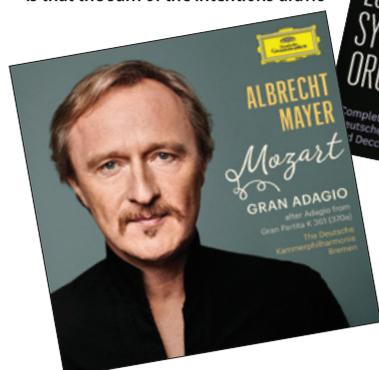
This quadrasonic respects the aesthetic integrity of the music. In the use of the rear channels, we are a bit above the **BIS** room atmosphere, but not at all in an artificial spectacularization. As for purchase decisions, the example of **Stravinsky-Bernstein** and, a contrario, **Ravel-Boulez**, a pure delight as well as a reference, shows that the original quality of the source should be a criterion if you wish to acquire some of the titles. That said, as **Stokowski's "Resurrection" Symphony** shows, **Michael Dutton** sometimes works miracles. The best thing would be for him to submit them to us!

Beethoven Stokowski. Dutton, CDLX 7380.

Mahler Stokowski. Dutton, CDLX 7382.

Ravel Boulez. Dutton, CDLX 7381.

Stravinsky Bernstein. Dutton, CDLX 7383.



**MARANTZ MODEL 30** INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER AND **30N** SACD/NETWORK PLAYER

# A FORWARD-LOOKING DUO

By MICHEL DALLAIRE



In the late 1970's, I was able to afford my first real high-fidelity system thanks to a summer job as a broadcast technician. This system was then composed of a gleaming **Marantz 1070** integrated amplifier. At that time, **Marantz** products were designed by American engineers but manufactured in Japan. Japanese products had a bad reputation at that time, much like some products currently made in China. Since then, I've had the opportunity to test a few **Marantz** products, but none of the ones at the top of the range. In general, Japanese brands have acquired their reputation for excellence and now offer products that are highly sought after for their manufacturing quality. For this test bench, I will have the pleasure to test two models from the new **Marantz 30 series**, the **Model 30** integrated amplifier and the **30n SACD** player designed and manufactured entirely in Japan. Let's see what these two **Marantz** devices, which are intended to be perfectly complementary, offer us.

### Let's start with the SACD 30n source

The new **Marantz 30n SACD** player is a true digital input portal that can accommodate almost any type of music file available for download. Its digital-to-analog conversion section is based on an in-house concept called *MMM (Marantz Musical Mastering)*. Therefore, all incoming *PCM* music files are converted back to *DSD 256* using a selection of digital filters and two different clocks to ensure accurate sampling of files up to 32 bits/384 kHz. The *DAC* section is also accessible via two optical and one coaxial input that supports *PCM* files with a resolution of up to 24-bit/192 kHz. On the back, there is also a *USB-A* input that can play music directly from a *USB* stick or external *USB* hard drive.

Moreover, the *30n SACD* player is a true network player thanks to its *RJ45* input which allows easy access to any music whether it is downloaded from online music services, stored in a music server or on a *NAS (Network Attached Storage)*. The *30n SACD* can also be used with the *HEOS* platform and its free app for *Android* or *iOS* phones and tablets. This allows for multi-room streaming from *UPnP* storage devices and online music services like **Amazon Music HD**, **Spotify**, **Tidal** and others. Two antennas

also offer *Bluetooth* and *Airplay 2* wireless transfer functions. As a bonus, the *30n SACD* is also certified for the *ROON* playback software. A picture of the interior gives me a good impression of the quality of its playback mechanics, while the linear power supply of the device is ensured by a toroidal transformer of good dimensions.

The *30n SACD* player has one fixed and one variable gain audio output on *RCA* connectors, but no *XLR*, which I don't think is a problem. The *30n SACD* player uses the latest *HDAM-SA2 (Hyper Dynamic Amplifier Module)* technology in its output circuitry, developed and refined by **Marantz** since 1992. This technology consists of small operational amplifier modules with discrete parts rather than chips. These modules are individually shielded by a copper-plated housing. Therefore, the *30n SACD* player can be used as a real digital preamplifier ready to be connected directly to an amplifier or active speakers. The 6.35 mm jack output, for headphone listening, has its own *HDAM* modules, specific volume control and adjustable gain depending on the type of headphones used. Add to that a great remote control, and the **Marantz 30n SACD** player becomes a smart buy in terms of connectivity, features and usability.

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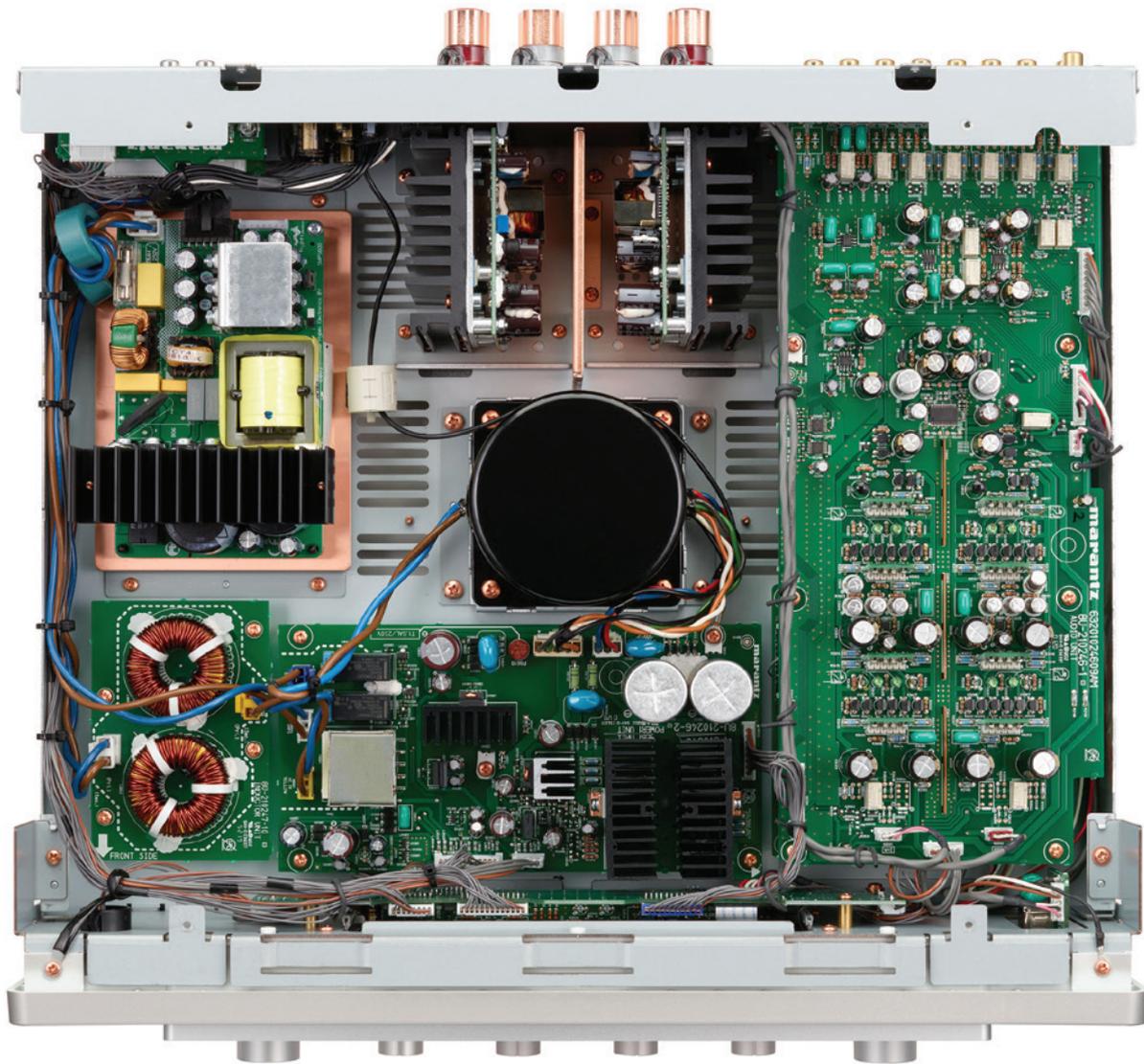


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### The Model 30 integrated amplifier

Even though its output circuits are equipped with *Class D* modules, the *Model 30* must be considered a purely analog integrated amplifier, as it does not have a digital section. Its *Class D* amplifier modules are *Hypex Ncore NC500s* that have their own *SMPS600* switching power supply circuit. Aided by a series of ultra-fast capacitors made to specification, the *Model 30's* claimed power is 100 W per channel at 8 ohms impedance and increases to 200 W at 4 ohms impedance.

The preamplifier stage is purely analog and its linear power supply is completely independent with its own toroidal transformer. This stage also includes *HDAM* modules used for the two-stage phono input, *MM* and *MC*, in combination with *JFET* transistors. This in-house design eliminates coupling capacitors in the very low voltage signal path that is susceptible to interference. The gain setting for the *MC* stage can be selected from three positions (*Low*, *Mid*, *High*) by a knob on the front of the amplifier. The other line inputs are identified as *CD*, *Tuner*, *Line-1*, *Line-2*, *Recorder* and *Power Amp In*. The line outputs are labeled *Recorder* and *Pre Out*.

### Conditions of use

First of all, I would like to specify that the result of my listening to this duo of **Marantz** devices is essentially based on their

joint use. I've used them, too, on their own and I can assure you that both are of equal quality. The headphone outputs are fully capable of powering excellent quality headphones. To this end, my open-faced headphones, of appropriate quality, offered me a masterful sound. The **Marantz 30n SACD** is perfectly compatible in *UPnP* mode through my *Ethernet* network with my **CeolBOX** music server and its **Logitech Media Server** playback software. I was also able to play my music files from the *ROON* platform and its application without any problem. As I also had the option of connecting my server directly to the *30n SACD* player via *USB*, I did not feel it necessary to use the *HEOS* platform for my tests.

### A duo that sings in unison

I started my listening British singer-songwriter **Alice Jemima's** eponymous album that I downloaded in 24-bit *Flac* files. She is a guitarist who uses looping rhythms combined with electronic music arrangements. Her voice, soft and suave, is presented to me in my listening room by the **Marantz** duo in a carnal and vivid way. The tonal balance is most appealing, with a deep, powerful and well controlled bass. The mid-range is open, warm and transparent. It is well covered by crystalline high frequencies which have a beautiful extension, without ever doing too much to impress or to give in to acidity. Some audiophiles



find *Class D* amplification cold, dry or disembodied. With the *Model 30* amplifier and the *30n SACD* player, they'll have to reconsider this, because these two devices are anything but cold or dry. Together they have a detailed sound with a slight roundness in the lower midrange, which contributes to their musicality.

I continue with Catherine Major's fifth album entitled *Carte Mère* and also downloaded in 24-bit *Flac* format. This singer-songwriter has been playing piano since she was 4 years old, but in this opus, she decided to experiment with the keys of a computer keyboard. She therefore goes towards a more electronic style. Some of the tracks feature superb symphonic arrangements performed by the **Bratislava Symphony Orchestra**. Musically, this album is excellent and it is recorded with a lot of gain, which gives it a great dynamic. On the other hand, on some pieces, the sound sometimes borders on the hardness that could be interpreted as distortion caused by the recording techniques. *Carte Mère* is therefore, for me, a reference album that tells me if a high-fidelity device is a little too high-frequency oriented or if it has too thin a tonal balance. The **Marantz** duo doesn't hide any of the recording's characteristics, but their soft and warm tonal balance makes listening to this album much easier and more enjoyable. The dynamics are there with low frequencies, once again, powerful and well supported. The symphonic orchestral mass, on certain tracks, is perfectly respected in all its grandeur.

I end this description with **Matt Holubowski's** 2016 album *Solitudes*. This Quebec singer-songwriter composes his songs in French as well as in English. On this opus, his rather high voice floats in an airy way thanks to judiciously applied reverb. His guitar is magnified thanks to a superb capture that the **Marantz** duo renders in a very natural way. Here, the synergy between the *30n SACD* player and the *Model 30* amplifier gives me a shimmering listening experience thanks to a slight roundness in the lower midrange which embellishes the whole without, however, distorting the timbres. The level of transparency, definition and dynamics of this duo allows a free diffusion of the music in my listening room, but without an exaggerated projection effect. The singer and the various instruments remain well encamped in a stereophonic image that goes far beyond the speakers. In this sense, the intimate character of this album is superbly preserved by the **Marantz** duo. These two devices have the ability to reproduce all types of music, whether on

analog media or on digital files, and this with a very attractive tonal balance.

### Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this review, **Marantz's** new *30 series* is not just a rebranding of its devices, but a thorough reformation towards an even more affordable high-end series compared to the *Reference* series or even the *SA-KI Signature* series. Transparency, neutrality and musicality are qualities that are highly sought after by designers of high-fidelity equipment. It often happens, however, that in the upper echelons of uncompromising devices, these three qualities work against each other when the goal is to achieve musicality that is forgiving of lesser recordings. In my opinion, the **Marantz** duo, *Model 30* and *30n SACD*, succeeds in finding the right balance between a warm and detailed sound at the same time. The manufacturing quality of both devices is impeccable and without major flaws. I also believe that not including the digital streaming and *D-A* conversion circuits in the amplifier is a good decision that pays off audibly. In a relatively reasonable price range, I consider that these two **Marantz** devices offer us a very good overview of what is offered in the market of the exceptional brands. I therefore recommend them without equivocation.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Model 30 integrated amplifier

Price : \$3,500

Warranty : 3 years, parts and labor

#### 30n SACD player

Price : \$3,500

Warranty : 3 years, parts and labor

Distributor : Sherpa Group, T. : 514.366.4265 or 1 866.767.6584, [www.marantz.com](http://www.marantz.com) ; [sherpagroupav.com](http://sherpagroupav.com)

#### Mediagraphy

Alice Jemima, Alice Jemima, *Flac 24 / 96 ProStudioMaster*

Catherine Major, *Carte Mère*, *Flac 24 bits / 96 kHz*

Matt Holubowski, *Solitudes*, *Audiogram / Sony Music*, 88985368932

Monoswezi, *Monoswezi Yanga*, *TUGCD*, 1090

Eddie Higgins Trio, *Haunted Heart*, *SSC*, 1080D

# What's New?

## NEW FROM ISOACOUSTICS - APERTA SUB

**IsoAcoustics** is proud to unveil the new *Aperta Sub*. Featuring a sculpted aluminum frame and patented IsoAcoustics integrated isolators, the *Aperta Sub* sets a new standard for subwoofer sound isolation. The *Aperta Sub* dissociates the subwoofers from the supporting surface to prevent the physical transfer of energy to the surface, which causes the room to rattle and disturb the neighbors.

Patented **IsoAcoustics** isolation also prevents subwoofer vibrations from reflecting off the surface of the stand and back into the subwoofer cabinet. Managing these reflections eliminates muddy bass trails and reveals greater clarity and definition.

Carpet discs (or decoupling spikes) are included with the *Aperta Sub* for use on carpeted surfaces. The carpet discs ensure a solid connection through the carpet, providing a solid base for the *Aperta Sub*.

The *Aperta Sub's* design features a low profile of 10.5" wide x 11.5" deep x 1.3" high, intended for use with front- and side-loaded subwoofers weighing up to 80 lbs (36.3 kg). This innovative shape allows the *Aperta Sub* to be positioned directly under the subwoofer without interfering with the existing subwoofer stands.

With a large speaker producing low frequencies, the subwoofer creates a large amount of energy that can transfer to the supporting surface, interfere with other audio components and/or annoy the neighbors. The *Aperta Sub* provides a high degree of isolation and will clean up muddy low frequency sound to reveal more clarity and definition. The unique patented isolators are directional and are designed to be positioned so that the logo faces forward



to resist lateral deflection and wobble for greater accuracy and focus.

The **IsoAcoustics** *Aperta Sub* will be available soon from the audio video dealer of

your choice. The manufacturer's suggested retail price is expected to be approximately \$189.99.

<https://isoacoustics.com/>

# What's New?

## AUDIO RESEARCH LAUNCHES A NEW INTEGRATED AMP



By the newsroom

The **I/50** Integrated Amplifier is the first product in an all-new series from **Audio Research**. Functionally simple, visually engaging, and musically sublime – the **I/50** takes music listening to a whole new experience. Hand-crafted in Minnesota, the **I/50** is built with the same attention to detail as all other **Audio Research** products – each one even gets its own listening test with sonic designer, **Warren Gehl**.

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Available in six colors, this new integrated amp features Cerakote finishes for a beautiful and long-lasting look. The modular design allows for the installation of two audio modules - a *Phono Stage*, and a *D/A Converter* (to come in 2022). The high current, 50 W per channel amplifier is capable of driving a wide variety of speakers. A headphone jack allows for personal listening time. The *I/50* is designed to be easy to use, and has three controls on its top panel – *Power*, *Input*, and *Volume*. Two *LexieTubes*® provide display information for input selection and volume.

Two matched pairs of 6550WE vacuum tubes, along with three 6922 tubes, stand in front of the perforated transformer cover. Three single-ended inputs and one XLR input provide connectivity for most systems, along with 4 and 8 Ohm speaker taps to accommodate your speaker of choice. One input can

be assigned for pass-through function. A full-function metal remote control provides further functionality and operation. An optional tube cage will be available.

The *Phono* module provides 42 dB of gain, allowing a wide choice of moving magnet and high-output moving coil cartridges. The *D/A Converter* will have multiple connection options and an array of decoding formats to accommodate the wide spectrum of music formats and resolutions. The *I/50* is a truly integrated product while providing renowned **Audio Research** performance and sound quality.

The performance of the *I/50* belies its compact design. 50 W of all-vacuum tube power energize your speakers with beautiful and lifelike music. Designed by the **Audio Research** engineering team and fine-tuned by **Warren Gehl**, the *I/50* has been given the same level of care and attention as our *Reference Series* products. The ability of the *I/50* to reconstruct a musical experience will thrill and excite all who hear it. Thanks to the substantial power supply and high current design, the *I/50* provides controlled and dynamic playback - even on challenging speakers.

<https://audioresearch.com/>

# A TUBE AMPLIFIER NOT LACKING IN ORIGINALITY

By MICHEL DALLAIRE

The **Fezz Audio** brand is relatively new in the field of tube amplification. It was founded five or six years ago and its factory is located in the east of Poland, not far from the Belarusian border. **Fezz Audio**, a family-owned company specializing in the manufacture of toroidal transformers and power supply circuits, is owned by a major Polish manufacturer named **Toroidy**. The latter is the supplier of several European and American brands of international renown. What differentiates **Fezz Audio**'s products from other brands of tube amplifiers is its use of toroidal output transformers, rather than **EI**-type models with a shielded winding of laminated metal plates. Since **Toroidy**'s

customers seemed skeptical about using these output transformers, they decided to build their own tube amplifiers to prove their point. This is how the **Fezz Audio** brand was born, which seems to be an alternative to many Chinese tube products that have been flooding the market for a few years.

## **Titania, a Polish amplifier that intrigues**

*Titania* is the name of a character in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by **William Shakespeare**. In this comedy written in 1594-1595, *Titania* is the queen of the fairies, but at that time the author of the play surely did not suspect that the name of his character would become, some 426 years later, that of an integrated tube amplifier.





**Fezz Audio** counts, in its catalog, no less than seven integrated amplifiers models of which the mission is to offer relatively affordable options to audiophile tube aficionados. Of these seven models, four operate in class A/B push-pull, one of which is dedicated to amplifying headphones. The other three operate in pure class A *Single-Ended Triode*.

The *Titania*, that I will test in this benchmark, is the most powerful of the range with its 45 W per channel in class A/B provided by a quartet of *KT-88* lamps. These, as well as the two *12AX7*, in the preamplifier section, are from **Electro-Harmonix**, a manufacturer located in Russia. The *Titania* has a rather conventional and typical tube amplifier shape with a solid base topped by six tubes on the front including also two output transformers

located at the back on either side of the main power transformer. The difference with other brands is that the covers that cover all the *Titania's* transformers are lowered and give it a less massive look. The use of toroidal transformers for all circuits of the device is, at least, one of the advantages. Other advantages include the fact that toroidal transformers are lighter, less bulky, and less prone to vibration, which can cause background noise. The colors offered are less conventional in the *Titania's* and other **Fezz Audio** products' design. White, black, bright red and burgundy red are offered in a textured lacquer that looks durable and easy to maintain, not retaining fingerprints. The *Titania* can be fitted with a protective grill for the tubes, a *Bluetooth* module, a remote control and an input, named *HT*, allowing to

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## AMPLIFICATEUR **TITANIA** DE **FEZZ AUDIO**

use this integrated amplifier as a stereo power amplifier if you have a separate preamplifier with a volume control. There is no phono input for the turntable, but **Fezz Audio** offers three phono stage models at different prices among its accessories. The Titania I received is bright red and has a black protective cage and a remote control that only operates the volume button. In my opinion, the protective cage is essential, especially if you have young children, or a cat that climbs everywhere. In operation, the *KT-88* lamps become hot enough to inflict burns.

« The first characteristic that strikes me in the *Titania's* sound is the clarity and definition with which **Louis-Jean Cormier's** voice is reproduced. The amplifier's response curve seems to me more linear and more extended in the spectrum's extremities in comparison with other tube amplifiers that I have tested in the past. In addition to its excellent linearity, its transparency and dynamics are of a very good level. The *Titania* exerts good control over my speakers' diaphragms, resulting in well-controlled low frequencies with a respectable depth compared to other transistor designs. »

of the amplifier. The volume control is on the far left, and on the far right is the input selector for the sources. If you want

to try out different brands of lamps and do what is known in the jargon as tube rolling, no problem, because the *Titania* has a circuit that automatically adjusts the bias of the lamps as they wear out. So, no visible *VU* meter or screwdriver holes to measure and adjust the voltage of rest of the lamps. The rear of the unit is equally uncluttered with only three line inputs on *RCA* connectors as well as the 8 and 4 ohm loudspeaker output terminals. The rear panel is completed with a rectangular block that contains the fuse holder, *IEC* cord socket and the main switch.

### Installation and conditions of use

Due to the high heat release, I placed the *Titania* on top of my audio cabinet so that it could breathe freely. The installation of its lamps was easily done by following the instructions in the user's manual. Each lamp is numbered and in the manual we are told in which socket to place them. The lamps supplied in the package are accurately tested and matched by the manufacturer. In fact, when these need to be replaced, it is strongly suggested to order them from a **Fezz Audio** dealer.

The sources used are my *CD* player and my **CeolBOX** music server. The digital signal of the latter is converted by a *DAC* through the *USB* connection. I believe that you should not skimp on the quality of the sources to be used with the *Titania*, whether they are digital or analog. With an average sensitivity of 86 dB and an impedance that is always above 6 ohms, my speakers were ideal candidates for the *Titania's* power.

My only complaint with this integrated amplifier is that its motorized volume control is too reactive when operated by its remote control. In order to finely adjust the listening level, one must necessarily fall back on the volume knob and do it manually.



### The Titania Show

I began my listening with this Russian-Polish product by **Louis-Jean Cormier's** last CD album which is entitled *Le ciel est au plancher*. In this opus, the artist adopts a more electro-jazz style to deliver his compositions. His songs were inspired by the death of his father in 2020. His approach to this theme is personal and touching, but not maudlin at all. The first characteristic that strikes me in the *Titania's* sound is the clarity and definition with which **Louis-Jean Cormier's** voice is reproduced. The amplifier's response curve seems to me more linear and more extended in the spectrum's extremities in comparison with other tube amplifiers that I have tested in the past. In addition to its excellent linearity, its transparency and dynamics are of a very good level. The *Titania* exerts good control over my speakers' diaphragms, resulting in well-controlled low frequencies with a respectable depth compared to other transistor designs. As the *Titania* is made in Poland, I continued my listening experience with sumptuous jazz singer **Anna Maria Jopek**, who is also of Polish origin. The *Titania* seemed to me quite at ease, as if it had recognized the soft and warm voice of this artist from Warsaw. Its thermoionic tubes present it to me in a masterly way, but beware, one should not conclude that the *Titania* embellishes things with an over-aged roundness in the low mid-range. The four *KT-88* output tubes keep, at all times, control on the delivery without exaggerating the low midrange, and with a straightness that reminds me of transistor circuits. The *Titania* obviously has some of the attributes of tube circuits such as very natural timbres and a very present midrange. Nevertheless, I find that its sound is quite modern and does not settle into a romantic sound as if it had been designed in the 1960s - 1970s. It is clear and fast in its execution.

I continue my listening young British composer and performer **Alice Jemima's** homonymous album. Its electropop tracks allow me to test a high-fidelity device's response curve's range as much in the highs as in the lows. On this album, the *Titania's* tonal balance is very satisfactory because of the depth of the low frequencies it reproduces. In this register, the *Titania* demonstrates relatively powerful renditions, but these remain at all times supple and very well controlled. At the other end of the spectrum, the highs are crystal clear, but without turning the voice's sibilant notes into shrillness. The percussion and the electronic keyboard's bass are sustained with a well assumed *punch* for an amplifier of only 45 W per channel. Ms. **Jemima's** voice is as it should be, smooth and well centered in a rather large stereo image. However, the latter seemed to me to spread out more in depth than in width.

I finish my listening with Montrealer **Matt Holubowski's** latest album, entitled *Weird Ones*. This opus is brighter and less melancholic than his previous album *Solitudes* released in 2016. *Weird Ones* gathers a bunch of songs written in a journey between Paris, Krakow, Banff and Montreal. We discover a whole spectrum of textures and musical colors different from one track

to another. The *Titania* doesn't hide anything from me in this respect with **Matt Holubowski's** sweet voice that is wonderfully accompanied by his acoustic guitar. The drums' cymbals retain their metallic character while the bass drum impacts are well felt and provide foundation to the low notes. I'm not talking about the sternum-pounding, breathless kind of bass, but rather the right balance of depth and speed of execution. On some pieces, the artist accompanies himself on the piano, an instrument difficult to capture in all its harmonics. To that end, the *Titania* does superbly well and I have to agree that this amplifier definitely loves music, no matter the style.

### Conclusion

For some years now, Central European countries have been home to excellent manufacturers of high-fidelity equipment. Polish **Fezz Audio** is certainly part of this emerging group. Its proximity to Russian suppliers of thermo tubes is certainly an asset. The *Titania* integrated amplifier is one of the easiest to use, but it needs a well ventilated space because of the heat it gives off. The use of toroidal transformers its *KT-88* lamps' output did not seem to me problematic, on the contrary, it is, I think, an undeniable advantage. Its maintenance is facilitated by its automatic polarization circuit of the output lamps. Its sound, which I would describe as modern, but above all musical, bypasses very well the small deficiencies inherent in tubes while keeping only the best characteristics. The control it maintained over my speakers reminded me of the aplomb of a transistor circuit. Thermoionic amplification has not said its last word at **Fezz Audio**. Other than the fact that there is no headphone output, I feel that the *Titania's* suggested retail price is totally justified for this type of tube amp, especially considering the build quality and modern look.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Price : \$3,500

Warranty : 3 years parts and labor for the amp and 90 days for the tubes

Distributor : Tri-cell Enterprises, T. : 905.265.7870  
www.tricellenterprises.com ; fezzaudio.com

### Mediagraphy

Louis-Jean Cormier, *Le plancher est au ciel*,  
Flac 24 / 44, ProStudioMaster

Alice Jemima, *Alice Jemima*, Flac 24 / 96,  
ProStudioMaster

Matt Holubowski, *Weird Ones*, Les Disques  
Audiogramme

Monoswezi, *Monoswezi Yanga*, TUGCD1090

Eddie Higgins Trio, *Haunted Heart*, SSC, 1080D

# A charming singe

By J.-D. DOYLE

This is a nice surprise, but it's not a surprise at all! Indeed, it was only a matter of time before **Cambridge Audio** jumped in and designed a new line of all-in-one devices. This category of devices, to which the user only has to add a pair of speakers, has evolved considerably over the last few years while becoming more and more accessible. With the **EVO** series, **Cambridge Audio** introduces a series of compelling looking and amazing performing devices. Here is a range of devices offered at more affordable prices, in addition to the high-end products already offered by **Devialet**, **Linn**, **Micromega**, **Naim** and many

others. For this test bench, I was able to play with the **EVO 75**, the youngest of the **EVO** range. Let's see if it fulfills its promise and how it stacks up in the current market.

**Cambridge Audio**, well known for its range of affordable high-fidelity products is, above all, a design office located in London. Of course, at the price offered, **Cambridge Audio** has its products assembled in a factory located in Asia. **Cambridge Audio** products' quality of assembly, as well as the after-sales service have reached an excellent level.

For the *EVO* project, **Cambridge Audio** entrusted its design to industrial designer **Ged Martin**. The latter wanted the design of the user interface to be as user-friendly and pleasant as possible. You can take my word for it, it is particularly well done.



# r with great style

Indeed, the way the screen and the software of the device interact with the two control buttons is quite unique. Ergonomically, this level of refinement and care is, in my opinion, unheard of on a series of high-fidelity devices, which could easily be found inside a **Tesla** car. To see for yourself, just watch a few videos on **YouTube** where you can see the device in operation.

The volume control alone, and the way it interacts with the screen, will make you want to play with it. The *EVO* series is also bold in terms of the aesthetics of the housing. It offers two types of decorative panels that attach with small magnets. These are interchangeable and allow you to change the look of the sides of the device. One of them has the appearance of a walnut wood finish. The second panel is made from a particle-board called *Richlite* and has a textured black appearance. Special care has also been taken with the control application for

your mobile devices. This one reaches the top in terms of functionality and pleasure of use.

The **Cambridge Audio EVO 75**, which I had the opportunity to evaluate for this testbench, is an all-in-one device that includes a high-quality network player, an *APT-X Bluetooth* receiver, a digital-to-analog converter, a very transparent preamplifier, and a powerful 75 W Class *D* amplifier. The *EVO 75* has an analog input, an optical, or *HDMI*, input for TV sound, a *USB* jack for the computer, and a coaxial input for the future *EVO CD* player. The *EVO 75* has a preamp output for an external amplifier, a line output for a subwoofer and a pair of terminals for connecting a pair of speakers. In fact, this unit has exactly what it takes to become the centerpiece of a refined, simple and powerful stereo system. As we will see, the *EVO 75* uses state-of-the-art technology to achieve this.



## CAMBRIDGE AUDIO EVO 75 ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEM

### Technical description

The *EVO 75*'s core is based on **Cambridge Audio's** *Stream Magic* networked playback platform. This is a networked playback circuit that has been refined and polished for many years by **Cambridge Audio**. This stable, well-supported platform is operated by one of the best applications available today and has a proven track record. This provided a solid foundation for the development of the *EVO 75*. The main new features for the *EVO* series are the integration of **Google Chromecast** functions, compatibility with **Apple's Airplay2** protocol and the decoding of *MQA* format files. The music coming from the network player is then converted by an **ESS Sabre** chip before going to the preamplifier section. It has been carefully designed to obtain the best possible synergy with the amplifier stage. In fact, since the amplifier section uses a circuit that operates in Class *D*, **Cambridge Audio** engineers made sure that the *EVO 75* has the classic **Cambridge Audio** amplifier tone.

The amplifier stage uses **Hypex** Ncore modules that deliver 75 W per channel. These modules are the latest technology in class *D* amplification. According to **Hypex**, these modules are no longer inferior to the best classical amplifiers operating in class *A/B*. A statement that I was initially inclined to take with a grain of skepticism. As we will see in the listening, **Cambridge Audio** seems to have succeeded in dosing the implementation parameters well. And the musicality is there.

### Unpacking and installation

As always with Cambridge Audio, the device arrives in a package absolutely at the top of what is done today. The *EVO 75* is, of course, delivered with a very well designed remote control. You will need to install the *Stream Magic* application on your mobile device first. This is essential and will allow you to use your device to its full potential. However, the controls, located on the front of the *EVO 75*, will allow you to access the basic





functions of the device without necessarily going through the application. The display provides a wealth of information on the *EVO 75*'s status and you'll have no trouble finding your way around. The instruction manual is complete and very well written. If you follow the steps carefully, you should be able to listen to your music in a few minutes. Once set up, the *EVO 75* will allow you to easily access your music from your favorite download sites such as **Tidal**, **Qobuz**, **Apple Music**, **Spotify** and many others.

### Listening Impressions

#### A gentle musical exploration

From the very first minutes of listening, the **Cambridge Audio EVO 75** gives off an impression of absolute smoothness. Everything is delicate, fine, detailed with just the right amount of micro-information. I have to tell you that this device really surprised me. Given the presence of a class *D* amplifier, I expected a hard and analytical listening. This was not the case. The timbres are warm, soft, even velvety. It is obvious that the **Cambridge**

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## CAMBRIDGE AUDIO EVO 75 ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEM

**Audio** engineers have succeeded in implementing this amplification technology by skilfully dosing the *EVO 75*'s various circuits, in order to obtain, in the end, a sound quality that is easily received. A superb example is listening to this album by the **Tord Gustavsen Trio**, *The Other Side*. **Tord Gustavsen**'s piano is rendered with a certain restraint that makes the listening experience chic and bright. The drums stay in their proper place without any cymbal spillover, and the double bass has staying power. With the *EVO 75*, we are definitely on the civilized side of listening. It is therefore a device with a predictable character, with a good dose of restraint. The **Cambridge Audio EVO 75**

« The sound rendered by the *EVO 75* is simply beautiful. It has this facility, difficult to describe, to embellish the listening experience and to complete your music collection with a rich polish. With this **Jacob Bro** album, *Uma Elmo*, encoded in *MQA* format and listened to using streaming platform **Tidal**, the result is superb. The guitar's texture is rendered with a very accurate tone that gives an irresistible urge to pay attention. »

will therefore fulfill its role of gently feeding a pair of speakers for a low volume listening that will remain detailed. Its velvety side, which is easily forgiven, will allow it to accommodate with ease the often fluctuating quality of the various streaming sources. At low volumes, you can easily switch from **Radio Paradise** in *CD* quality to **Spotify** in low resolution, without compromising the listening experience.

### Charming thanks to its beauty

The sound rendered by the *EVO 75* is simply beautiful. It has this facility, difficult to describe, to embellish the listening experience and to complete your music collection with a rich polish. With this **Jacob Bro** album, *Uma Elmo*, encoded in *MQA* format

and listened to using streaming platform **Tidal**, the result is superb. The guitar's texture is rendered with a very accurate tone that gives an irresistible urge to pay attention. **Arve Henriksen**'s trumpet is reproduced with all the little micro-details that can be heard, and his presence in the room is almost palpable. That an *all-in-one* device in this price range can achieve such a high level of quality is a feat in itself. By the way, how does the **Cambridge Audio EVO 75** stack up against its competitors? In the memory of this reviewer, the *EVO 75*'s rendering does not reach that of **Micromega's M-ONE**, **Linn's Select DSM** or **Naim's Uniti Nova**. This is a normal and logical result since the *EVO 75* is offered at a much more affordable price. However, it will be interesting to see how its big brother, the *EVO 150* model, will position itself in this ultra-competitive market. At the price it is offered, the **Cambridge Audio EVO 75** occupies a prime position and is a device with a very competitive quality ratio.

### Conclusion

The *EVO 75* has it all. As an elegant device, placed on a beautiful piece of furniture in your living room, it will become a charmer that will divert conversations. It will finely power a pair of quality speakers and fill your room with pleasant music every day. The beauty of its display and the pleasure of using its controls will only add to the happiness of its owners. A great success and a superb device to discover!

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Price: \$2,299.95

Warranty: 3 years, parts and labor

Distribution: Trends Electronics International Inc,  
T.: 604.988.2966, [www.trendsinc.com](http://www.trendsinc.com); [cambridgeaudio.com](http://cambridgeaudio.com)

### Mediagraphy

Tord Gustavsen Trio, *The other side*, ECM, 2606, 615 1618

Jacob Bro, *Uma Elmo*, ECM, 2702, 354 2716



# What's New?



## BMW iX x BOWERS & WILKINS

By the newsroom

**Bowers & Wilkins**, the British loudspeaker company famed for bringing its knowledge and experience of acoustic excellence to the automotive industry, has extended its successful partnership with **BMW**, with the launch of the *iX*, the new luxury electric SAV from **BMW**.

The **Bowers & Wilkins Diamond Surround Sound System** in the *iX* features the most advanced sound quality found in a car, with the aim of delivering an audio experience that feels as though you are there with the artist in the studio, a concept that **Bowers & Wilkins** refer to as 'True Sound'. This can only be achieved through close collaboration between the engineering teams from both **BMW** and **Bowers & Wilkins**, and by using proven technologies from **Bowers & Wilkins'** core range of passive loudspeakers.

The **BMW iX** is the first fully electric vehicle to feature *Diamond Dome* tweeters, as found in **Bowers & Wilkins 800 Series Diamond** loudspeakers, the monitor loudspeaker of choice in Abbey Road Studios. The exceptionally accurate, low-distortion tweeters feature *Nautilus™* swirls, spiralling channels behind the tweeter domes that dissipate reflected sound waves that emanate from the rear of the drive unit and limit distortion. In keeping with the minimalist interior of the **BMW iX**, the tweeters are covered with brushed stainless-steel covers with a laser-etched logo and a discreet lighting effect, and the door speakers are discretely hidden behind acoustically optimized fabric.



In total, there are two *Diamond Dome* tweeters, three *Aluminium Dome* tweeters and five *Aramid Fibre* midrange speakers mounted as high as possible within the light, spacious cabin. A further eight speakers are integrated into the front and rear headrests, which can be individually adjusted to create a truly personalised audio experience for each passenger. For the first time, four bass speakers are joined by *4D Shakers* that are strategically positioned within the interior to produce a rich bass experience even at low volumes.

Passengers can engage with the sound system through four different sound modes, according to preference. The result is sound that's superbly detailed and free from coloration, seamlessly integrated within the car design.

[www.bowerswilkins.com](http://www.bowerswilkins.com); [www.bmw.ca](http://www.bmw.ca)

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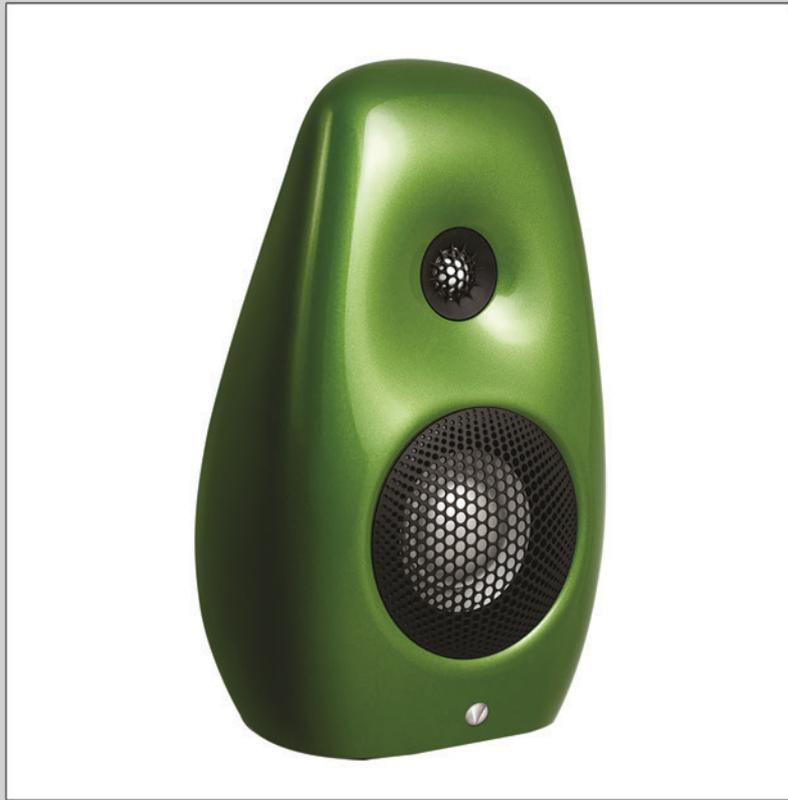
GOLDNOTE PH1000  
PHONO PREAMPLIFIER \$14,500



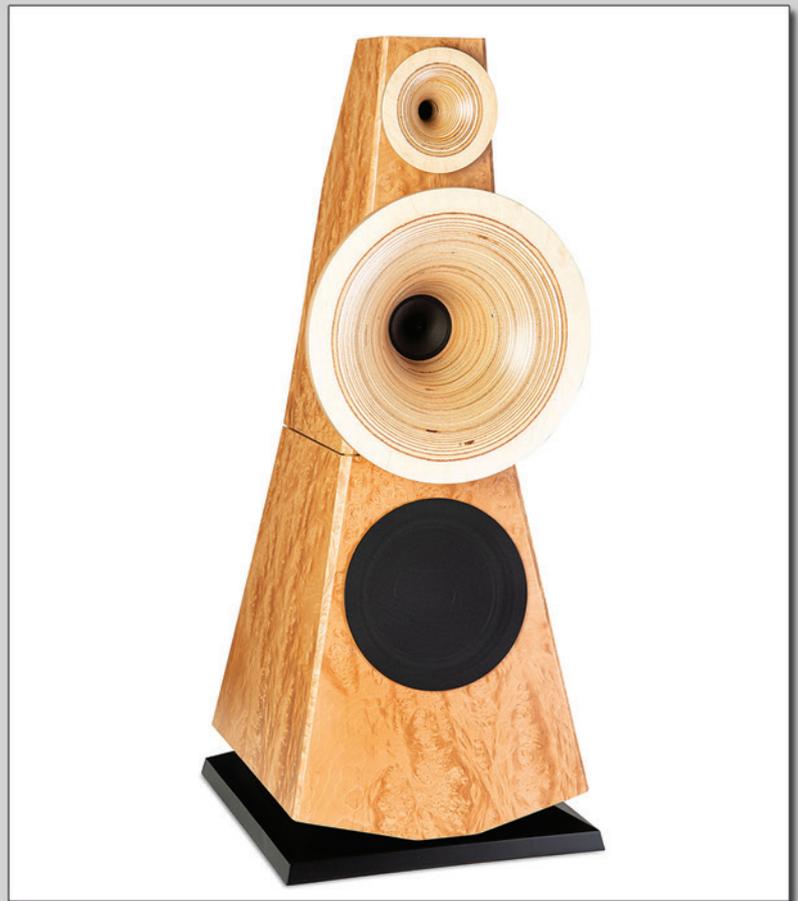
TRANSROTOR TRA9  
BLACK \$6,450



ETSURO URISHI COBALT BLUE  
MC CARTRIDGE \$6,000



VIVID AUDIO S12  
\$8,450



ODEON AUDIO HELIX  
MAPLE-BURL \$27,000

# BLUES

By PIERRE JOBIN



## CLARENCE SPADY

### Surrender

Nola Blue Records

**Clarence Spady** plays a felt blues, soaked in experience and it's an understatement to say so! Growing up surrounded by guitars in a bluesy family atmosphere - his father and uncle played guitar at weekly family jams - he got the feel and learned music naturally at a young age. And this, like his subsequent life experiences, is expressed in the outlet and through the crucible of his blues that range from traditional to contemporary with *R&B* and *Soul* blues. *Surrender* is only the third album in a long career that has had its ups and downs, its moments of glory and success, and its lows. But he is back, more determined and ready than ever to share his experiences and talents. His two previous records, *Nature of the Beast* in 1996 and *Just Between Us* in 2008, earned him a **W.C. Handy Award** nomination for *Best New Artist* for the former and a **2009 Blues Music Award** nomination for *Soul Blues Album of the Year* for the latter. **Clarence Spady** is a *bluesman* of heart, tradition, actualization, feeling, creativity and talent in all the variations of blues. If you can't be satisfied, this music will soothe your soul! With his friends, musicians and collaborators, he's a real deal! Or, as **Léo Ferré** sang, *C'est pas qu'c'est gagné, mais c'est bon!* The best of your career, Mr. **Spady!**

## MIKE GOUDREAU

### Isolation Blues

Productions Mike Goudreau, PMG-CD-20  
Never giving in to the pandemic, **Mike Goudreau** returns with *Isolation Blues*, his 21<sup>st</sup> independent album of 14 original tracks, with the regularity

of a clock or rather a metronome. Surrounded, as usual, by friends, close and hand-picked musicians, he tirelessly pursues his way with his everyday blues, glass half full! Delta, Chicago or Texas, Soul, Rock n' Roll blues, etc. without forgetting Jump Blues by this musician who knows how to roll with the blows and to bounce back, **Goudreau** masters and creates abundantly titles which he polishes, then, with the complicity of impeccable musicians and experienced collaborators until the achievement of the final product. Musicality, relevance and quality are his trademark attributes that he has been exporting for nearly 15 years to be incorporated through his compositions in American films and television series, such as *The Banker* (**Samuel Jackson**), 2020, *Dynasty* (**CBS** 2020) and the Christmas TV movie, *The Happiest Season* (**Hulu**, 2020), just to name a few! **Dany Roy**, on tenor saxophone, trumpet and brass arrangements, does a tremendous job and shows a dynamic presence, out of the ordinary. The other musicians are not to be outdone and know how to brilliantly pull their weight, **Jean-François Bégin** on drums and percussions, **Ira Friedman** on organ and piano and **Pascal Per Veillette** on harmonica. **Mike Goudreau** is on vocals, guitars and bass, as well as composing all the songs including *My Only Lady*, in collaboration



with **Michael Goodsell**. **Goudreau** has studied and mastered all the styles he produces. He also stands out as a keen observer of human nature and its daily hazards, which he knows how to portray with realism and a touch of irony. All the styles visited, pleasant, varied and invigorating listening, are again back again on this release!

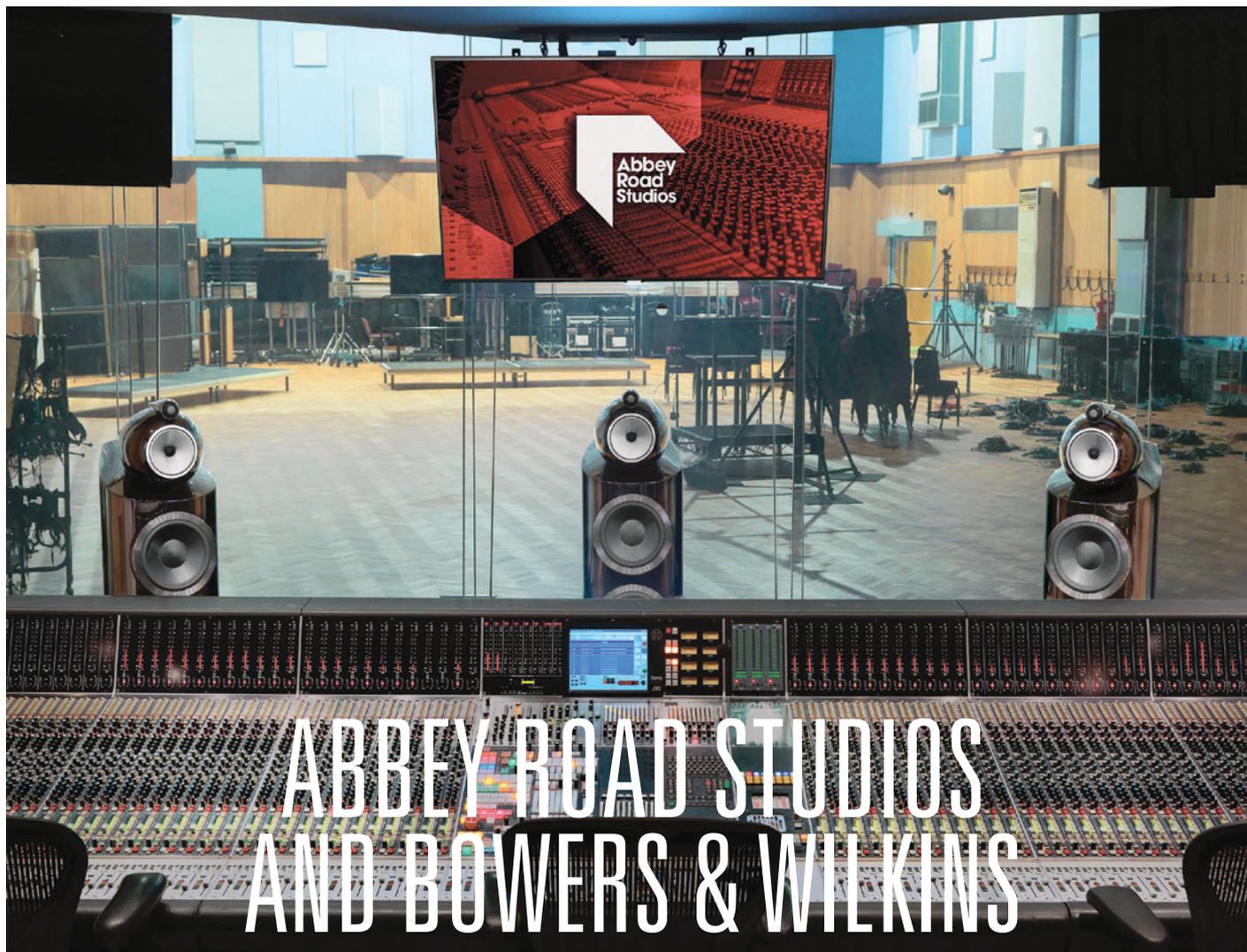
## ROB LUTES

### Come Around

Lucky Bear Records, MMMG 11550  
*Come Around* is the magnificent 8<sup>th</sup> solo album of **Rob Lutes**. Surrounded by his long-time accomplice, **Rob McDonald**, electric and acoustic guitars, dobro and mandolin, **Solon McDade**, bass, **Mario Telaro**, drums and percussion, **Bob Stagg**, piano, **Wurlitzer** and organ, as well as **Annabelle Chvostek** and **Kim Richardson**, backing vocals, **Lutes**, acoustic guitar and vocals, can count on this group of formidable and dedicated musicians to concoct for him folk music in a band with a fluid, subtle, consistent, even signature sound. **Lutes'** voice is supple and expressive, warm and sensitive, sometimes misty,

often intimate... As for the writing, some titles particularly caught my attention, the reflective *Work of Art*, which describes with accuracy and beauty, life, essentially relationship, in its contours and detours, in its elusive reality and its permanent and essential quest it isn't real, it's just a work of art Oh it could have been a work of art, he concludes! *Fisherman's Rest* is a song of brotherhood, caring and tenderness. This very beautiful subject coupled with the live and let live represents my song haven of peace of the album. *Shediac Bridge*, vivid, refreshingly youthful and rejuvenating memories, *That Bird Has My Wings*, an inspiring song of resilience and confidence, and *Come Around*, which emphasizes the importance of finding and supporting each other in the moment, are among the album's solid anchors. Taking the time to let yourself be lulled by the music, to let yourself be impregnated by the lyrics, to appreciate the bouquet of these merging talents on *Come Around*, isn't it loving generous life a little, a lot despite the knives, the lightning and the death that crosses it?

# What's New?



**Abbey Road Studios** and **Bowers & Wilkins** continue their partnership to improve in-car audio entertainment.

**Abbey Road Studios** and **Bowers & Wilkins** announced a new phase in their partnership that will see the two iconic audio brands join forces to explore and enhance the in-car audio experience today.

For the past five years, **Abbey Road Studios** has been exploring future music technologies, including machine learning and spatial audio, through its music technology innovation section, **Abbey Road Red**. Meanwhile, **Bowers & Wilkins** has perfected the way to move advanced technology to automotive speakers with **BMW**, **McLaren** and **Volvo**.

Now the two brands are combining their expertise to bring the unique acoustic personality of the **Studios** to the in-car listening experience for the first time, ensuring unparalleled sound quality while respecting the original recording. The partnership

between **Abbey Road Studios** and **Bowers & Wilkins** will enhance the sound quality and acoustic environment of automotive audio systems, aiming to provide the most lifelike listening experience possible.

**Dan Shepherd**, Director of Automotive Partnerships for **Bowers & Wilkins**, said *We are delighted to be working with **Abbey Road Studios** on a shared mission to enhance the in-car experience and provide drivers and passengers around the world with an exciting new way to enjoy their music.*

**Jeremy Huffelmann**, Managing Director of **Abbey Road Studios**, says *We are delighted to extend the mandate of our partnership with **Bowers & Wilkins** to co-develop our automotive offering. Through our shared passion for creative excellence and the highest quality audio, we will explore technologies to pursue the goal of creating the most accurate listening experiences possible for consumers.*

[abbeyroad.com](http://abbeyroad.com); [bowerswilkins.com](http://bowerswilkins.com)

KLIPSCH HERESY IV LOUDSPEAKERS

# Back to an expect



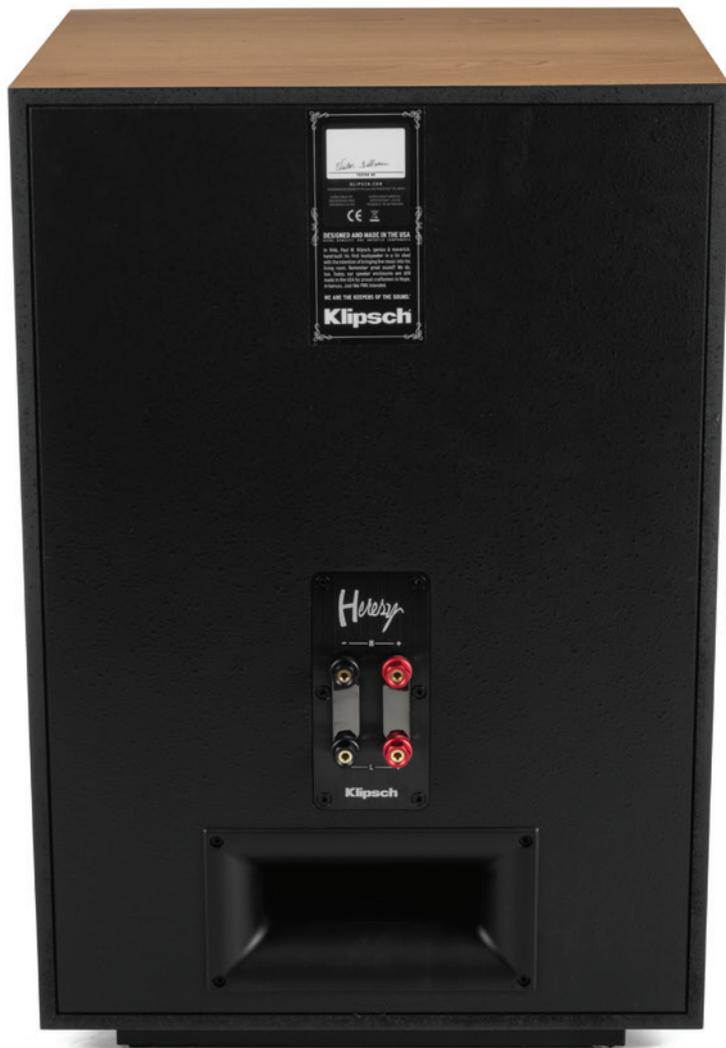
By ADRIEN ROUAH

Presenting a pair of **Klipsch Heresy IV**, at a time when some car manufacturers redesign and redefine their models almost every six months, the challenge is almost insurmountable! I must introduce you to a loudspeaker model that dates back to 1957 - the year it was created - and has an extremely high efficiency of 99 dB / 1 W / 1 m, has a 12" diameter woofer and is equipped with two compression chambers, one for the midrange and one for the treble. Are you still here? Yes, then I congratulate you and, as you will discover as you go along, you were right to continue reading

# ed future



To put you at ease right from the start, I'm going to propose to erase a few preconceived ideas, which have unfortunately done a lot of harm to this type of speaker and to high performance. Here are some examples: a high-performance speaker works only with tube electronics. Wrong! With transistors, it is also very good, provided that you do not connect an amplifier of several hundred watts per channel. There is no need for this, as high efficiency usually disdains high power. Analog (meaning vinyl) works best with this type of loudspeaker. Wrong! Even though at the time of their introduction, vinyl turntables were our primary playback medium, which reinforced this idea. This type of loudspeaker was created for rock music, or /and parties. This idea is terribly harmful, because it is destructive, in addition to being false, of course! Saying that about a **Klipsch** loudspeaker is like saying that a violin is made to play only classical music. I advise you to erase all these preconceived ideas and to follow me with a good blank ear. In fact, and this is what I'm going to assume in this article, you're not familiar with this type of loudspeaker or high output, and I'm here to tell you about it and convince you that there's something cutting edge about this approach.



### Technical details

**Klipsch's Heresy IV** loudspeakers boast an output that other loudspeakers struggle to achieve at their peak, and sometimes at all! The efficiency of the *Heresy IV* is 99 dB for 1 W at 1 m, while what you generally meet is about 87 / 89 dB on the most common models. This means that with a high-quality 30 W per channel integrated speaker, you'll have more than enough to fill your listening room, thanks to the 99 dB that the *Heresy IV* offers. If your choice is 100 W per channel - I'm assuming, again, that you already own a 100 W per channel integrated amplifier, and if that unit is class *A/B*, you're in luck! Electronics operating in class *A/B* operate in class *A* for the first few watts - hence the name *A/B*! And this is exactly what a high efficiency speaker requires, very few watts as long as they are of high quality, which is what class *A* offers. To close the subject and set some things straight, you can listen to what you want with these **Klipsch Heresy IV** high efficiency loudspeakers, the type of music you want, using the medium you like the most and especially the electronics of your choice, keeping in mind that it is quality that comes first and not all these preconceived ideas. To say today that the high output is a narrow way for our listening is an error of judgement, because it is this way, precisely, which will give another dimension to our listening.

### Technical description

Let's get to the heart of the matter. The **Klipsch Heresy IVs** are fairly compact speakers considering they have a 12" diameter bass driver. The dimensions of the enclosures are harmonious and keep the advantage of easy integration. The ones I was given are veneered with real wood, American walnut, which the manufacturer has matched in pairs. The wood grain pattern follows perfectly the edge of each cabinet. The protective fabric is reminiscent of professional speaker fabric which I like and is in perfect harmony with the wood tone. Once the grille is removed, we discover the unusual in terms of transducers. A 12" woofer with a multi-ply suspension and paper cone - a blend of cellulose pulp and composite material to be exact, a midrange chamber with a polymer diaphragm, and a treble chamber with a titanium diaphragm. These two transducers are equipped with horns whose design is patented, and named *Tractrix* by **Klipsch**. This *Tractrix* design allows for a better dispersion of the frequencies involved. The principle adopted is a *Bass-reflex*, with a rectangular and flared vent, placed at the back of the cabinets. This is a new *Bass-reflex* tuning on the *Heresy IV*, as the previous versions were closed type models. The terminal block is doubled to allow either bicabling or passive bisimplification. The finish is very careful and handcrafted in the noblest sense of the word. We feel that people have participated to this final result. It's both elegant and classic, and I like it because it's timeless.

### Technical description

Some notable changes have been made in this fourth version of the **Klipsch Heresy**. Compared to the previous versions, it is mainly within the cabinets that those changes have been made.



## KLIPSCH HERESY IV LOUDSPEAKERS

I immediately noticed that the top, bottom and side panels are wood veneered on both sides, a principle known to add long-term mechanical stability. The front and rear panels are painted in semi-gloss black and a flocked paint was used, like the one found in professional loudspeakers. The filtering is placed on a printed circuit, it is very elaborate and I notice that first quality components have been used - total absence of electrolytic capacitors which, as many electronic engineers say, age badly. The cabling is entirely from **Audioquest**. Here again, **Klipsch** sets itself apart from the norm with these high-quality cables. The internal cushioning is made with judiciously installed honeycomb foam. What is certain is that a lot of listening has helped to place and refine this internal damping. You can, along with me, rejoice in the important differences inside the cabinets, because it is rather on the outside that changes are made most of the time at other manufacturers! Finally, an important specification, all the transducers are mounted with metal inserts and maintained screwed with these inserts, thus, no screw directly in the wood. **Klipsch** is not looking to save time, but rather to last over time and we should remember that the **Heresy** model was created in 1957!

### Preparation for listening

Installing a pair of **Klipschs** always requires special attention. It's not the brand that wants this, but rather the high performance. If my listening was made in simple wiring, after many tests and comparisons, I preferred not to position the *Heresy IV* on the floor, as initially planned by the manufacturer. I placed them on rigid supports, after gradually looking for the best possible height in my room. So I chose 18" high brackets that were slightly tilted backwards (by about 5 degrees). I specify here that it will be necessary to start with a listening directly on the ground then, according to the results obtained, to seek the best height as I did it myself, until the new positioning gives you satisfaction. Satisfactory height is found when the musical scene seems to be true to life, when an artist appears to be approximately standing in front of you and not sitting on the floor! Physically, and once the listener is comfortable, it is the midrange transducer that is at eye level. The *Heresy IV*'s were aimed squarely at the listener, but your own testing will be necessary. The grilles don't make a noticeable change if left in place, but it is without them that my listening description was made.



**Music and movies**

Analog music in the first place. Punk and lighter music, to agree on the versatility of high performance. **Iggy Pop** and **Jacques Bertin**. *Dirt and Carnet*, two pieces I know perfectly well. It hits like it should for the **Stooges**. No surprise, I was expecting this. I immediately noticed the richness of the bass provided by a 12" woofer. It's generous, there's enthusiasm in my listening room. Totally agree with the idea that punk-rock will get along well with **Klipsch Heresy IVs**!

For **Bertin**, it is necessary to try it only the next day, just to be rested from the previous performance and to honor the next one! It is both warm and soft, the compression chambers work wonderfully with voices, this one is masculine and articulate, it is refined and very detailed. No ears to strain, no volume to turn up, everything is clear and limpid. The vinyl listening is a complete success!

In digital format, I chose **Iggy Pop**, not to really compare, but to authenticate, symbolically, that the digital crushes the analog. You knew it of course, now you live it fully. However, the overall warmth is more tangible in vinyl, while in digital, it is the precision and dynamics that come out on top. The midrange and treble compressions are very close to the real thing, without reaching the very high powers of my class A/B integrated amplifier.

Although I watched a few shows on the Internet, it is the next day that I started listening to CDs again. It is the oud's turn to distill the music. I would almost applaud this music and its match with the **Klipsch Heresy IVs**. I'm not saying that I can actually see the musicians, but I can see their respective positions and I have a very strong feeling of a live performance.

To put ourselves back in the present time, **Sia** and her 2021 album make it clear that versatility is the order of the day. No constraints with continuously loaded music, and here, no respite for the six transducers, everyone is active and follows a continuous rhythm. And then here is the terrible record, the one that allows me to say that high performance, and in this case the **Klipsch Heresy IVs**, is the only way to make such a work credible even at home. It is the *Rite of Spring* by **Stravinsky**. The power doesn't matter as long as you get the decibel surge, the masterful differentiation between silence and modulation peaks! And these low notes, these low notes which will not go down to 25 Hz (frequency often wished by many audiophiles), but will have a tone which will make startle at times. The *Bass-reflex* principle, newly adopted on the *Heresy IV*, greatly increases the tone felt in the low frequencies, with real depth. Because that's the strength of this pair of speakers, presenting a reality you never knew existed. And the dynamics of the *Heresy IV* do not preclude the possibility of delicacy, far from it. As soon as the *Rite of Spring* is introduced, one would have to be ill-intentioned not to notice the superiority of compression chambers in classical music. Even the best domes, fabric or metal, struggle during this transcription and especially during the accelerations that take on a

dizzying dimension here. The fusion of the two compressions is excellent, sign of a perfect mastery of the subject on **Klipsch's** part. The bass is also perfectly blended, and it is coherent. Everything happens as if it were real, as if you were there, without leaving your home.

**Conclusion**

The future is already at hand, because you were waiting for it without knowing it. You will notice that I did not use in my article the word vintage which, for me, has always been composed by the words old and aged. If some people call this pair of loudspeakers vintage, that is to say old and aged, it is because they consider the look before the exceptional performance in the transcription of the music and its right intensity. If **Klipsch** speakers of this caliber have been temporarily excluded from the distribution channels, you should not deprive yourself of a listening experience to orient yourself towards what will be the future. To me, they should never have been set aside or distributed so sparingly. Commercially speaking, they have their place in our listening rooms, now more than ever. Fidelity is good, but near-reality is better. And what better way to convince yourself of this form of home reality than with a pair of *Heresy IVs*?

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Price: \$4,398/a pair

Warranty: 10 years parts and labor for the original purchaser

Distributor: Gentec International Inc, T.: 905.513.7733

[www.gentec-intl.com](http://www.gentec-intl.com); [www.klipsch.com](http://www.klipsch.com)

Mediagraphy

**Vinyls**

Stooges, Funhouse, Elektra, EKS 74071

Jacques Bertin, *Domaine de joie*, Le Chant du Monde, LDX 74701

**Compact discs**

Stooges, Funhouse, Elektra, EKS 74071-2

Alan S. Bardezbanian, *The Art of the Oud*, ARC Music, EUCD2894

Sia, *Music*, Atlantic, 2 653732

Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*, Dir: Esa-Pekka Salonen, Universal, DG483 9953

A man wearing a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, a light blue and white striped shirt, and khaki pants stands in a vineyard. He is holding a wine glass in his right hand and has a dark jacket draped over his left shoulder. The background shows rows of young grapevines in a field under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

*BUON GUSTO*

# BONNY DOON VINEYARD'S RANDALL GRAHM

By CLAUDE LALONDE

Discover **Bonny Doon Vineyard's Randall Graham's**, one of the most iconic producers in the wine world, wines!

We all have heroes in life and for me, **Randall Graham** is a true hero. Californian wine industry icon, recognized as a great marketer, as he says himself without any pretension, he has turned many rules upside down during his career. This inner fire that fuels his need for change, the need to be recognized for his high-end California terroir wines, drives him to unprecedented research in order to discover his *Holy Grail*.



After enjoying success with brands like **Big House Red**, **Cardinal Zin**, **Pacific Rim** and others that became major commercial brands, he decided to make a 180 degree turn nearly 10 years ago. He sold his successful brands in order to devote himself to the development of terroir wines. But how did it all start?

As he says, at first he was looking to make **Pinot Noir** which proved to be more difficult than he anticipated. He found that the climates in the **Bonny Doon** area of California had similarities to the Rhone Valley and decided to plant Rhone varieties such as *Mourvedre*, *Grenache*, *Syrah*, etc. with great success. *I had this very simple and intuitive notion - it's hot in the south of France and it's hot in California. It seems to me that grape varieties from this region of France would thrive in Bonny Doon.*

In 1984, he launched his **Cigare Volant**, a blended wine inspired by **Châteauneuf-du-Pape** wines. And it's a success! This wine will be acclaimed by world critics and will make him, in 1989, the *Rhone Ranger* and as he says: *For the past 35 years, I have been making blended wines as they are done in France, because it allows me to choose from the palette of the various grape varieties available, those that will give me the desired color, acidity level, structure and aromas.*

After selling his iconic brands, he's putting everything in motion to pursue his dream of developing high-end California terroir wines. In 2010, he acquired 400 acres of land near San Juan Batista near Santa Cruz, which he named **Popelouchum** which means *paradise* in Mutsun dialect.

He finally owns the coveted land that brings him closer to his dream. In fact, about ten acres are planted with vines, mostly of varieties other than *Cabernet Sauvignon* and other typical California varieties. For example, *white* and *grey grenache* and *furmint* are planted, but *Timorasso* and *Sagrantino* as well, because he certainly does not want to replicate what everyone else is doing. He wants to distinguish himself and therefore aims for authentic wines that will stand out.

#### **How does Randall Grahm define a terroir wine?**

As he describes it *there are, in fact, two types of wine. The effort wines and terroir wines. Effort wines are wines where the winemaker integrates their style into the wine, where they control as many variables as possible in the winemaking process (irrigation, choice of clones, yeasts, when to do malolactic fermentation, temperatures), in fact everything that can influence the style of the wine. The benefit is the consistency of the wine from one year to the next. This prevents disasters in bad years. On the other hand, there are no more surprises, either positive or negative. The wines become as interesting as the winemaker themselves.*

*In terroir wines, the winemaker still has to work very hard. However, they are at the service of an idea, an aesthetic, a reality that goes further than them. They must show more respect for the vine and the wine itself. They must better understand the environment of the vineyard, that is, the terroir. Terroir wines are really the ones that count. It is the wines that really make a difference. These are wines that have more history and more emotional resonance.*



## ***Bonny Doon Vineyard Le Cigare Blanc Central***

The Grenache used to produce the wine comes from various vineyard parcels on the *Central Coast* of California, mostly from **Beeswax Vineyard** (92%) in **Arroyo Seco** and **Creston Ridge** (8%) in **Paso Robles**. It is organically grown, surrounded by wilderness and protected from the cool Pacific Coast winds by the Santa Lucia Mountains. **Beeswax Vineyard** grows complex, concentrated, mineral-rich grapes from vines deeply rooted in the soil.

### **Tasting notes**

Moderately aromatic, this wine reveals aromas of pear, white fruit with a hint of lime, honeydew melon, a nice stony mineral feel and a light frame of discreet vegetal notes.

Lots of freshness on the palate with crisp acidity and bright pear and lime flavors. It is a wine which is more on the delicacy than on the fruit bomb, and which stands out by its rather marked minerality. Nice finish with citrus accents and a slight bitterness. A very nice gastronomic wine!

It will make a good pairing with seafood drizzled with a light lemon sauce.

### **Bonny Doon Vineyard Le Cigare Blanc Central Randall Grahm, Organic White Wine, 2019**

**Grape varieties:** White Grenache 46%, Vermentino (Rolle) 34%, Clairette 20%

**Sugar:** 1.5 g / l

**Alcohol:** 13.5 %

**Price :** 26,35 \$

**SAQ Code:** 14602900

## **Bonny Doon Le Cigare Volant Cuvée Oumuamua Central Coast 2018**

**Bonny Doon Vineyard** is one of California's most iconic vineyards. The **Le Cigare Volant** brand, a blend of Rhone grape varieties, and an iconic product, is the original source of Rhone-inspired *New World* red blends.

**Le Cigare Volant** takes its name from the municipal decree of Châteauneuf-du-Pape which states *The flying over, the landing and the taking off of aircraft called flying saucers or flying cigars of any nationality whatsoever, are prohibited on the territory of the commune.* Unusual, no?

As the story unfolds, we learn that with the 2018 vintage, there has been a fundamental change in the style of the **Cigare Volant**. Not that there's anything wrong with the first 34 vintages that preceded the current one, but for a number of reasons, **Randall Graham** thought it best to shake things up a bit. With this cuvée, there was an adjustment of the grape varieties, whereby the *Mourvèdre* was removed from the mix. We are no longer on the *GSM*, but on a new aromatic profile with a higher proportion of *Grenache*.

The 2018 vintage was a wonderful vintage from grapes with great natural acidity and vibrancy. This 2018 vintage wine is among **Wine Spectator's** top 100 wines for 2019, ranking 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Tasting notes**

This wine reveals aromas of morello cherry, kirsch, black currant, spicy notes and a hint of blackberry. In the mouth, the texture is silky with fresh acidity and silky tannins, balanced and endowed with a certain elegance. The whole is juicy, harmonious, tasty with bright flavors of ripe red fruits, floral notes, sweet spices, anise and dried herbs. The finish is very persistent with notes of dark red fruits and dried herbs. Simply superb! Great with grilled red meats on your *BBQ*.

### **Bonny Doon Le Cigare Volant Cuvée Oumuamua Central Coast 2018 Randall Graham, Organic red wine**

**Grape varieties:** Grenache 52%, Cinsault 35%, Syrah 13%

**Sugar:** 1.6 g / l

**Alcohol:** 13.5 %

**Price :** 26,35 \$

**SAQ Code:** 14602889

To learn more about **Bonny Doon Vineyard**, click on the link:  
<https://www.bonnydoonvineyard.com/>

**Samples** - Noble Selection Agency



**CLEARAUDIO INNOVATION COMPACT** TURNTABLE,  
**TT5** TANGENTIAL TONEARM AND **MAESTRO V2** CARTRIDGE

# THE THRILL MACHINE

By JEAN-DENIS DOYLE

We have the right to dream a little! Since the beginning of the pandemic, dreaming has kept hope alive and kept our spirits high. For this test bench, we invite you to discover, to contemplate with us, this **Clearaudio** set, and to dream about it. It consists of the *Innovation Compact* turntable, its *TT5* tonearm and the *Maestro V2* cartridge, all from **Clearaudio**. This is a turntable with

uncompromising performance that is aimed at the most passionate among us, a very high-end turntable that is quite expensive. There is, of course, no economy of scale in the number of decks sold. **Clearaudio's** *Innovation Compact* is a reference product. The research and development, from which it benefited, will have advanced the quality of reproduction, in the broadest sense, of what



is possible today to achieve with a vinyl record. During its too short stay in my home, this **Clearaudio** set will have made me live all kinds of sensations that I now share with you with pleasure.

#### Technical description

##### The Innovation Compact turntable.

The *Innovation Compact* is a relatively heavy turntable weighing about twelve kilos. As is always the case with **Clearaudio**, the platter is driven by a belt and has no suspension at all. The base, shaped like a tripod, is in fact a sandwich made of aluminum and a type of plywood called *panzerholz*. This plywood is so rigid that it would withstand the impact of a rifle bullet! The three ends of each leg of the tripod allow the motor to be installed on the front one, the tone arm on the right one and



optionally a second tone arm on the one behind. The motor is of the *DC* type and is regulated by an electronic circuit with an optical controller that analyses the speed of the plate. This motor is of impeccable quality with very tight tolerance ball bearings and is extremely stable. This motor's rotational stability, combined with the plate's considerable mass and the optical sensor control, ensures exceptional rotational stability. The heavy tray is made of a synthetic substance called polyoxymethylene. This material is very inert, has virtually no resonance and does not require the addition of any mats when playing a disc. This heavy 70 mm plate has a brass insert placed on the ceramic shaft. The two fit together with micron precision. The turntable and the tripod are each equipped with powerful magnets, thus ensuring rotation with a minimum of friction.

##### The TT5 tangential tonearm

The **Clearaudio TT5** is a tangential type, which means that it allows the needle to move perfectly parallel to the grooves of the record. This represents a theoretical ideal, since the chisel that engraves the original disc does so by moving in the same way. Therefore, when reading a disc with a tangential arm, the reading is done without the introduction of groove angle errors by the needle. In practice, what this means is that the disc will have exactly the same sound quality from beginning to end. However, this is a technology that requires a high level of precision in its implementation and very few tone arm manufacturers venture into this area. The *TT5* is the entry-level tangential tone arm from **Clearaudio**. The main parts that make it up are aluminum-based and the finish is impeccable. Its operating mechanism is quite simple. It is essentially a carbon fiber tube attached to a small carriage, with precision bearings that move on a glass track. The carbon fiber tube is the actual tone arm and incorporates a cartridge mount on the front and a small counterweight that slides on the other end. A small spirit level is installed on top of the rail. It ensures precise leveling of the rail, which is absolutely essential, since no motor takes over the movement of the carriage. Of course, the *TT5* tonearm is equipped with an arm lift that tilts the entire rail and makes it easy



**CLEARAUDIO INNOVATION COMPACT** TURNTABLE,  
**TT5** TANGENTIAL TONEARM AND **MAESTRO V2** CARTRIDGE

to use. The **Clearaudio TT5** is equipped with a captive link cable with high quality *RCA* plugs.

### The Maestro V2 cartridge

This *Clearaudio* cartridge is a moving magnet cartridge. Its output level is high enough to be plugged into any conventional *MM* type phono input. The outer shell of the cartridge is made of ebony. This particularly rigid wood type allows for excellent vibration control and gives the *Maestro V2* a unique sound signature. Its needle is made of boron and the diamond has undergone several stages of polishing to ensure a flawless finish. This cartridge has been meticulously measured and the output level of the channels has been carefully matched to ensure the best possible performance for a moving magnet cartridge.

### Unpacking and installation

Receiving a device of this magnitude at home, which moreover arrives in three different boxes, is certainly something intimidating. If you have no experience in assembling, adjusting and setting up a turntable, you're better off forgetting the project and letting your salesperson handle these tasks. A turntable like this requires a certain level of experience to make it sing at its best. Despite the intimidating nature of the beast, I still managed to do it by following the steps well and with a lot of intuition. The packaging is absolutely impeccable, the instruction manuals are pretty much clear and the steps well explained. All necessary tools, mounting and alignment accessories are included in

the package. It is imperative to use the thinnest precision scale possible, since the clearance once the needle is raised is minimal. This one should have been included with the turntable. You should also make sure that it is installed on a solid and perfectly level surface.

### Listening Impressions

#### Great from one end of the record to the other

It is with The new **Gary Burton** quartet that I began my listening. The first obvious thing to notice is what the *TT5* tangential tonearm brings to the listening experience. Indeed, with this tone arm, the track quality, the precision of the nuances and the reading accuracy remain identical from the beginning to the end of the disc. Once properly adjusted, the *TT5* tonearm allows the *Maestro V2* cartridge to follow the groove perfectly and silently. The surface noise level remains superbly quiet throughout the disc playback. **Gary Burton's** vibraphone then reveals an unsuspected texture of its tone with small reverberations of a magnificent subtlety. All the musicians who accompany him are also well present and it is easy to position them in the space. The group's play is rendered with a fluidity offering a listening of a great smoothness which gives only one desire, that to listen to another disc. The amount of micro-information that this arm can extract from the discs is simply staggering. In a way, it becomes practically economical! Indeed, it allows a reasonably priced cartridge (reasonable compared to some moving coil cartridges...) to shine as a very high end cartridge.



« Once properly adjusted, the *TT5* tonearm allows the *Maestro V2* cartridge to follow the groove perfectly and silently. The surface noise level remains superbly quiet throughout the disc playback. **Gary Burton's** vibraphone then reveals an unsuspected texture of its tone with small reverberations of a magnificent subtlety. All the musicians who accompany him are also well present and it is easy to position them in the space. The group's play is rendered with a fluidity offering a listening of a great smoothness which gives only one desire, that to listen to another disc. »

**CLEARAUDIO INNOVATION COMPACT** TURNTABLE,  
**TT5** TANGENTIAL TONEARM AND **MAESTRO V2** CARTRIDGE



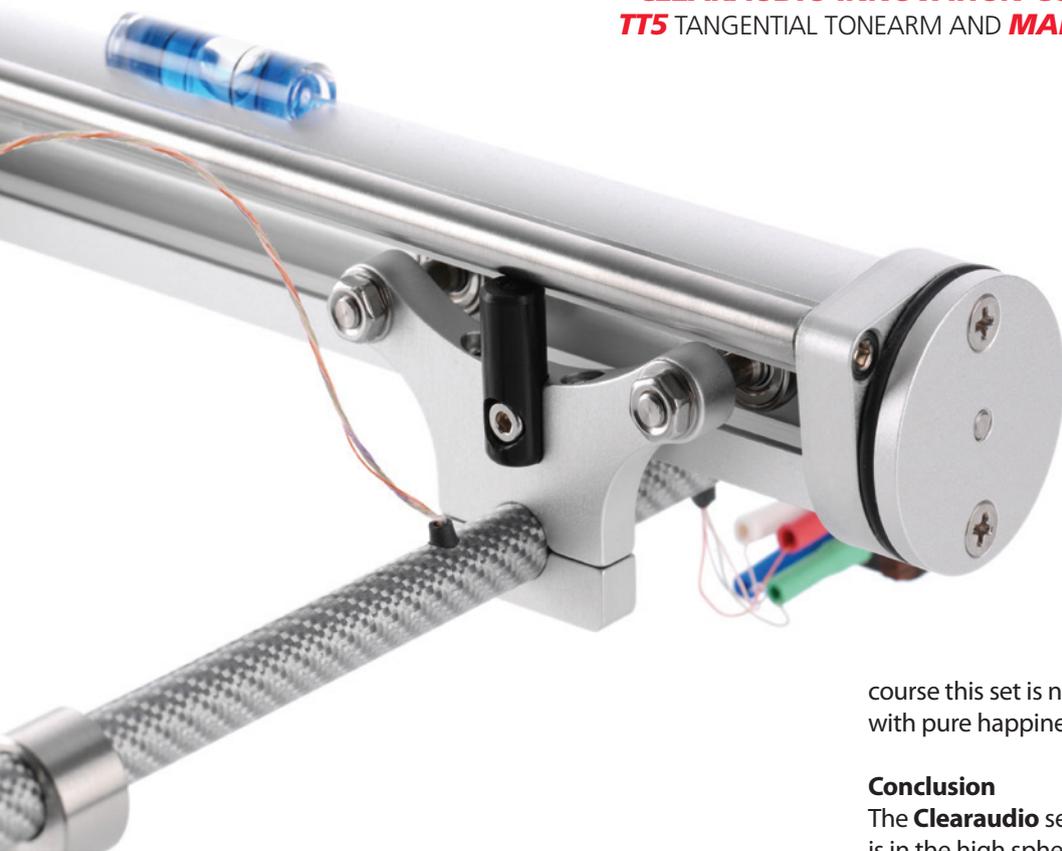
During my various listening sessions, I was amazed by the *Maestro V2* cartridge's ability to extract music from my records with disarming ease. No matter the album, I was able to discover a treasure trove of previously unknown details. When I received the turntable, I was rather skeptical about the choice of the **Clearaudio** *Maestro V2*. I was thinking that an expensive moving coil cartridge would have been much more appropriate. Now, I completely understand this choice.

**When silence is heard**

The **Clearaudio** *Innovation Compact* is the quietest turntable I have ever used in my home. So quiet, in fact, that each record I listened to was a pleasant surprise. The two magnets work wonderfully and allow the tray to literally float and spin with an absolute minimum of friction. Often, with turntables equipped with a heavy platter, the sound becomes heavy and lacks agility. As for the *Innovation*



**CLEARAUDIO INNOVATION COMPACT** TURNTABLE,  
**TT5** TANGENTIAL TONEARM AND **MAESTRO V2** CARTRIDGE



*Compact*, it delivers a smooth, fast and articulate sound without any heaviness. In fact, listening to **Stevie Ray Vaughan's** *Tin Pan Alley*, it sounds as if the album is literally floating in a vacuum as it spins. It is as if the relationship between the turntable and the piece of furniture that supports it no longer exists. This most pleasing effect allows the music and the band to have a hyper-realistic perspective. You have to hear how the singer's voice and his guitar playing illuminate it with an almost holographic clarity. The **Innovation Compact's** stable and quiet rotation also allows dynamic differences to manifest themselves with an explosive edge that few turntables are capable of. In fact, the song's finale takes on epic proportions with an explosion of guitar and drum sounds to make one dream.

#### **A real little thrill factory**

The **Clearaudio** set will have succeeded in providing me with very beautiful emotions. The best part is that it manages to bring them to life with records and pressings that are not particularly audiophile quality. Like this **Suzanne Vega** album, *Solitude Standing*. A very ordinary 1980's pressing. Played back by the **Clearaudio** ensemble, this one turns into an extraordinary musical feast. Suddenly, everything is clear, sharp, and precise. With the album's title track, the rhythm is super solid, the singer's voice becomes bright and the impact of the sticks on the drums becomes very pronounced. What struck me most was how much resolution the vinyl record can hold. Using a turntable like the **Clearaudio**, this formidable resolution touches us on an emotional level and gives one goosebumps. Of

course this set is not cheap. However, it will fill its future owner with pure happiness for many years.

#### **Conclusion**

The **Clearaudio** set, which I was able to use for this test bench, is in the high sphere of what it is possible to achieve in terms of reproduction quality with a vinyl record. This real thrill machine is not just an expensive stylistic exercise, but rather an example of what can be achieved when high technology is put completely at the service of music. For those who can afford it, I highly recommend it.

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

##### **Clearaudio Innovation Compact Turntable**

Price: \$9,990

Warranty: 5 years, parts and labor

##### **Clearaudio TT5 tangential tonearm**

Price: \$3,990 for the black arm

Warranty: 2 years, parts and labor

##### **Clearaudio Maestro V2 MM cartridge**

Price: \$1,690

Warranty: 2 years, parts and labor

Distribution: Focal Naim Canada,

T.: 1 866.271.5689, [www.focalnaimamerica.com](http://www.focalnaimamerica.com);

<https://www.clearaudio.de/en/direct/>

#### **Mediagraphy**

Gary Buron Quartet, Common ground, Mack Avenue, MAC1061LP

Stevie Ray Vaughan, Couldn't stand the weather, Epic, PPAN39304

Suzanne Vega, Solitude standing, A&M, SP-5136

# JAZZ

BY CHRISTOPHE RODRIGUEZ



## BARNEY WILEN

### La note bleue

180 g Vinyl, unpublished La note bleue en concert  
 La note Bleue de Loustal / Paringaux graphic novel  
 40-page booklet with photos; 2,000 copies  
 Elemental Music / Casterman

### Imported

In this recent summer of 2021, when we start to see the beginning of freedom, a small miracle has just arrived at your record shops, either online or physically. If I wanted to be poetic, I would say that this boxed set is a tribute from a son to his father who marked the universe of the blue note. After having exhumed, in a double format, the only concert that tenor/soprano saxophonist **Barney Wilen** gave at the **Montreal International Jazz Festival** (1993), doubled with his concert with Catalan pianist **Tete Montoliu** (Grenoble, 1988), **Patrick Wilen** makes us rediscover his father's flagship work, *La Note bleue*.

### Itinerary of a gifted person

With a French mother and an American father, **Barney Wilen** (1937-1996) quickly made his mark among the greatest. At the age of 21, we find him with trumpeter **Miles Davis** on *Elevator for the Scaffold's* soundtrack, then on a European tour in 1959, as well as at

the **Newport Jazz Festival**. Also in 1959, he participated to *Dangerous Liaisons'* original soundtrack, by pianist **Thelonious Monk**. **Barney** composed the music for **Édouard Molinaro's** *Un témoin dans la ville*. Curious and on the lookout for all kinds of music, here he is interpreting psychedelic jazz with *Dear Prof Leary* in 1968, then in 1972, he is telescoping jazz with African music for the unclassifiable **Moshi**. As is the case for all musicians, his career had its ups and downs, and in 1987, with the publication of comic strip *La note bleue* by **Loustal / Paringaux**, **Barney Wilen** is finally at the top of the bill.

### Happiness and emotions

With this very full box set, I felt like I was back in the good old days of very selective American record company **Mosaic**. Taking us by the hand and by the ear (I know, the pun is too easy), **Patrick Wilen** and his companions make us rediscover *La note bleue* from every angle, with several surprises in store. We obviously opened, with a lot of precautions, the vinyl's sleeve decorated with pencil work by draftsman Loustal. Under a big remastered 180 g, **Barney's** characteristic sound, majestic, ample and unique will resonate in your living room. In addition to the essential themes *Besame Mucho*, *Whisper Not*, *Round Midnight*, *Portrait de l'artiste avec saxophone*, we are offered an unpublished *All Blues* by **Miles Davis**.

For this *Note bleue*, the saxophonist was surrounded by his faithful accomplice, pianist **Alain Jean-Marie**, guitarist **Philippe Petit**, bassist **Riccardo Del Fra** and drummer **Sangoma Everett**. To motivate your listening, the 40-page booklet is a work of art, with press clippings, commentary and never-before-seen photos by the great photographer **Guy Le Querrec**. It is almost a *Holy Grail*. And the original graphic novel by the **Loustal-Paringaux** tandem, which is a semi-biography in colors of the saxophonist, the designers reveal us something as of yet unpublished.

In 1989, at the **Petit Opportun** (Paris), under the direction of the legendary and late producer **Claude Carrière** who passed away this year, **Barney Wilen** revisited his *Note bleue*. This unpublished work that was sleeping in the vaults of the **National Audiovisual Institute** is a step towards nirvana. From the young pianist **Jacky Terrasson**, the double bass player **Gilles Naturel** and the drummer **Peter Gritz**, this blue note in front of an audience is as poetic as in the studio. In love with perfection, stimulating his partners, **Barney** evokes a jazz which is to be slowly savoured, like his master, **Lester Young**, and to a lesser extent **Zoot Sims**, did so well. From the finesse, to the interventions as well as the setting *Besame Mucho*, *No Problem* and *All Blues* resonate with an infinite freshness!



PRO-JECT DEBUT CARBON EVO TURNTABLE AND ORTOFON 2M RED CARTRIDGE

# THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER GREAT ADVENTURE



BY ADRIEN ROUAH

Everything is contained in the title of this article, *Debut Carbon EVO* by **Pro-Ject**, which can be written in a sentence to already define the proposed article. This is the result of a turntable project to initiate oneself to vinyl playback, including the carbon tone arm and a cartridge, for said initiation to analog playback. This turntable also bears the mention *EVO* which implies evolution, therefore, that it has evolved compared to the previous model. This is what we are going to verify right now.



A nice spiring green turntable arrived at my home for my first encounter with the *Pro-Ject Debut* turntable. Today, it is yellow, a satin yellow, as specified by the distributor **Gentec International**, but since we are in the aesthetic description, I would rather describe it as mustard yellow, pleasant and different from the usual colors. This *Debut Carbon EVO* deck comes with a cartridge already installed and chosen by the manufacturer. We are addressing, here, beginners in the realm of analog playback and we suppose that they will want to follow what is proposed by the manufacturer, who tries to seduce them by this means, the ready-to-consume.

#### **Presentation and technique**

If a *Orofon 2M Red* cartridge has already been chosen for the future owner of this *Debut Carbon EVO*, this choice is excellent and in harmony with the category of turntable and its arm. I emphasize that the objective is to meet the expectations of the music lover, novice in vinyl playback, and to satisfy him with

a turntable with a serious base - made of thick *MDF*, a sophisticated arm combining aluminum and carbon, a quality moving magnet (*MM*) cartridge and a pair of connecting cables of equal quality included by **Pro-Ject**. The platter is driven by a flat belt for the usual 33 and 45 rpm and by a toroidal belt to obtain a 78 rpm speed. While browsing on the manufacturer's website, I notice that there are no less than 12 series of turntables available, 12 families that each address a different clientele. I imagined being in "*I want to start out with vinyl playback, and I want a good quality equipment, ready to be used!*" family. Despite this deliberate choice on my part - the novice music lover who tends to be a bit forgotten, the more experienced vinyl lover will also be interested in this *Debut Carbon EVO* turntable, especially if they have the taste to revisit its analog musical wealth.

#### **The evolution**

*EVO* means change. What about it? First of all, the three cushioning feet are adjustable. Good idea when you know the

importance of starting with a leveling adjustment of the base, and therefore of the tray itself! Then comes the motor suspension, which has been reworked to be more flexible. Even the slightest vibration of the engine interferes with the playback of precious black discs, and better isolation of the engine system is always a significant improvement. The choice of speeds is selected and regulated by an electronic system. It will no longer be necessary to remove the tray to change the belt on the motor pulley as in the previous version of the *Debut Carbon*. There is more mechanical convenience, for sure, but also the fact that the motor is now electronically controlled, which is very good for its precision and speed consistency. Last but not least, **Pro-Ject** used a thermoplastic elastomer for the adjustable feet and under the internal perimeter of the metal plate. It is also this elastomer that is installed as the motor insulator, with the fixing screws passing through the elastomer damping tubes.

This additional damping will reduce some of the turntable's resonance, which is sensitive to the sounds emitted by the speakers, and provide better isolation of the turntable base for the feet. The same will be true for engine microvibrations. Nice improvements that allow the justified appellation of evolution.

#### Installation

This installation is simplified because the cartridge is already installed and perfectly positioned. All that remains is for the amateur to adjust the perfect horizontality of the base, to balance the arm as indicated in the manual, to install the anti-skid counterweight and to establish the wire connections. It is simple and very well described in the photo manual. As usual, I used what is proposed in the box, i.e. the mounted cartridge and the supplied *RCA* link cable. No change on my part to the ready-to-consume package. The future owners will be able to





rely on the vernier reading of the counterweight of the arm, very precise, since placed between 1,5 and 2 g, I checked with my scale that we obtained well 1,75 g, recommended weight for the *Ortofon 2MRed*. An economical version of the turntable does not mean inaccuracy for **Pro-Ject**, and that's perfect for me!

### Listening

I won't use the same records I listened to in the previous test bench about the *Debut Carbon* turntable from **Pro-ject**, but another selection, just as diversified. We start in the nostalgia with *Porgy & Bess*, **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Louis Armstrong**. It's a nice introduction, although it's mainly the vocals that I find magical and well-recorded in this album from 1958. I told myself that I would choose mainly works that I haven't listened to for a very long time, in order to be in line with the novice who will rediscover, with the *Debut Carbon EVO*, their forgotten LPs. The definition is good, the image correct, especially considering the date of the recording. The couple is slightly put forward and the feeling is rather pleasant. Overall, nostalgia operates and I am seduced. I then move on to my favorite record, **Sweet Smoke**, *Juste a Poke*, an album that has helped me spot a lot of flaws on certain devices. And it dates back to that time when high fidelity was starting to penetrate the homes. This record is exceptionally well recorded and, for a vinyl turntable worthy of the name, it is an assured transmission of happiness. The *Debut Carbon EVO* does very well, it knows how to recognize that if the

sounds are almost perfect, it is not the same for the sound stage which is a little blurred, to the detriment of the stereophonic effects which are deliberately exaggerated. All of this is very much in line with what I know about this record, which is, for me, a real writing tool. I am quite satisfied with the reading accuracy and the dynamics of the cartridge has potential.

Let's play on diversity, and change genres. Intelligent variety, **Philippe Chatel** and his album *Sentiments*. Do we listen to this old recording's sounds or do we let ourselves be carried away by the lyrics and the music? In other words, does the **Pro-Ject Debut Carbon EVO** turntable and the chosen cartridge allow us to abandon ourselves to an LP that is not at its best? Of course, that is the case! It's easy to go through your music library and pull out something and say I don't remember that one. We listen, we rediscover, and the memories come back. The *Debut Carbon EVO* becomes an accomplice to this moment. Some titles of tracks that made this artist's success follow each other and are listened to with great pleasure. It's important, the pleasure of listening again!

And what about classical music, you may ask, because I suppose you listen to a lot of classical music, so what about it? For this, I chose something difficult, but also majestic, **Handel's Messiah**. There is everything in this disc to perfect a listening description, choirs, strings, a gigantic orchestral mass and a masterful direction. All this will contribute to put in difficulty our device in demonstration. I am first surprised by the ease of reading and the message deconstructed, it is lesser than usual,



but nothing is lost. I rather think, and this is what is curious, that everything is there, sometimes timidly, but everything is there. A bit like a pair of minimonitors, you could go further, but what the *Debut Carbon EVO* delivers is delivered with seriousness. The playback is good, the dynamics quite acceptable, if we consider that the test is a little breathless, especially at the time of the *Hallelujah*. I am really in the presence of a well thought device and especially thought with a quality musical result in mind.

### Conclusion

A nice, easy to use, reliable turntable, because technically well made, **Pro-Ject's** designers know their trade and do it with seriousness. I have always appreciated from a manufacturer (of turntables or other things), that they respectfully take into account those who will not be able to afford very high end products, but will still want to enjoy their music in a good way. I'm still talking about both cases, either the newcomer to analog playback or the already fervent fan of black discs who decides to get back into it, and both will find their happiness. I'm very happy that you can find equipment at **Pro-Ject** that is made to last, especially at a reasonable price. The technological sacrifices that any manufacturer must make to offer an affordable product have been replaced, in this case, by real assets that ensure the evolution of the previous model and this is rare enough that it must be underlined with enthusiasm!

Musically, and as proposed, i.e. with the *Ortofon 2M Red* cartridge and the supplied connecting cable, the **Pro-Ject Debut Carbon EVO** turntable will please many music lovers. Quality ready-to-consume products, I tell you, are rather rare, exist.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Debut Carbon EVO with Ortofon 2M Red cartridge

Price: \$749

Warranty: 2 years. Parts and labor

Distributor: Gentec

International Canada,

T.: 905.513.7733, [www.gentec-intl.com](http://www.gentec-intl.com);

[www.project-audio.com](http://www.project-audio.com)

#### Mediagraphy

Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong,  
*Porgy & Bess*, Verve, 2LP, 2622 008

Sweet Smoke, Just a Poke,  
EMI Columbia, 2C, 062 28 886

Philippe Chatel, Sentiments,  
Kébec Disc, KD513

Handel, Messiah, Dir: K. Richter,  
Deutsche Grammophon, 3LP, 2709 045



# What's New?

## CHORD LAUNCHES A NEW DESKTOP INTEGRATED AMP



By the newsroom

**Chord Electronics** has launched its first ever small desktop integrated amplifier, *Anni*. Capable of driving both headphones and compact loudspeakers, the *Qutest*-sized *Anni* benefits from the company's proprietary *ULTIMA* circuit topology and is perfectly positioned to exploit the full potential of today's high-performance headphones, desktop monitors and high-resolution audio sources.

The new *Anni* desktop integrated amplifier forms part of the *Qutest* range and seamlessly complements the resolving abilities of the multi-award-winning *Qutest* standalone *DAC* and *Huei* phono stage. As a system, the *Qutest* components provide an unrivalled desktop audio solution, offering class-leading digital and analogue technologies for the modern music lover. The company's compact *QSS (Qutest Stand System)* modular equipment rack provides the perfect support, too.

*Anni* offers **Chord Electronics'** recently announced dual-feed-forward error-correction circuit topology whether using headphones or compact loudspeakers. *Anni's* advanced technology allows it to drive any headphone load, error-monitored and compensated amplification at all times.



Benefitting from both 3.5 mm headphone outputs and ¼-inch (6.35 mm) outputs, so two can listen simultaneously, plus 4 mm banana-type loudspeaker outputs, *Anni* delivers 10 W of **Chord Electronics**-quality *ULTIMA* amplification, controlled by a fascia-mounted volume control that also doubles as an input selector switch for *Anni's* two line-level inputs. A two-stage gain control for loudspeakers provides additional flexibility with a wide range of desktop monitors.

*Anni* benefits from the same UK-made precision CNC-machined high-grade aluminium casework common to all **Chord Electronics'** products, and is entirely designed, engineered and built in the UK. The company's trademark polychromatic control spheres govern the power and gain controls, complementing the fascia-mounted volume control/input selector.

*Anni* is powered by a 15 V external power supply and benefits from a 12 V DC output, capable of powering the *Qutest* *DAC* and *Huei* phono stage when used with the new *Qutest* range power adaptor (supplied).

Price and availability  
*Anni* is shipping now (black only); UK SRP: £1,195

# PROG ROCK

By RICHARD GUAY



## JORDSJØ

### Pastoralia

<https://jordsjo.bandcamp.com/>

The Norwegian duo formed by **Hakon Oftung** (guitars, bass, flute, synthesizers, Hammond organ, mellotron, vocals) and **Kristian Frøland** (drums, percussion) continues its surprising career and offers us its fifth opus, the previous ones being *Jordsjø* (2015), *Jordsjø II* (2016), *Jord* (2017) and above all, the delightful *Nattfiolen* (2019) that I had praised, here, last year (just like *Jord* two years prior). Although our two companions began their career very discreetly, their regular appearances suggest a career in full ascension.

*Jordsjø* is thus part of this new wave of Norwegian bands that completely redefine progressive rock and install it on new bases, sometimes obscure, often strange. This young duo's music is, like that of their compatriots, symphonic, full of dark atmospheres, strewn with bewitching refrains, cerebral passages and bathed in impenetrable Norwegian lyrics. *Pastoralia* is therefore in the same vein as the previous opuses, even if it displays good differences in content. What is striking, at first, is the more limited use of psychedelic variations, catchy choruses and surrealist atmospheres plunging more into an earthy music, marked by jazzy, folk and medieval passages. Bewitching as can be, *Pastoralia*, which was recorded during the pandemic, offers us a way out and helps us regain our mental equilibrium, notably by exacerbating the group's proximity to nature. There are still several frenzied passages even if the bill is much less rock than usual. The presence of string instruments (violin, double bass),

wind instruments (clarinet, flutes) and choirs, delivered in good part by the half-dozen musicians and guest artists, enhances the pastoral side of the album. Even if *Pastoralia* presents a slightly different version of the *Jordsjø* we know, the interest is not diminished. However, you will have to work harder than with the previous albums, because its appropriation, less natural, implies the comprehension of the many subtleties which hide there, and believe me, the effort to invest there is worth its weight in gold!

## THE SAMURAI OF PROG

### The Lady and The Lion and Other Grimm Tales I

<https://www.facebook.com/thesamuraiofprog/> ;

<https://www.seacrestoy.com/>

*The Samurai of Prog* is an international trio born in the mid-2000s, featuring American guitarist, soloist and violinist **Steve Unruh**, Finnish drummer **Kimmo Pörsti** and Italian-Finnish bassist **Marco Bernard**. Very prolific, we are offered today a ninth album, *The Lady and The Lion and Other Grimm Tales I*. Knowing that the tenth, *The White Snake and Other Grimm Tales II* will probably be released by the time you read these lines, the series will thus count ten albums in as many years, twelve by adding the two duet opuses by **Kimmo Pörsti** and **Marco Bernard** (*Gulliver* and *La Tierra*). It is likely that the lockdown injected a good dose of adrenaline to these musicians, because their creativity seems unlimited. *The Samurai of Prog*, it is

well known, has an inordinate interest for the thematic albums, undoubtedly a contribution of **Marco Bernard** recognized for this attraction. The theme, usually epic, is a pretext for classic and eclectic progressive rock. Incidentally, *The Lady and The Lion* revisits **Grimm's** fairy tales. Many will rightly ask what the point is of building a work for adults around the story of *Snow White*. It is probably because of the richness of the range of emotions as well as the naivety of the **Grimm's** fairy tales, which makes possible a musical content offering an almost infinite palette of colors. By freeing oneself from the rigid boundaries of an overly serious concept, one can freely create a bold, passionate and emotionally charged work, which is exactly what *The Samurai of Prog* is all about. *The Lady and The Lion* offers a delicate music, tinged with **Canterbury** fragrances, often jazzy and where electric instruments, synthesizers, guitars, wind instruments and strings are used, the latter being mostly the business of a plethora of guest musicians, as well as complex vocal arrangements. This trio of purists thus has all the space they need to give free rein to their remarkable genius. This rather restrained album will not let you off the hook. It is an introspective and pure product that is only for progressive rock purists. Moreover, this album requires a serious appropriation to fully enjoy it. But for classic progressive rock diehards, this is a must-listen.

## SYLVAN

### One to Zero

[www.sylvan.de](http://www.sylvan.de) ;

[www.facebook.com/sylvan.de](http://www.facebook.com/sylvan.de)

Six years after the release of *Home* (2015), it was more than time for the Germanic band **Sylvan** to make a comeback. **Marco Glühmann** (vocals, lyrics), **Volker Söhl** (keyboards, piano), **Matthias Harder** (drums) and **Sebastian Harnack** (bass) offer us the long awaited tenth opus, *One to Zero*. Of a rare stability, the musical substance remains very faithful to the original recipe and bets on a rather slow symphonic progressive rock by offering us catchy melodies, well positioned hard passages, skin-deep emotions and a serious theme which strikes with the full force of very current realities. This time, it is about problems related to the overuse of computers and social networks that cause, more often than not, insecurity, dependency and distress. Like on previous albums, **Glühmann's** lyrics are heavy with meaning, dark and disturbing. His voice, which has not aged a bit, is still as melodious. The songs are shorter and a good balance between the frenzied passages and those that invite to relax is maintained. Less symphonic, less keyboards oriented, more adventurous, perhaps crossing over even more than the previous releases, *One to Zero* is the fruit of a healthy, but careful evolution of style which testifies to the maturity of a group of outstanding creators. It doesn't have the emotional power or depth of *Sceneries* (2012) or *Postumous Silence* (2008), but does a great job of fulfilling everything fans of this neoprogressive icon have been looking forward to.

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