

# TRENDS

*Electronics & Design*

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2023  
VOLUME 04 NUMBER 01

*Loudspeakers*  
*PSB Passif 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

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# Contents

18

56



## Buon gusto

- 24 Recipe – Classic Oatmeal Cookies
- 40 Wines – Weingut Burg Ravensburg  
Wines that represent the ultimate in Germany

## Product Reviews

### AMPLIFIER

- 6 **KARAN ACOUSTICS POWERB**  
Powerful, accurate, and simply beautifully stunning!!

### LOUDSPEAKERS

- 12 **GRANDINOTE MACH 2**  
Mr. Max's melodious towers
- 18 **MISSION 770**  
Its mission: letting you have a great time!

- 26 **PSB PASSIF 50TH ANNIVERSARY & NAD C700 BLUOS STREAMING AMPLIFIER**  
The golden wedding anniversary of high fidelity

## Product Reviews

### LOUDSPEAKERS

- 36 **SONUS FABER SONETTO III**  
When your song is as beautiful as you looks!

### NETWORK / CD RECEIVER

- 50 **TECHNICS' PREMIUM CLASS SAC-600**  
An all digital device offering an accurate and detailed musical transcription

### TURNTABLE / CARTRIDGE

- 56 **NEW HORIZON 301 & ORTOFON TURBO MC3**  
Towards new horizons in analogue reading

## Rhythme & Music

- 30 Classic
- 60, 62 Blues
- 65 Jazz
- 63 Progressive Rock



50

# TRENDS

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info@quebecaudio.com

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101, rue de l'Harmonie  
Sainte-Sophie QC J5J 0P5  
450 436-1777

**Publisher and Publication Manager**  
Franco Moggia

**Co-publisher and Public Relations Manager**  
Lucie Beauchamp

**Writing Team Contributors**  
Lucie Beauchamp, Yves Bérubé, Michel Dallaire,  
George de Sa, Jean-Denis Doyle, Léa Gariépy,  
Claude Lalonde, Adrien Rouah, Richard Schneider &  
David Susilo.

**Writing Team Contributors Rhythm & Music Section**  
Richard Guay Christophe Huss,  
Pierre Jobin & Christopher Rodriguez.

**Translation & Texts Revision**  
Lucie Beauchamp

**Infography**  
Editions Mizka Inc.



**Photography**  
Robert Guevremont  
& Franco Moggia

**Advertising Sales Representative**  
Lucie Beauchamp  
lucieb@quebecaudio.com  
450.436.1777

**Subscription and Address Change / Correction**  
Trends, Electroniques & Design Magazine  
450.436.1777  
lucieb@quebecaudio.com  
www.tedpublications.com/en

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# PASSION

Although Valentine's Day will take place on February 14<sup>th</sup>, it is not intense love that I want to talk about, but rather the passion that an artist has and transmits through his work. I was watching a programme where the host **Anne-Marie Dussault** asked **Blair Thomson** and **Serge Fiori**, two of the artists who have collaborated to bring about the series *Riopelle Symphony*, honouring the memory and highlighting the enormous work of this artist on the occasion of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2023. The details we learned in this interview were fascinating in terms of the vision, the collaboration and the thoroughness of all the artists who brought this project to fruition. This includes the visual design, the staging of the multimedia concert and the artistic direction. The **Montreal Symphony Orchestra** will present, at the *Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier* of the **Place des Arts**, the series of *Riopelle Symphony* performances on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2023. A second series of shows will be presented on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 at the *Louis-Fr chet te* room at the **Grand Theatre of Qu bec** with the participation of the **Symphonic Orchestra of Quebec**. Here is a possible gift for Valentine's Day for those at a loss for ideas...

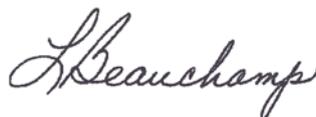
This leads me to make a connection with designers, craftsmen and manufacturers of audiovisual equipment. Looking at the array of test beds in this edition, I can only applaud the diverse qualities that have resulted in some truly remarkable audio products. In the electronics section, our contributor shows us the brand new amplifier *Master Collection POWERb* by **KARAN**. A product conceived and designed with the aim of not compromising on the quality of the components and aiming for excellence in every respect.

The section of *Loudspeakers* is superbly well represented. We start with the *Mach 2* loudspeakers by **Grandinote** that are really off the beaten track. The designer's vision is to use full-range transducers, and our collaborator appreciated these speakers and the designer's know-how. The company **Mission** relaunched the production of a speaker model that had been initially launched in 1977, the 770. Naturally, these loudspeakers are now adapted to today's needs in order to respond to the various digital sources now available, without neglecting open and detailed music reproduction. We continue with the couple **PSB / NAD**, which presents us with a reiteration of the old loudspeakers *Passif II* now named *Passif 50* highlighting the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **PSB**. The company's experience and expertise have enabled it to establish its longevity. With regard to **NAD** also celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, our contributing editor was able to test the *C700 All-in-One* streamer, which accompanied the **PSB** loudspeakers, and is easy to use. We now move on to the *Sonetto III* loudspeakers by **Sonus faber**, which is always at the forefront in terms of design and aesthetics. With an impeccable finish and an undeniably clean, crisp and precise musical sound reproduction, they are very likely to be a strong competitor in terms of performance and aesthetics.

In the *Sources* section, the company **Technics** offers us a network receiver with *CD* player, the *SAC-600*. At first, our colleague wondered about this combination, but when he heard it, he soon realised that it was an excellent idea, as this device covers all the bases (*CD* player, subwoofer, phono stage) and offers an accurate and detailed musical transcription. As for the turntable 301 by **New Horizon**, let's admit that this one has an elegant look while being very solid. And the surprise is the particular warmth that makes listening almost magical at times.

I invite you to also read the other articles in the *Rhythm & Music* section on the *CD* to discover or rediscover as well as the *Buon Gusto (Wine and Recipe)* section. I would also like to wish each of you, dear readers, a life of passion! It is easy to experience it in all kinds of works around us.

The whole team of **TED Magazine** joins me in offering you its best wishes for *Peace, Love, Health* and *Serenity* for the year 2023. And let's meet again in the next edition!



Co-publisher and  
Public Relations Manager

**KARAN** MASTER COLLECTION **POWERB** AMPLIFIER AND **LINEB** PREAMPLIFIER

*Powerful, accurate, and  
simply beautifully stunning!*



By GEORGE DE SA

**KARAN Acoustics (KARAN)** is a small high-end audio product manufacturer that produces uncompromised handmade components that aim to impress the most discriminating of audio and music aficionados. Founded in 1986, **KARAN** initially focused on sophisticated medical and television products; however, by 1989, the company's owner and founder, took the **KARAN** down to role of his passion with its foray into high-end audio

components and since, has never looked back.

**KARAN's** focus is purely on audio amplification, across several products that includes preamplifiers, power amplifiers (both stereo and mono block), integrated amplifiers and phono amplifiers. Yet rather than follow the going trend with audio manufacturers – ever broadening across product categories, **KARAN** has remained focused on purely on

amplification...yes, just amplification and only amplification. Unusual and unique in terms of high-end audio, **KARAN** is a company from the Republic of Serbia. Though a **Google Search** shows **Karan** as the name of a village in western Serbia, the company though, takes its name from its founder and owner, **Milan Karan**. Operations of the company are in a couple of locations in Serbia, with its headquarters in Novi Sad. This Serbian heritage is proudly evidence with all its products bearing the phrase, *Hand Made in Serbia*.

I've had the pleasure of hearing **KARAN** products over several years now; however, until this review, it's been limited to only audio shows and distributor showrooms. Most recently, October 2022, I heard the new **KARAN Acoustics Master Collection** – specifically, the **LINEa** Preamplifier with external power supply paired with **POWERa MONO** amplifiers, driving **Vimberg Tonda D** loudspeakers. This was in a room hosted by **Wynn Audio**, the North American distributor of **KARAN**, that was demonstrating this set-up at the **Toronto**

**Audio Fest**. I was so smitten by the gorgeous sound I heard that I praised this room as *Best at Show*.

This most recent listening experience had me reach out to **Wynn Audio** with the hope to quench my thirst for getting a more intimate **KARAN** encounter. Fortunately, **Wynn Wong** of **Wynn Audio**, agreed to provide the all-new **KARAN Master Collection POWERb** amplifier for this review, just released in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2022, this is its 1<sup>st</sup> North American review! As well, just so that I could get a taste of the full **KARAN** experience, **Wynn** also provided the matching an also rather new **LINEb** preamplifier.

### Design and Technical Innovation

The **KARAN Master Collection POWERb** and the **POWERa** amplifiers incorporate new performance and design elements that make them the very best amplifiers that **KARAN** has ever produced. The **POWERb** uses superlative passive and active components, including custom ones, and improves on its former models in every way. Ensuring optimal handling of the audio signal, **KARAN** uses circuit boards with a copper thickness of 75 to 100 µm on all layers. These electronic boards are decoupled and isolated fully from the unit chassis. State-of-the-art **Sanken RET** (Ring Emitter Transistor) bi-polar output devices are employed with zero overall feedback and all stages of amplification are pure dual-mono, fully differential

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- Focal/Naim
- McIntosh
- Moon
- Dynaudio
- Paradigm
- Martin Logan
- Rega
- Totem
- Musical Fidelity
- Bryston
- Linn
- Devialet
- Bluesound
- Sonos
- Cambridge
- IsoAcoustics
- Nordost
- JL Audio
- Transparent
- Yamaha



LE MAGASIN  
AUDIOLIGHT

## KARAN MASTER COLLECTION **POWERb** AMPLIFIER AND **LINEb** PREAMPLIFIER

balanced, with high transient speed, and DC coupled in class-A operational mode, with no capacitors in the audio signal path. The new **POWERa** and **POWERb** now use much larger, yet ultra-quiet toroidal transformers combined to a larger bank of capacitance, delivering significantly greater power reservoirs. New and enhanced innovative circuit topology is also now employed in this latest and greatest *Master Collection* of **KARAN** amplifiers. The two most significant improvements incorporated into both **POWERb** and the higher spec'd **POWERa** are first, a completely new main chassis and second, the introduction of **Karan Acoustics'** first proprietary, in-house designed *Line DC* (mains) *Conditioner*.

The new chassis – effectively minimizes and eliminates mechanical resonances of various components inside the chassis, with increased mass and choice materials. The front, rear and top panels have increased density and thickness. A unique use of a solid CNC-machined piece of special aluminium as a single piece unibody heatsink for the output devices, provides the highest non-resonance improvement in the **POWERa** and **POWERb** amplifiers. In addition, these new **Karan Master**

*Collection* amplifiers sit on **Critical Mass Systems** – CS2 supporting feet (three CS2M – 1.5 feet), which are purported to completely isolate and ideally balance the amplifier from the supporting surface. The all-new **KARAN Line DC** (mains) *Conditioner* – ensures effective and efficient treatment of all unwanted *DC* artifacts from the mains supply that could otherwise degrade operational and sonic performance. **KARAN's** all-new *DC* (mains) *Conditioner*, serves to eliminate such undesirable *DC* voltage, without any restriction on current/voltage flow from the mains supply (providing 3x maximum amplifier demand/60A) and no ill effect on amplifier sonics. An on/off switch also allows users to directly compare the effect of the conditioner.

### Specifications

The **KARAN POWERb** is a fully differential (balanced) dual-mono stereo power amplifier. It provides a stereo set of balanced (*XLR*) inputs, as well as unbalanced (*RCA*) inputs. Input impedance is 30 k  $\Omega$ , with an input sensitivity of 2.0 V/RMS for maximum output. Gain is 30 dB with a rated power output of: 2 x 450 W / 8  $\Omega$ ; 2 x 800 W / 4  $\Omega$  and 2 x 1,350 W / 2  $\Omega$ . Within

the **POWERb** are 2 x 1,500 VA toroidal transformers and 180,000  $\mu$ F of capacitance. The frequency response is 20 Hz to 20 kHz, +/-0 dB; (DC to 300 kHz, -3 dB) with distortion rated at: 0.03 % (THD) / 0.03 % (IMD). The signal-to-noise rating is superb at > 120 dB (unweighted). The dimensions of the **POWERb** are: 19.8" (w) x 11.5" (h) x 20.5" (d) with a back breaking 81 kg/178 lbs, making it the absolute heaviest and largest amplifier I've ever used. Thoughtfully, **KARAN** ships its components in extremely hardy solid wood crates with form fitting foam inserts.

### Build & Aesthetic

The **KARAN POWERb** amplifier is undeniably a *work-of-art* visually with truly impeccable build. Simple lines are complemented by gentle curves and radiused edges that feminise its austere and masterful form. You will notice the gentle rearward sweep of the front panel's cheeks from centre to outer left and right that serve to put the centre vertical black glass display panel appropriately to the fore, as it elegantly presents the **KARAN** name and company logo, aglow in royal red. The bottom left and right outside edges gracefully curve upwards, not only adding to the amplifiers stylish appearance but also serving to provide an easier surface for lifting.

The top panel is worthy of comment, with its attractive stippled ventilation pattern and deeply engraved **KARAN** brand logo. All panels have a microbead blasted finish that is silky smooth to the touch, while all panel seams are most impressively fine and tight, in keeping with the finest of construction. Stiff does not do any justice to how the panels of the **POWERb** feel, which also applies to the top panel, where lesser manufactures tend to skimp. This top cover itself is affixed with 8 *Allen* screws that are virtually invisible, hidden within the venting and something that would go missed without the manual to tell you they exist.

Connectors and switches are all located on the back plate and include two separate **IEC 15A** sockets with two rocker power switches, left and right, a true dual-mono





design that calls for the use of twin power cords. **WBT** binding posts are provided for speaker cable hookups and along with a pair of **Neutrik XLR** connectors there is a set of single-ended *RCA* jacks. A centre on/off rocker switch is provided for the built-in *Line DC* (mains) Conditioner.

In my setup, engaging the conditioner resulted in the most subtle smoothing of the uppermost audible frequencies. Perhaps others would find a greater effect, as my listening room does have a dedicated *20A* power circuit for amplifiers with a **Furutech GTX-D NCF(R)** AC receptacle, providing inherently low noise. I do salute **KARAN** for building such power quality assurance into its *POWERb* and adding the convenience of a switch to allow users to directly evaluate its results.

### Setup

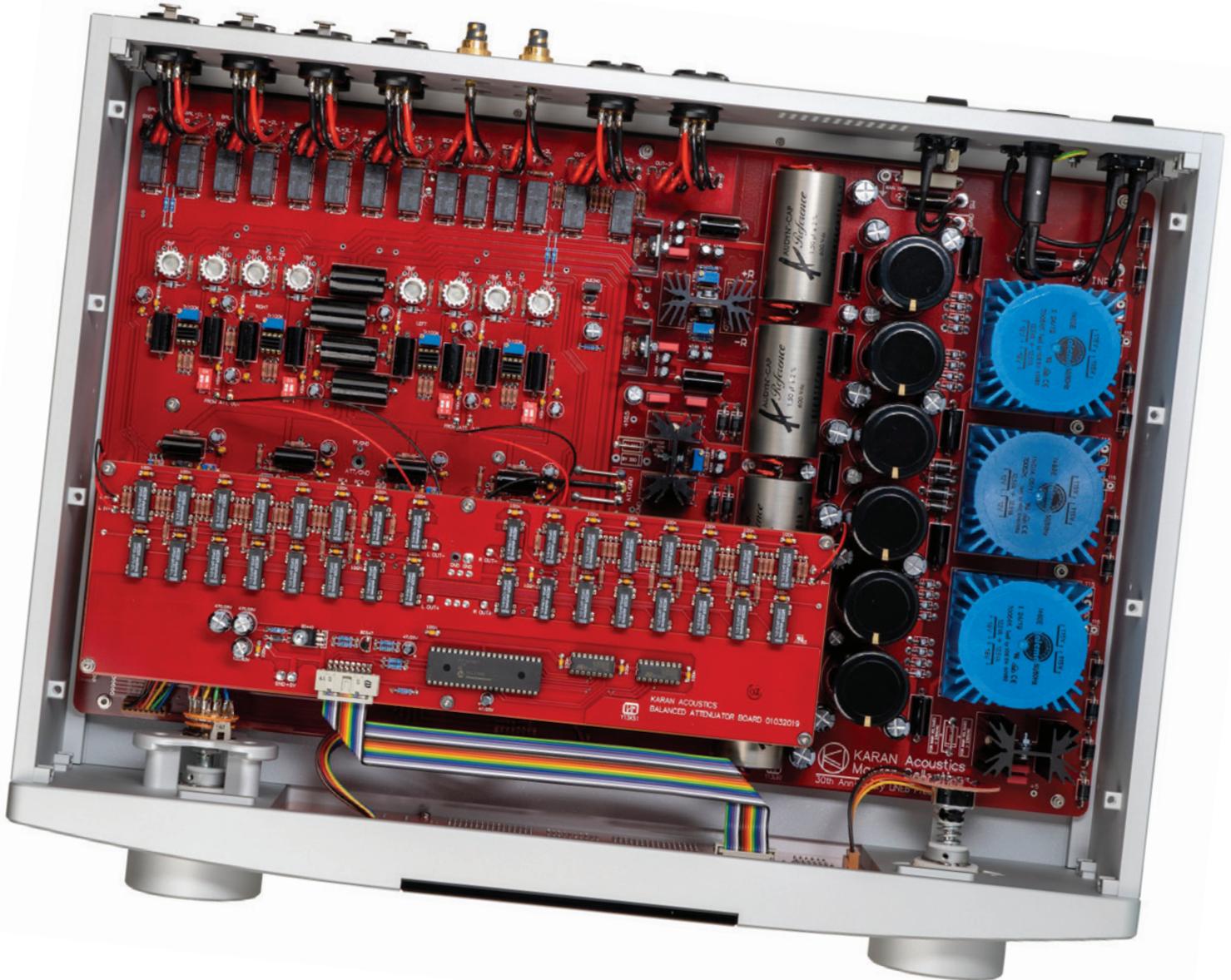
I evaluated the **KARAN POWERb** amplifier with my **Dynaudio Confidence C2 Signature** loudspeakers with my **Bryston BR-20** hooked up to the **KARAN LINEb** as a DAC/Streamer, running tracks from **Tidal HiFi** as well as via my **Rega Apollo CD** transport. The recently reviewed **Furutech Power Reference III** power cables that were in my possession, delivered power to the *POWERb*. **Audio Sensibility Statement** power cables, *XLR* interconnect and speaker cables were used, as well as a **Zavfino Fusion XLR** interconnect between the *LINEb* and *POWERb*.

### Listening Impressions

Before I dive into the **KARAN POWERb** amplifier, which is the focus of this review, I must tell you about the **KARAN LINEb** pre-amplifier that was provided as its mate. The *LINEb* is absolutely

in keeping with the aforementioned build, aesthetic and quality of the *POWERb*, bearing simplicity and sophistication. Functionally, with just two immense control knobs on the front for source and volume, using it was a joy. The *LINEb* called out a liquid-like quality in music. Cymbal splashes sounded effervescent, with a silky quality. There was a general sense of ease and finesse, which allowed me to deeply appreciate the ebb and flow of the music. Dynamics were delivered with ponderous impact, while bass frequencies were smooth, controlled and never lean. The *LINEb* is proficient at revealing the soundstage, whether small or immense, it could deliver depth, width and even height and with its ultra-black backgrounds revealed elements in a holographic manner with great separation. No spotlighting or exaggeration but a truthful and lifelike presentation. I did compare the *LINEb* with my own **Bryston BR-20**. Somewhat unfair, as the *BR-20* with its integrated DAC/Streamer eliminates a key interconnect. Yet, this comparison only served to make clear how transparent the *LINEb* was – allowing all the essential detail to be heard, while delivering unimpeded imaging. It turned out that the biggest difference between the *LINEb* and the *BR-20* were in their presentation. Whereas, the *BR-20* possessed more edge definition, airiness, attack, and bass texture, the *LINEb* provided softer edges, natural detail, a feathery upper treble and greater bass heft, and fluidity.

On **Daft Punk's Game of Love** track, the elastic nature of the bass notes took primacy with the *LINEb* over the transient definition that the *BR-20* drew out. Drums though slightly more textured with the *BR-20* was a little less weighty and svelte than the *LINEb*. I stand convinced that the *LINEb* is an exemplary



preamplifier with a propensity for finesse and musical beauty. Let me start by saying that the *POWERb*, even during its initial couple hundred hours of operation, was immediately convincing of its grace. Most evident was its smoothness across its bandwidth, providing a very balanced and harmonically complete sound. Top to bottom, there was nothing that jumped out and nothing was out of place. The primary impression I got was that of understated confidence, control, composure, and scale, combined with an ever-present inner warmth. The *POWERb* is not an amplifier that seeks attention for itself – most unlike a small yappy dog that barks to make its presence known, the *POWERb* stands assuredly

akin to a *Great Dane*. Music is handled with aplomb, regardless of the current demands of the track or the challenge presented by the loudspeakers. There is a captivating density to the sound the *POWERb* produces, painting music not with watercolours but rather in the luxuriant deep and rich colours of oils. And the strokes, those are as painted with fine brushes, revealing intricacy and detail in a most realistic manner. Is it powerful? Like its name suggests, it is most definitely *POWERful*. It delivers current without any apparent restriction; the sense of flow, smoothness and headroom remaining present regardless of volume level. I'm not sure what one could throw at such a surefooted amplifier to throw

it off its heels but this, for me, was an impossible task, within my medium sized well-treated 13' x 18'5" x 7 ¾' room. The *POWERb* was able to scale music within soundstages as large as I've ever been able to achieve in my room, while maximizing image separation across totally black backgrounds. However, though a masterful amplifier, it is also able to play quick and nimble, for instance, listening to **Dexter Gordon's**, *Scraple from the Apple* off the **Blue Note** CD, *Our Man in Paris* – you hear the quick play of **Dexter's** tenor sax sounding spright and agile, while possessing the brassy warmth and fullness of a live performance. The same too was the handling of the upright bass strings and drums, the *POWERb* handled



the notes with their quick succession without any sense of delay or sluggishness. Yes, the *POWERb* is a big (almost 178 lbs) and powerful (800 Wpc / 4 Ω) amplifier that also sounds big when needed but is also agile and fleet-a-foot. It is a very well poised amplifier that keeps up with music and preserving pace, rhythm and timing (PRAT).

I was able to hear **Annie Sumi** *live* a few years back, at a small intimate venue and was taken by her music immediately. This young Canadian vocalist has a wonderfully sweet voice to match her endearing personality. Giving listen to the track, *Eye of A Rose* from her album *in the unknown*, you most easily and clearly perceive the sense of an outdoor space and that of a parting subway train on the opening of the track. The delicate guitar strings played with all the details of their sinew delivered, along with the resonant body of the instrument. **Annie's** voice, as portrayed by the *POWERb* was most corporeal – dense and solid yet with all the shading and nuance of her vocal technique well revealed. The track sounded glorious on the *POWERb*, enchanting in fact, drawing me body and soul into the music. As delicately as the *POWERb* presented these elements, when the boom of the war drum began to strike it did so with girth,

depth and thump that served as a clear reminder of the *POWERb's* capability and prowess. Not only did the *POWERb* play the track capably but it also did an amazing job of expressing the emotion of the music – conveying the mystical, enthralling, and poetic melancholy of the song. On the *Conversations* album, by **Vincent Bélanger & Anne Bisson**, the track *Fly Away* presents a vocal piano arrangement that provided insight on the timbral realism of the *POWERb*. Listening to this track through the *POWERb* proved it adept in rendering both human voice and piano. Here was **Anne's** voice hauntingly *alive* with no distracting artificiality. The tone, timbre and percussive expression of the piano, its body resonating and expressed with size and scale made it manifest within my room. The harmonic richness of the instrument combined with this accurate tone also carried with it a scintillating glow that was nothing less than enthralling.

### Conclusion

A realization, the **KARAN *POWERb*** was not only excelling in the best qualities of solid-state amplifiers, such as bountiful power, control, headroom, wide-bandwidth, and low distortion but it was most capable with many of the best qualities of

tube amplifiers, including true and beautiful tone, texture, body, inner warmth, glow, and holography. In so doing, the *POWERb* conjures realism and stunning beauty from recorded music.

Is the **KARAN Master Collection *POWERb*** amplifier expensive? No doubt it is. It's not an amplifier that many might be able to own nor even hear in a private setting but for those who get the chance, they will surely recognize *how special it is*. The *POWERb* is an amplifier that delivers life-like scale and solidity with understated confidence and surprising serenity; an amplifier capable of consistently interpreting natural warmth, harmonic complexity, and beauty within the music. With such an amalgamation of ever so desirable qualities, the **KARAN Acoustics *POWERb*** is both beauty and beast.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### **POWERb Stereo Amplifier**

Price: USD \$43,000 / CAD \$55,000

Warranty: 5-year, Transferable Limited Manufacturer

#### **LINEb preamplifier**

Price: USD \$29,000 / CAD \$37,100

Warranty: 5-year, Transferable Limited Manufacturer

Distributor: Wynn Audio, T.: 647.995.2995, <https://wynnaudio.com/>

# Mr. Max's Melod

By JEAN-DENIS DOYLE

**Massimiliano Magri**, whom everyone in a friendly way calls **Max**, is the designer behind the prestigious Italian brand **Grandinote**. This gentleman designs and manufactures uncompromising electronic components, among the most popular on the market. He is also a great loudspeaker enthusiast. His approach to loudspeaker design is quite unique, as he prefers to use broadband transducers. These speakers give acoustic results that are truly out of the ordinary and they deserve that we take the time to dwell on them. So here are the *Mach 2* speakers from **Grandinote**, a pair of floor standing speakers that I had the pleasure of hosting at home in order to better appreciate their charming personality.

# odious Towers

**G**randinote is a small manufacturer in northern Italy. This company is the fruit of the passion for musical reproduction which **Massimiliano Magri** and his team possess. His first products were amplifiers. Although he was a lover of vacuum tube amplifiers, **Max** wondered if there was not a way to achieve a similar quality of reproduction, using transistors. His research on circuits led him to create the famous **Grandinote** amplifiers, using in-house *magnetosolid* technology. Thus, the **Grandinote** adventure had just begun. The amplifiers of our friend **Max** were a great success all over the world. It was now time for him, to take an interest in his other great passion, loudspeakers. **Massimiliano Magri** has always wanted to get a faithful reproduction using full range speakers. He wanted the latter to reproduce all the frequencies, without any filter. After many disappointing attempts, he found that this type of speaker simply did not exist. It was therefore necessary to find a quality wideband loudspeaker, to modify it substantially, in order to be able to give birth to the range of *Mach* speakers by **Grandinote**. Today, the *Mach* speaker line by **Grandinote** includes many models. The model number designation indicates how many

full range speakers are used. For example: in the case of the model, we are interested in, which is called *Mach 2*, for two full range speakers per loudspeaker. The range extends to very ambitious models, including the incredible *Mach 36!!!* A monumental loudspeaker, which I dream of listening to one day. Let's see now, by what technical *tour de force* **Max** could have developed his loudspeakers.



## GRANDINOTE MACH 2 LOUDSPEAKERS

### Technical description

The *Mach 2* loudspeakers from **Grandinote** are really very special. It is a floor standing loudspeaker (or commonly called a *tower*) equipped with two *full-range* speakers, whose frequency response is completed by a *tweeter*. The vast majority of unfiltered full range loudspeakers have, most of the time, a sound that quickly becomes nasal, even screaming. In general, when the cone reaches its highest resonant frequency, distortions and deformations occur, which are very easily audible and particularly unpleasant. Anyway, nobody really wants that sound. For this reason, **Max** has developed, with the collaboration of an exclusive supplier, a unique *full-range* speaker. **Max** firmly believes that any form of correction with a conventional electronic filter, erases too much information and life to music. He therefore decided to do so mechanically. By treating the back of the cones with different coatings, he was able to change the resonance parameters of the speaker. In this way, he is able to control the highest resonances of the latter. He can thus obtain a smooth frequency response. The two *full range* speakers are loaded by the long column which opens

into a flat vent, located at the bottom of the speaker, at the back of it. This solution is similar to a transmission line and makes it possible to extend the frequency response, at a really very low level, around 27 Hz.

The *Mach 2* of **Grandinote** are equipped, with what it would be correct to call, a *super tweeter*. Indeed, the latter intervenes only to reproduce the harmonics of the very high frequencies. The *tweeter* and the two speakers are mounted a little recessed inside the speaker, about one inch. This makes it possible to create a small pavilion leader that helps control directivity and facilitates *tweeter* phasing. The floor standing loudspeaker as such is excessively well finished and constructed. The *Mach 2* by **Grandinote** create an irresistible desire to touch them, to better feel the quality.

The underside of the loudspeaker is finished with a solid steel plate, into which a set of three high quality spikes is inserted. In order to facilitate a possible repair, the entire rear panel of the loudspeaker can be dismantled, thanks to the use of no less than twenty-two good size screws. The connection terminals are of excellent quality, as expected with a product of this level.

### Unpacking and installation

The unpacking and installation of the *Mach 2* of **Grandinote** is obviously the business of two people. The packaging is very convenient and facilitates the operation. Once all three spikes are installed, you'll need to find a good location to maximize performance. *Mach 2s* love the proximity of the back wall. They resulted in a position of approximately 12 inches from the rear wall, just enough space to clear the vent outlet. *Mach 2s* like to be widely separated, much more than a conventional loudspeaker. By turning them slightly inwards, a sound image is obtained from one wall to another. Despite the rather high price of *Mach 2*, they are still quite economical speakers! No, it's not ironic, I just want to point out that these loudspeakers start at a quarter-turn with a small quality amplifier. They will not need to be accompanied by super exotic electronics to perform well. I got a satisfactory result with a simple integrated amplifier, the 3510 by **Exposure**, and the amazing little network player from **Wattson Audio**, the *Emerson Analog*. Of course, if you absolutely want to go all out with very high-level equipment, they will respond with *panache*.

### Bass like champions

The first thing that strikes when listening to **Grandinote** *Mach 2* is the quality of the low-frequency reproduction. Once installed near the wall, the *Mach 2s* offer a very low descending bass frequency. Listening to the album *Workin'it Out*, by the organist **Pat Bianchi**, is pure happiness. We are then entitled to a very agile sound, without any note that drags, all with a frankly amazing *punch*. The melodic following is impeccable and the urge to tap the foot becomes simply irresistible. And then,



« The voices are also well served by the unusual presence of the **Grandinote Mach 2**. **Lizz Wriuth's** voice in the song *Singing in my Soul* literally stands in front of me, right at my feet, like a hologram from a science fiction movie. The singer has no restraint, it's dynamic, raw, without any sleeping coating. »



## GRANDINOTE MACH 2 LOUDSPEAKERS

I must confess, hear and feel these ultra-low notes of the **Hammond B3** organ, left me with a huge smile of satisfaction. This bouquet of qualities in the lowest frequencies is certainly not unrelated to the fact that the speakers are in direct connection with the terminal block of the loudspeaker. Without any form of filtering, the latter behave like those of an active loudspeaker. The amplifier then has total control over them. The *Mach 2s* are able to start and stop in a nanosecond, a feature that makes listening dynamic, gasping and lively.

### A tone of their own and well chosen

The **Grandinote Mach 2** loudspeakers have a tone that resembles very few loudspeakers. I'll give you a little advice, when you listen to it for the first time, give yourself some time to adapt. After all, these loudspeakers use broadband speakers, whose response is augmented by the *tweeter*. Despite all the work that has been done to smooth the frequency response, there is still a slight trifling in the high medium that will require adaptation. On the other hand, this character trait gives a magnificent presence to string instruments and especially to acoustic guitars. The voices are also well served by

the unusual presence of the **Grandinote Mach 2**. **Lizz Wriarth's** voice in the song *Singing in my Soul* literally stands in front of me, right at my feet, like a hologram from a science fiction movie. The singer has no restraint, it's dynamic, raw, without any sleeping coating. You'd go see and hear her sing at a show and it wouldn't be much different. These loudspeakers definitely have a *live* sound that is anything but dull. The bass, with its extraordinary extension, always ends up saving the day, giving solidity and support to the timbres. Despite their own character traits, the *Mach 2* by **Grandinote** were cut for the music and the compromises were really well balanced and this, with a lot of *know-how*.

### Plenty of Refinement

The *Mach 2* by **Grandinote** are superbly refined and delicate floor standing loudspeakers. The *Mach 2 super tweeter* certainly has something to do with it. Unlike many loudspeakers, using *broadband* speakers, the *Mach 2s* produce a high-pitched treble with great finesse. On the standard *So What* by **Miles Davis**, picked up by guitarist **Wolfgang Haffner**, the cymbals have brilliance, and their resonances take forever to extinguish. The

sound of the brass is rich as desired, not only because the loudspeakers go down very low in frequency, but also thanks to the *super tweeter* which reproduces the highest harmonics with great ease. The xylophone present in the recording is perfectly cut out just like the piano. Effectively, the piano hammer strikes have a nice impact and startle with their realism. At the same time, the stereophonic image is wide and very precise. If the *Mach 2* can be a little destabilizing during the first listening, they are just as destabilizing when we return to more conventional smoothed and filtered loudspeakers. The removal of the **Grandinote Mach 2** from my audio channel left a great void in the sense of immediateness, control and speed. A small audiophile weaning that I will have to live with, which is obviously part of my life as a audio columnist.

### Conclusion

So, here's a pair of towers that really go off the beaten track. The *Mach 2* by **Grandinote** certainly have a personality of their own and deserve to be listened to in depth. Easy to implement, they are not very demanding with the equipment that accompanies them and will easily perform well with a small quality amplifier. As it is preferable that they be positioned close to the walls, they will easily integrate into a domestic environment. Thank you, Mr. **Max**, for your genius which gave birth to these melodious towers.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Price: 18 500 \$ for the black satin finish, 20 000 \$ for the mat finish with wood sides and 22 000 \$ for the glossy wood finish

Warranty: 5 years, parts and labor

Distributor: Goerner  
Audio, T.: 1.514.833.1977,  
<https://goerneraudio.com/>

### Mediagraphy

Pat Bianchi, Workin'it Out, Tidal File

Lizz Wriarth, Grace, Concord Records, CRE00482

Wolfgang Haffner, Kind of Cool, ACT, Act 9576-2





GRANDINOTE MACH2

**MISSION 770** LOUDPEAKERS

# *Its mission: letting yo*

By RICHARD SCHNEIDER



Many years ago, in 1977, high-fidelity enthusiasts discovered a product that would become a reference in music reproduction. It was a loudspeaker by the British firm **Mission**, the 770. From the outset, this loudspeaker achieved **Mission's** best sales results at the time. The original was created with the aim of developing speakers that would be as accurate as the monitors used by the **BBC**. Nothing less! Coming back to our time, the past year was highlighted by two major events at **Mission**. To our delight, the firm restarted production of the 770 and moved manufacturing of its products back to the United Kingdom. I had this iconic product from **Mission** for a few days, so with great excitement, I rushed to get them installed and running. Welcome to the world of British high fidelity!

*You have a great time!*



**MISSION 770** LOUDPEAKERS



**T**he reintroduction of the 770 is a project in which **Mission** has great hopes. The parent company that manufactures the loudspeakers is called **IAG**. The premises have been specially enlarged to help produce them. In fact, the factory's premises in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, have grown by

2,300 m<sup>2</sup>. That tells you how seriously this project is.

The **Mission 770s** are two-way loudspeakers with a vent. On the outside, apart from a few details, it's amazing how similar they are to the original model. Stop! Appearances are misleading, as the new 770s feature new technologies in almost every aspect. That's why the comparisons stop here and now. These are modern loudspeakers that belong to our time.

### The Challenge

**Mission** could not afford to simply create a project that was a carbon copy of the original model. On the contrary, modern consumers demand a product suited to the many music platforms available to them and specifically to digital music. That said, let's not forget that when the 770s were launched 45 years ago, the heyday of audio was all about analogue turntables, not to mention *FM* radio, which was much more geared towards music lovers than it is now. However, there is one element that **Mission** wanted to preserve, and that is the warm and natural character for which these loudspeakers were once so successful.

However, the aim of producing the new version of the 770s was to offer even more open and detailed musical reproduction, suitable for all musical sources. The project was led by **Peter Comeau**, Director of Acoustic Design at **Mission**. For the record, **Peter** was a young audio critic when the original 770s were released, and he remembers their impact well. Previously, in 1979, he co-founded the highly successful **Heybrook** loudspeaker firm. For him and his team, the new **Mission 770s** were a real labour of love.

### A Closer Look at This New Version

The beauty of the cabinets strikes the imagination. When removing the grilles, you can only marvel at the ivory-coloured facade on which the **Mission** logo is proudly displayed. The anchors holding the grilles in place are gone, replaced by a magnetic anchoring system. The larger pressure-relief vent cone at the bottom is much more aesthetically pleasing than its predecessor.

The cabinet is much more rigid. Actually, the cabinet of the new 770s is made from a sandwich of *MDF* and particleboard separated by a layer of microfibre. The unit reaches a thickness of 28 mm. This results in a cabinet whose resonance is well below the level of audibility. At the same time, this process

considerably reduces the colouring of music reproduction. The so-called sound warmth, which is often talked about, is fine for those who are nostalgic for the audio systems of yesteryear, but in this case, it is a colouring that we want to avoid. Designing two-way loudspeakers is, in my opinion, a great challenge. Unlike three-way loudspeakers, all midrange and bass frequencies must be produced by the same driver. Moreover, I don't see the point in adding a subwoofer to such a system. **Peter Comeau's** team worked tirelessly to overcome this constraint. The 20-cm mid-range/bass driver features a die-cast chassis with openings at the back to reduce internal resonance. Made of polypropylene just like the original, the membrane is now stiffer so that the bass is reproduced as accurately and dynamically as the mid-range. The 2.8-cm tweeter underwent minor changes from the original version. It now has a microfibre textile dome, chosen for its lightness. The frequencies setting of the bass-reflex vent tuning (the pressure-relief vent at the bottom of the front) has been lowered from the original version so that despite the size of the loudspeakers, the bass is smooth and coherent, demonstrating a certain authority.

But what would a quality speaker be without high-level crossover? Developing the 770s' filter required several thousand hours of testing. It has been completely redeveloped so that it is suitable for both analogue and digital. According to the manufacturer, the Director of Acoustic Design, **Peter Comeau**, wanted seamless unification of the various components between the units so that the integration of all frequencies would be consistent. During endless listening sessions, a wide variety of musical genres were used, and more than 170 different circuit types were tested before the final version of the filter was adopted by the design team.

The high-quality, gold-plated terminals are compatible with all types of connections. We didn't rely on bi-wiring or bi-sampling. The 770s have only one set of terminals per unit. Beautiful black metal bases, which go perfectly with the cabinets, are included with the purchase.

### The Set-up

Setting them up couldn't be simpler, as these are loudspeakers, after all. The instructions for setting up the bases are clear and relevant except for one detail. In the package, you will find eight nuts with bolts mounted on them. Do not try to loosen the bolts. Instead, insert them into the cylinders as shown on the sheet. A beautiful box set is offered with the purchase of **Mission 770s**. You will find a high-quality brochure explaining the virtues of your new purchase, as well as valuable tips for positioning your loudspeakers. The box also contains a pair of white gloves to ensure a smudge-free set-up, as well as the



discs on which the tips of the metal bases will rest. Setting up the **Mission 770s** in your listening room will be relatively simple. According to the manufacturer, they reach their full potential when they are placed about one metre away from the rear walls and as far as possible from the side walls. You will also need to tilt them slightly towards your listening position to optimise the sound stage. The *sweet spot* is not very wide. So, you will need to adjust your listening position accordingly. There are two important aspects that need to be emphasised to maximise your enjoyment. These loudspeakers will need to be run in for a while before they can deliver their full potential. Also, make sure your electronics are properly warmed up. This is no trivial detail.

With a sensitivity of 88 dB, it is accepted that these loudspeakers are suitable for a wide range of amplifiers as long as the nominal impedance is 8 ohms and the minimum impedance is 6 ohms. The amplifier should be carefully chosen based on its good musical performance rather than its power, because these loudspeakers are very transparent. But don't worry, because the *770s* aren't afraid to express themselves at high volumes.

### **The Joy of Listening**

The original *770s'* excellent reputation was due to their ability to reproduce mid-range sounds like no other loudspeakers. When using this new version, there is no doubt that this sound signature is still there for our greatest enjoyment. From the very first time I listened, this captured my attention. Just like other audio commentators, I started dusting off vinyl and digital recordings, focusing on vocals and acoustic instrumentation with renewed pleasure.

On the song *Blue Country* of the same album, performed by **Joe Dassin**, the acoustic guitars occupy a central place and are of great precision. **Dassin's** voice is right in the middle, and the singer's low tone is respected. At the time of

recording, the latter was probably positioned quite close to the microphone because it feels like he is right next to us. We liked the consistency of all the musical spectrums. The bass, an important part of this song, is articulated and very easy to follow. The high notes are discreet without being erased, which, in my opinion, is a major advantage over the competition. Like many of us, I can't stand aggressive and/or overly revealing tweeters. In fact, my partner (my best critic) said how much she liked the sweetness of the high mid-range and high notes.

Historically, and in my experience (this statement only involves me), two-way loudspeakers are not the best suited for rock, or for progressive rock, for example, because of the vigorous nature of these musical genres that benefit from a very extensive bass from a loudspeaker. However, the **Mission 770s** clearly stand

out in other areas such as jazz, folk, classical, new age, etc. Just listen to *Folk Singer* by **Muddy Waters** on vinyl or digital to appreciate the clarity, detail and atmosphere that seemed to be present during the recording. The acoustic guitars are natural and powerful as **Muddy Waters** performs *live* for you in your listening room. Put a needle on the record, *We Get Requests* by **Oscar Peterson** or *Chile Pepper* by **Art Pepper**, and you will understand the craze for vinyl. What is there to say about the format? On the other hand, play *Jazz at The Pawnshop* in DSD or FLAC, and you will discover the full splendour of this superb recording. We will agree that when playing digital files, the *770s* prove to be dynamic, transparent and catchy.

#### Conclusions

This re-release of the mythical **Mission 770** speakers is a total success. The timbres

are beautiful, the tonal balance is close to perfect and the listening consistency is exceptional. These loudspeakers are beautiful and will be very easy to integrate into your environment. You will be able to spend many hours listening to music with endlessly renewed enjoyment. Thank you to **Mission** for making me letting me hear a great time. Now it's up to you to check them out.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Price: \$6,500 (matching stands included)

Warranty: 3 years, parts & labor

Distributor: Erikson Home

Tel.: 514.457.6674,

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

« On the song *Blue Country* of the same album, performed by **Joe Dassin**, the acoustic guitars occupy a central place and are of great precision. **Dassin's** voice is right in the middle, and the singer's low tone is respected. At the time of recording, the latter was probably positioned quite close to the microphone because it feels like he is right next to us. »



# Buon Gusto – Recipe

By Léa Gariépy

## Classic Oatmeal Cookies

Good oatmeal cookies  
remind us of the good old days of our childhood –  
a tasty snack!

A close-up photograph of a white ceramic bowl filled with golden-brown oatmeal cookies. The cookies are scattered on a light-colored wooden surface. The background is softly blurred, showing more cookies and a wooden rolling pin.

## *Ingredients*

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup of oatmeal
- 1 ½ cups quick cooking rolled oats
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ cup softened unsalted butter
- ¼ cup margarine
- 1 ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup coconut oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 egg

## *Preparation:*

1. Preheat the oven at 375°
2. In a bowl, combine the flours, oats, baking soda and salt.
3. In another bowl, cream the butter and margarine with the brown sugar, oil and vanilla extract using an electric mixer. Add the egg and whisk until the mixture pales and becomes homogeneous.
4. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, mix on low speed.
5. Using a 60 ml ice cream scoop, form balls of dough and distribute them on greased baking sheets. Press the balls to have discs 2 cm thick.
6. One sheet at a time, bake for about 12 minutes until the edges of the cookies are lightly browned. Allow to cool before handling.

# *The golden anniversary of high fidelity*

By ADRIEN ROUAH

To celebrate a golden wedding anniversary, you must have a common life of fifty years. And it is precisely the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian company **PSB** and the English company **NAD** that we are celebrating. I do not know if the Canadian distributor, **Lenbrook Industries**, married these two companies at the same time, but what I can tell you is that being able to celebrate such a long existence and such a great professional success for these two companies, deserved to be commended! When we hold the market with such tenacity, we must admit that the products offered have surely created an exemplary loyalty due to their qualities; and that these products are surely paired with music! And as all celebrations have their speeches...

The pair of loudspeakers proposed here is a replica of what the **PSB** company proposed some fifty years ago under the name of *Passif II*. Of course, technologically, there are differences, as for example: the *tweeter* that goes from a fabric dome to a titanium dome and neodymium magnet, with mirror positioning on the front of the cabinets. On the other hand, the felt surrounding the latter is always present, with the well-known advantage of smoothing diffusion imperfections, since the *tweeters* are particularly sensitive to that. The main idea in the medium-bass remains the same with a 6.5" transducer, supported by a larger diameter (8") passive. It is therefore a two-way loudspeaker with a passive radiator; that is to say, a resonant membrane without a magnet. Aesthetically, it is indeed a replica whose great similarity with its ancestral *Passif II* was sought, that is how the **PSB** company – and certainly **Paul Barton** himself, must have wanted it. Even the small, dedicated stands remain faithful to the ancestor! At a

time when many companies are resurrecting their champion models, it is a choice and a view point to want to move towards an exact replica.

## **Let's Talk Passive**

Let us talk about this principle. But for this, it is first necessary to divide into two families the types of charge of the loudspeakers. A cabinet is constructed which is desired to be closed, without any opening: resulting in a loudspeaker of the *closed* type or with acoustic suspension. We build a loudspeaker with a hole, square, round, rectangular, whatever, then we have a loudspeaker of the *bass-reflex* type. This *bass-reflex* loudspeaker is also called a resonator loudspeaker and the principle concerned here, the passive radiator principle, belongs to the family of resonator loudspeakers. It is the passive transducer that will act as the hole of a *tuned bass-reflex* cabinet. Thanks to the work of **Hermann Von Helmholtz** on acoustics, we can take advantage of the work of this genius on resonators, to understand that what we always want, with a pair of loudspeakers, is to obtain the best possible result in the bass, with a physically acceptable cabinet volume in our living rooms. For this purpose, it will be sought to lower the resonant frequency of a loudspeaker, either by means of a hole, or by replacing this hole by a passive element which will act in the same way. The active-passive system proposed by **PSB** with the *Passif 50* is a principle that has proven itself technically and if perfectly optimized, the results will be spectacular.

## **Manufacturing**

I will not teach anyone that to have a 50-year longevity, it takes a certain rigor of manufacturing! And this rigor is present with, for **PSB Passif 50<sup>th</sup>** loudspeakers, a beautiful wood veneer on 5 sides – the front side is black with a magnetic protective grid in beige woven fabric. The *Passif 50s* are bi-wire able and equipped with seriously studied filters, even if we could have done without the electrolytic capacitor for this anniversary



model! The internal damping is entrusted to felt of good thickness to avoid harmful tones inside the cabinet. The **PSB Passif 50s** each rest on a small stand that puts the loudspeaker at the right height, in addition to giving it a slight backward tilt.

### The NAD C700 All-in-One

With regard to the **NAD C700** received at the same time as the *Passif 50* loudspeakers, we must also honor this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company! Let's recall for the new audiophiles that **NAD** – for **New Acoustic Dimension**, started into the audio market in 1978 with the realization of an integrated amplifier – baptized *3020*, which has been the basic piece of equipment and the happiness of many audiophiles. The *C700* described today is the latest in the large **NAD** family: an *all-in-one* music server system (*streamer*). Just connect a pair of loudspeakers and you're done... or almost! A little configuration is still necessary. After all, we are dealing here with a system that is more like a computer than an audio amplifier!

The presentation is very *zen*. Only one large button is present to navigate through the various menus and control the volume, two small *push* buttons to move *forward* and *backward*, as well as a 5-inch color *LCD* display that is of very good resolution. Like its big brother, the *M10*, the *C700* incorporates the stunning *BluOS* operating system.

At the connectivity level, we have a host of options: wired network, *WiFi*, *Bluetooth*, *USB*, optical, coaxial and finally, two analog inputs. The only thing missing is a

*phono* input. Also present are a preamp output and a subwoofer output with a configurable cut-off frequency. Almost all digital audio formats are supported, from simple *MP3* to *MQA* (full decoding), up to 24 bits and 192 kHz. However, decoding of the *DSD* is not supported.

The device is powered by a powerful 4-core **ARM** processor. For digital-to-analog conversion, **NAD** used an **ESS**-origin *ES9010K2M* chip. The amplification task was, here, entrusted to a class *D* board from the manufacturer **Hypex**, with a power of 80 W per channel. Getting the *C700* started is a breeze. Simply install the *BluOS* app on a smartphone (*Android* or *iOS*) or on a computer connected to your local *WiFi* network, plug in the *C700* and start the app. The latter will automatically search your network for any device with the *BluOS* system. Once detected, just choose your network and enter the password, and that's it! Other start-up methods are detailed in the user manual. The *BluOS* application is very intuitive, it allows us to navigate the different menus of the *C700* and of course to inject music!

### Before the Listening Sessions

The installation is easy. Since the height position of the **PSB Passif 50** is already established by their dedicated supports, it remains to position the pair of loudspeakers in my room with respect to the adjacent walls. I noticed right away that while I don't usually encounter too many difficulties for positioning a pair of loudspeakers in my room, I think it's easier to find the ideal location with an *Active-Passive* system. Indeed, immediately, **PSB**

*Passif 50s* seemed to be in the right place, the same place as my personal loudspeakers. All the listening sessions have been made with simple wiring and without protective grid.

### Let's Move Forward with the Listening Sessions

With the **NAD C700 All-in-One** to start and celebrate birthdays at the same time! If the listening is vigorous in dematerialized mode, it becomes quieter on linear inputs. Class *D* obliges, one can easily classify the *C700* to be *live* in digital and mellowed in analog. This is not a defect, but rather a feature often encountered with the **Hypex** amplification section. The television concerts are pleasant and fairly lively with enough dynamics to have a great time. It should be remembered that **NAD** aims here at the comfort of use and also the simplicity of use, with this fabulous solution which consists in having almost everything done by a single device. The sound emitted is immediately warm, with this little physiological aspect that loudspeakers equipped with passive speakers give.

A warm and gentle listening session, always pleasant whatever the musical style chosen. Here, let's take for example my favorite vinyl records, **Jacques Bertin** and of course **Sweet Smoke**; confirmation of an additional sweetness with pure analog when the *C700* is in action. But it is the digital and the dematerialized that will have its preferences, the big winner being the dematerialized music.

The second part of my listening sessions was done with my usual darling integrated, operating in class *A/B*. Things change a little and the **PSB Passif 50s** fit well. A few sessions of musical films were first seen, **Loreena McKennitt** and **Jinjer** to use extremes and make sure everything was enjoyable. When playing compact discs, **PSB Passif 50s** are more than pleasant, especially if we consider the production as *ready to receive everything*, musically speaking. Indeed, I believe that the *Active-Passive* system makes it possible to keep a beautiful fullness of sounds, without overflowing, a sign that listening will always be pleasant whatever our musical choice. The intelligibility of the acute medium part

## PSB PASSIF 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ACOUSTIC LOUDSPEAKERS AND NAD C700 BLUOS STREAMING AMPLIFIER

is also very well achieved, with this small touch of refinement, without aggressiveness, that is not unrelated to the success of more than 50 years of career for **PSB**. The **Caronni Sisters** and their album *Santa Plastica* amazes us with its playful, very pleasant presentation. Beautiful recording also that the *Passif 50* easily translate, especially the soft and warm aspect well transcribed.

I'm staying in the intimate performance with **Angelique Ionatos**. **PSB** loudspeakers participate in this poetic listening, I would even say that this is the big strength of these loudspeakers to be able to charm us quickly. Simple, too simple the disc of **Angelique Ionatos**, you will tell me? Not really, rather difficult at times when the wrong cut-off choice for this loudspeaker or the wrongly chosen treble

transducer, could have annihilated the correctness and destroyed the pleasure; but this is not the case here. And when I finish my listening sessions with **Azam Ali**, I tell myself that the experience has something unsurpassable, of course I'm talking about the experience of an audio manufacturer like **PSB**. It's hard not to be bewitched by so much charm and accuracy. Really well this *anniversary* pair, besides I surrender, I listen again, all that pleasure, in abundance.

### Conclusion

We leave aside the *pure performance* aspects, *audiophiles* and other sound analysis, as well as the chosen aesthetic that some will find too classic for a birthday celebration. We are here to listen to music. And even if this music has a warm rather than enthusiastic rendering, I think this pair of *Passif 50* loudspeakers will interest more than one. But let us understand, *one* being a music lover who wants to do nothing but share, with the complicity of **PSB Passif 50**, his music and his entertainment in general. No dehulling, no unnecessary musical dissection, just music for the pleasure. This is how we go through life as a couple, after 50 years, with ups and downs, but always together, always present, like the Canadian company **PSB** and music.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Distributor:** Lenbrook Industries,  
T.: 905.831.6555, <https://lenbrook.com/#ourbrands>

#### Mediagraphy

##### Vinyls

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

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

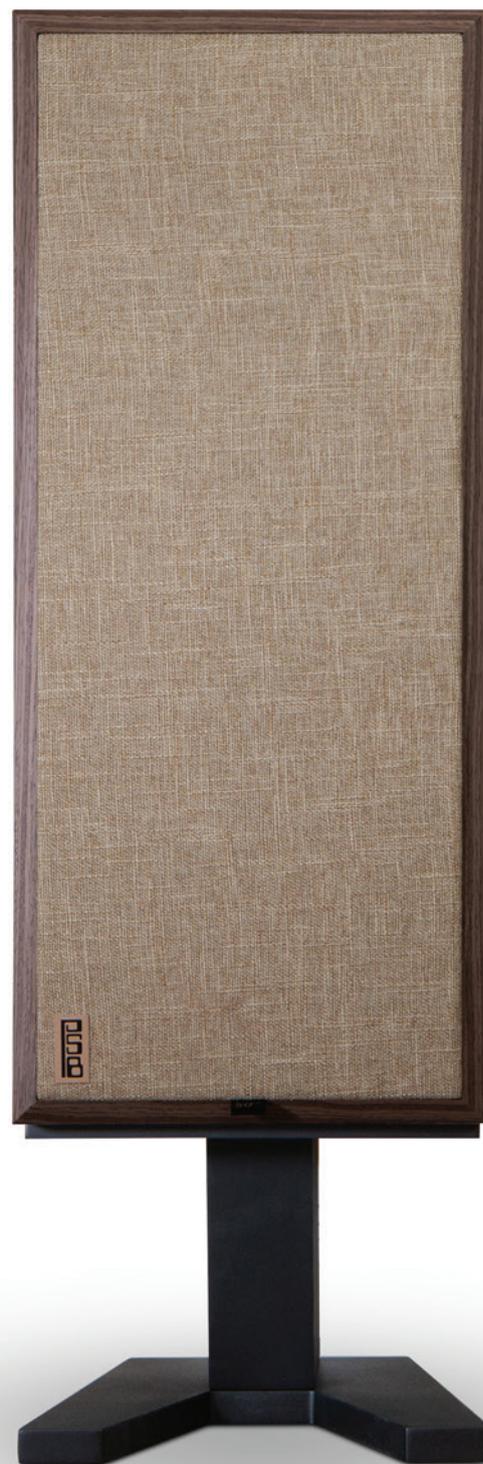
##### Compact discs

Las Hermanas Caronni, *Santa Plastica*, LHC, 5664/3

Angelique Ionatos, *Remain the Light*, IDA 104

Azam Ali, *Lamentation of Swans*, Autoproduction





# Classical Music

By CHRISTOPHE HUSS



## RECORD OF THE MONTH

**CÉSAR FRANCK**

**ALAIN ALTINOGLU**

**Symphony in D. Salvation. The cursed hunter.**

**Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra**

Alpha 898

Performance: \*\*\*\*

Technical: \*\*\*\*

During the selection process to find a successor to **Kent Nagano** at the head of the **OSM**, **Rafael Payare** definitely made a very strong impression but another conductor was a sensation, too. This conductor, **Alain Altinoglu**, was also

courted by the **Orchestre National de France** and when he apparently refused this position, it was said that the stars were well aligned for Montreal. But it was a German orchestra that won at the end of the day. This is the first record in this duo, and it's dazzling. **Alain Altinoglu** returns to the rich hours of *French* readings of this masterpiece which, in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s became increasingly Germanic, or cosmopolitan, so in a way, weighed down by the performers. However, a lively and cursive character does indeed get to its essence and drive it forward. We can add a perfect coupling here with a true masterpiece *Le chasseur maudit*. A great record for the beginning of the year 2023.

## SOUND RECORDING OF THE MONTH

REINHOLD GLIÈRE and ALEXANDER MOSOLOV  
XAVIER DE MAISTRE

Concertos for harp and orchestra.

+ Glazunov and Tchaikovsky.

Xavier de Maistre (harp), WDR Symphony Orchestra  
Cologne, Nathalie Stutzmann

Sony, 19439913812

Interpretation: \*\*\*\*

Technical: \*\*\*\*\*

This selection puts the harp in the spotlight, alongside the presentation of the solo disc *Consolation* by **Antoine Malette-Chénier** at **ATMA**. So, we have two major harp records in this issue. In the field of the harp, **Xavier de Maistre** is an undeniable reference. If you're looking for an artistic beacon, here he is. From **de Maistre** having already recorded the great classics and many transcriptions, including a superb one of the *Aranjuez Concerto*, he continues his exploration and we finally have a solid reference of the efficient and charming *Concerto* from **Glière** (1875-1956), a score from 1938, which unfortunately has never been heard in concert halls again. All this is served by a miracle of balance between the harp and the symphony orchestra, so difficult to achieve. **Günther Wollersheim** has achieved this feat. The harp is present without being intrusive and the orchestra is framed in a rather global sound recording, but sufficiently



present and very coherent. It's not a spectacular multi-microphone take, but beautiful, meticulous radio work.



## DISCOVERY OF THE MONTH

JOSEPH JONGEN

IVAN ILIC (Piano)

13 Preludes. 24 Preludes in all keys.

Chandos, CHAN, 20264

Interpretation: \*\*\*\*

Technical: \*\*\*\*

Published on January 6<sup>th</sup>, this CD is the first major discovery of the year. **Ivan Illic** is accustomed to doing this, having dived for **Chandos** in the work by **Antonin Reicha. Jongen** (1873-1953) was a Belgian composer known for his organ repertoire. But what we discover here is a cycle of *13 Preludes* (1923) directly inherited from the *Debussyste* language **Jongen** does not attach evocation or paintings to it, but states of mind: *Worry, Torment, Still Water, Tenderness*, etc. It is obviously the harmony that impresses. It's very French in taste and the record will appeal to fans of **Ravel** and **Debussy**, who are looking for even more dreamlike escapes. The *24 Little Preludes* are more succinct (around one minute each) often with a refined simplicity closer to **Satie**, but without its expressive bareness.

# Classical Music

## BOX SET OF THE MONTH

**REINHARD GOEBEL & MUSICA ANTIQUA KÖLN**

**Complete Recordings on Archiv Produktion**

Archiv, 75 CD, 486 2063

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

Technical: \*\*\*\* to \*\*\*\*\*

There are artistic marriages that are so obvious that you really wonder why they ever end. The baroque conductor **Reinhard Goebel** has been a pillar of the ancient music and baroque branch of **Deutsche Grammophon, Archiv Produktion** from the mid-1970s to the year 2000, more or less. As such, he has given this label, at the time of making the CD catalogues, a range of reference versions in landmark works, such as the *Brandenburg Concertos*, the *Suites* or *Bach's Art de la fugue* but also in various repertoires covering the works of **Biber** or **Telemann**. **Archiv** used **Goebel** as a perfect complement to **John Eliot Gardiner**. **Goebel** did not touch **Haydn** nor **Monteverdi** and recorded French baroque music, he did not do opera, limiting himself to sacred vocal music and did not escape to **Beethoven**. His curiosity allowed **Archiv** to set up marketing stunts around famous unknowns like **Heinichen**, presented as the German **Vivaldi**. It is this discographic saga



that this box set contains: it has not aged. It shines with life and wholesome audacity.



## OTHER NOVELTIES

**BACH FAMILY**

**Vocal works by members of the Bach family.**

**Ensemble Polyharmonique, Teatro del Mondo, Andreas Küppers.**

CPO, 555 418

Interpretation: \*\*\*\*

Technical: \*\*\*\*

We had never seen so many people from the family, especially in the ancestor section of **Johann Sebastian** (1685-1750). There are **Heinrich Bach, Johann, Johann Christoph, Johann Michael** the incredible **Johann Ludwig** and colleague **Adam Drese**. From the next generation, **Andreas Küppers** retained the nephew **Johann Ernst** and the famous son **Carl Philipp Emanuel**. The disc is therefore relevant for those interested in the musical path that starts from **Jean-Sébastien**, for example, in a style reminiscent of **Schütz**. It is obviously through the archaic zest of this *pre-JS* music (**Johann Michael**) that one can gauge the genius of the great **Bach**, but also the injustice that posterity has visited upon **Johann Ludwig** (great *Unser Trübsal*, track 6). Relevant and well-sung record.



**OLA GJEILO**

**Dawn**

Decca, 485 2954

Interpretation: \*

Technical: \*\*\*\*

We were dazzled by the vocal inspiration of the Norwegian composer living in the United States, **Ola Gjeilo**, including a *Ubi Caritas* as beautiful as the one in **Durufle's**. It was then recorded by **Voces8** in a record entitled *Lux* published in 2015. A monograph **Ola Gjeilo** came next, in 2016, with works for piano, voice and strings. It is the only CD of **Gjeilo** to date, as piano works published under the title *Night*, in 2020, had strongly disappointed. Those that come to us with the epithet *Dawn*, are *collapsing* of banality and fall into that nebula of new lift music known as *neoclassical* and yet, it has got some people excited. Musical *Cheez Whiz*. Hardly.



**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

**Mozart at the opera. Fantasy in K. 475. Piano Concerto No 22.**

**Air Ch'io mi scordi di te. 4 Hands Sonata K. 497.**

**Philippe Cassard, Natalie Dessay, Cédric Pescia, Orchestre national de Bretagne.**

La Dolce Volta, LDV, 106

Interpretation: \*\*\*\*

Technical: \*\*\*

It is a wonderful idea to celebrate **Mozart's** vocals through various types of contemporary works from the *Noces de Figaro*. As the musicologist and pianist **Robert Levin** has pointed out in a recent interview with *Le Devoir*, the works of **Mozart** reflect not so much moods related to events in his life but rather needs to *examine* states of mind. The *Noces de Figaro* is such a concentrate of happiness that the overflow of joy had to have its counterpart elsewhere. There are therefore parts of surprising shadows in these well-combined scores. Here we find, as in the records, **Mozart** from **Leif Ove Andsnes** (who combines concertos and chamber music) and the sure and warm tone of **Philippe Cassard**, the stimulating pleasure of escaping the traditional pairing of two concertos. In the *Concert tune K. 505*, one can enjoy a rounder, fuller voice than that of **Natalie Dessay**. Note the drier-than-usual capture by **La Dolce Volta**. Be careful not to confuse the *4 Hands Sonata K. 497* with the famous *Sonata for 2 pianos K. 448*, which is also very beautiful.



# Classical Music

## OTHER NOVELTIES



### FLORENCE PRICE

**Songs of the Oak, Concert Overtures and other orchestral works.**

**Württembergische Philharmonie Reutlingen, John Jeter.**

Naxos, 8,559,920

Interpretation: \*\*\*

Technical: \*\*\*\*

Thanks to the commitment of **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**, **Florence Price** (1887-1953), the first major African-American composer, became the symbol of a new distribution in music programming. But before **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**, it is to **Jon Jeter** at **Naxos** that we owe it for having tried to recall **Florence Price** to our good memory. His problem is to have relatively average orchestras for his rediscoveries. Again, this is the case for the small symphonic compositions that are well suited to **Price**, whose limits are generally the art of symphonic development. So, we have some very typical and enjoyable pieces, some of which will certainly make their way into the repertoire.



### VALENTIN SILVESTROV

**Maidan. Four Songs. Diptych. Triptych.**

**Kyiv Chamber Orchestra, Mykola Hobdych.**

ECM, 485 8084

Interpretation: \*\*\*\*

Technical: \*\*\*\*

This very moving record is the result of a license from **Kyiv Chamber Choir** who recorded it in 2017. But its inclusion in the **ECM** catalogue is logical, as the German label has done much for the music of the greatest Ukrainian composer, **Valentin Silvestrov**, and has been doing so for a very long time. During the pro-European revolution of the **Euromaidan**, **Silvestrov** established a kind of musical chronicle through works for choir *a capella*. There are four cycles here which open with transfigurations of the national anthem illuminated by the memory of the bells of St. Michael's Cathedral imitated by the men of the choir. There are, in these cycles, purely sublime moments, including the now famous *Prayer to Ukraine* (IV, 3). The reverberated sound is consistent with the aesthetics of the rooms, but still significant.

**34** [tedpublications.com/en](http://tedpublications.com/en) January-February 2023



**ANTOINE MALETTE-CHÉNIER**

**Consolations**

**Works by Renié, Zabel, Schumann, Schuetze, Glinka, Hasselmans, Posse and Liszt.**

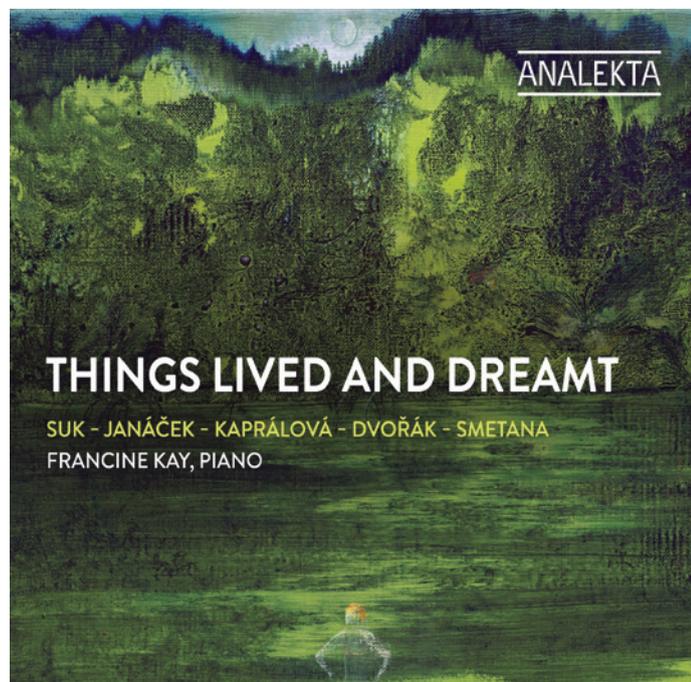
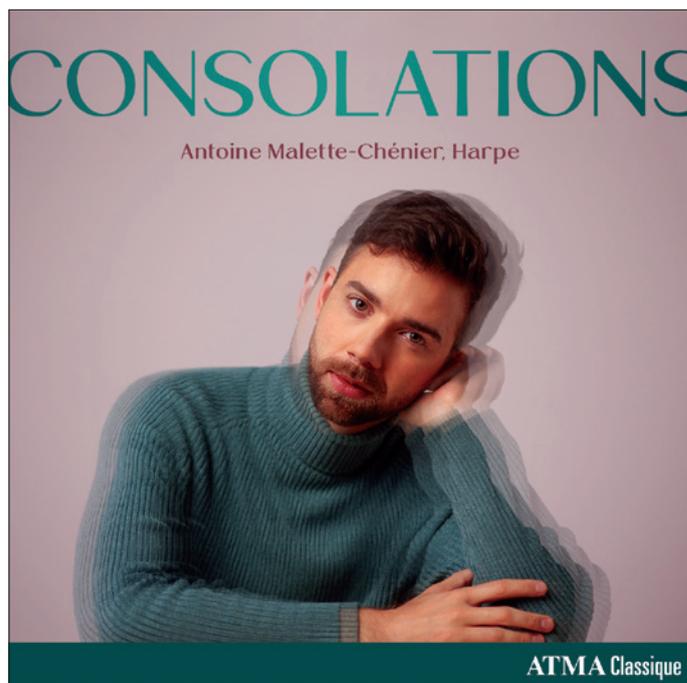
**Antoine Malette-Chénier (harp).**

Atma, ACD, 2 2855

Interpretation: \*\*\*\*

Technical: \*\*\*\*

Quebec is fortunate to have two harpists of the calibre of **Valérie Milot** and **Antoine Malette-Chénier**. The latter makes a very strong impression in a solo disc of works *by harpists* like those of **Henriette Renié**, of **Wilhelm Posse** and of **Alphonse Hasselmans**, an incredible *Paraphrase on Faust by Gounod* by **Albert Zabel** played with absolute tact, and the transcriptions of *Melodies* by **Schumann**, **Glinka** and *Consolations* by **Liszt**. These six works give the disc its title. Like the work of **Zabel**, it is the musician's finesse that stands out, as well as the intelligence of the programme for a disc that is aimed at all music lovers, not only harp lovers.



**FRANCINE KAY (Piano)**

**Things Lived and Dreamt**

**Works by Janacek, Suk, Dvořák, Kapralova and Smetana**

Analekta, AN, 2 9004

Interpretation: \*\*\*\*

Technical: \*\*\*

This record may not mean anything to anyone, but it is an event, because it has been at least 20 years since **Francine Kay** recorded. The Quebec lady, who teaches at **Princeton University**, had made her mark with a CD of *Preludes by Debussy* of intense poetic force. Here, she fell under the spell of a cycle composed in 1909 by **Josef Suk** (1874-1935), *Životem a snem (Things lived and dreamt)*, which impresses with its freedom and harmonic beauty (see *Op. 30 No 5*). In this respect, the coupling with the *Sonate* by **Janacek** is very logical and, as a result, **Francine Kay** offers us a Czech musical panorama of great concentration and mastery. The sound is a bit dry and somewhat restricts a dreamy escape, but the pianist is not to blame for that. It is a perfect complement to the **Dvořák** by **Leif Ove Andsnes**.

# *When your song is as beautiful as your looks !*

By MICHEL DALLAIRE

The loudspeaker manufacturer **Sonus faber** is based in Italy, in the municipality of Arcugnano, in the province of Vicenza in Veneto. It was founded in 1983 by the late **Franco Serblin**. This brand has always been at the forefront in terms of design and aesthetics for the manufacturing of its loudspeakers. I had the opportunity to test different models of this manufacturer in the past, but I always had to go to a audio shop in Montreal to be able to do my test bench. So, this is the first time that I finally have the opportunity to test a **Sonus faber** loudspeaker at home, in conditions and an environment that are familiar to me. My living room will welcome a beautiful pair of *Sonetto III*. In the **Sonus faber** catalogue, the *Sonetto* series takes position between the *Lumina* entry-level series and the *Olympica Nova* intermediate series. The superb *Sonetto III* is a three-way model of floor-standing type (or *tower*), equipped with two *woofers* for low frequencies. I paid particular attention to it both aesthetically and acoustically. Follow the guide for a visit to the heart of Italian design.

## The Sonetto family

**T**he *Sonetto* series is not a novelty in itself, as it dates back to 2018. However, it benefits from the latest technical developments of the manufacturer **Sonus faber**. This series is now entirely manufactured in Italy, just like the new *Lumina* entry-level series. The *Sonetto* series therefore replaces the *Venere* series, which was made in China. The *Sonetto* family consists of three models in the form of a 3-way *tower* loudspeaker, the *Sonetto VIII*, the *Sonetto V* and the *Sonetto III*, which is the smallest and most affordable one. Two other shelf-style 2-channel models are also in the catalogue, the *Sonetto II* and the *Sonetto I*. Next come the home cinema models such as

the center loudspeakers, the *Sonetto Center II*, and the *Sonetto Center I* as well as the *Sonetto Wall* wall speaker. Two subwoofers are added to the offer for home cinema situations, the *Gravis I* and the *Gravis II*.

## Lyre or Lute?

Like many other models of **Sonus faber**, the *Sonetto III* has a shape that, seen from above, resembles the curves of a lyre or a lute. These fleeting curves towards the rear serve to eliminate the standing waves which tend to form inside the loudspeaker when the latter comprises parallel walls. The *Sonetto III* is a rather slender loudspeaker, and its curves make it even less visually imposing. It can therefore be easily placed in any interior and is designed for rooms ranging from 15 to 25 square meters. Its surface is in real wood veneer and the grain is oriented horizontally from the front to the back of the loudspeaker cabinet, which gives it a particular *look* and a certain elegance. The available finishes are walnut and wenge covered with a satin lacquer. In a glossy finish, there is black and white. A protective fabric grille completes the looks. It attaches magnetically to the front, but the beautiful industrial design of the loudspeaker encourages us to remove the grille.

All models of the *Sonetto* series inherit a top part in genuine Italian leather as on the *Olympica Nova* series. This leather piece features the brand's embossed logo and is hand-applied by **Sonus faber** craftsmen. The *Sonetto III* comes with four solid aluminum footings that must be fixed underneath the loudspeaker. The latter are equipped with decoupling tips made of solid steel and adjustable in height. Metal washers are provided so as not to damage varnished wood floors. These feet also serve to keep a space below the loudspeaker where the vent of the *reflex bass* load emerges. At the bottom rear of the loudspeaker are the amplifier terminals, which are of good quality and designed for bi-wiring or bi-amplification. At the top, there is a small nameplate that indicates that the loudspeaker is *Made in Italy* as well as its serial number. It can be seen that



attention to detail is always present at **Sonus faber**.

### Transducers

Since 2018, all loudspeakers and cabinets are entirely manufactured in **Sonus faber's** workshops in Italy. In addition, the *Sonetto III's* midrange and bass speakers have been specifically designed for it. For the first time in this price category, the *DAD tweeter (Damped Apex Dome)* equips the entire *Sonetto* series. It is a flexible dome in treated silk with a diameter of 28 mm. The latter is traversed vertically by a hoop which applies a conical contact tip to the top of the dome. It is known that the upper part of a flexible dome (its apex) has a tendency to deform under air pressure during its front-rear movements. The movements of this part of the dome then become non-linear and out of phase, which rapidly lowers the response curve in the high frequencies. This DAD damping technique corrects this phenomenon. The medium is a 15 cm diameter transducer whose membrane is a mixture of cellulose pulp and natural fibres. The principle of the median frequencies reproduced by a paper cone is highly prized by **Sonus faber** for its properties of speed and respect of the timbre of the instruments. The driver of this loudspeaker is made of injected aluminium with thin branches that prevent wave returns on the cone. The two 15 cm *woofers*, which handle low frequencies, have an aluminium alloy membrane for an increased weight/stiffness ratio. All speakers are of good quality and equipped with powerful magnets. The *Sonetto III's* frequency filter uses the patented *Paracross Technology* principle, which is also borrowed directly from higher-end series such as the *Olympica Nova* or *Homage*. This anti-resonant filter compensates for the impedance in the low frequencies in order to facilitate the operation of the amplifier associated with it. The cut-off frequencies are 220 and 3250 Hz, and the nominal impedance is 4 ohms. However, measurements made by some observers show that the impedance

is relatively stable around 5 ohms. So, in principle, the *Sonetto III* should be quite easy to drive with its 89 dB sensitivity with a frequency response of 42 Hz to 25 kHz. However, the manufacturer recommends an amplification of 50 to 250 watts/channel.

### The installation and its associated equipment

I installed the *Sonetto III* pair about 35 cm from the back wall to get the best tonal balance and more than a metre from the side walls. Between the two speakers, there is a distance of about 230 cm, and I tilted them directly towards my listening position. They are powered by my faithful integrated amplifier with a power of 150 watts per channel in 8 ohms, which is largely enough for the *Sonetto III*. The source is my *CeolBOX* music server connected to my *Emerson Digital streamer* from the manufacturer **Wattson Audio**. Through my wired *Ethernet* network, this *streamer* allows me to use one after the other, three different digital-to-analog converters including that of my **Atoll IN300**, a **Chord Qutest** and that of my **Sugden Masterclass PDT-4F CD** player which is accessible only through a coaxial *S/PDIF* input. The reading platforms used are **Logitech Media Server** and *ROON*. I was therefore able to listen to *PCM* and *DSD* files in high resolution.

### When the song relates to the looks!

I started listening with a novelty for me, despite the fact that this album dates back to 2013. *No Beginning No End* by **José James** made his debut with the jazz label **Blue Note**. It's really a well-strung recording and perfect for testing speakers. The battery snare has an extraordinary impact and dynamics. The bass player's play is well highlighted while the accompaniments of the **Hammond B-3** organ and the **Fender Rhodes** piano are subtly inserted into the musical performance. The brass is well balanced, and all these instruments take us into the sweetest not to say sexy blues-funk atmosphere. Other percussions are added here and

there while the *Sonetto III* does not hide anything from me of this recording. **Josée James'** voice is perfectly reproduced and well projected in my listening room. The timbre of the instruments is scrupulously respected thanks to the transducer of the medium and its membrane in natural fibers. Its association with the *DAD tweeter* is very well done and transparent. This *tweeter* goes up high enough in frequency to illuminate the details, but never goes into hyper definition or hardness. So well, that the reproduction of the high medium has an incredible opening and gives me an almost magical presence of the singer's voice. The reproduction of this album by the *Sonetto III* is really nice and gives me a good three-dimensional feeling of the stereophonic image.

I'm following this with another artist whose second album is with **Blue Note**. This is **Julian Lage's** *View with a Room*. His trio consisted of **Jorge Roeder** on double bass and **David King** on drums. The guest guitarist is **Bill Frisell** and his style fits perfectly with that of **Julian Lage**. Again, the clarity of the message is impressive with a presence of musicians almost palpable. In my large open-air living room, the low frequencies are not abyssal, but I do not lose anything of the play of the double bass and the woody character of its sound box. In order to satisfy my appetite which is a little too voracious for low frequencies, I would have had to test the *Sonetto V* with its two *woofers* a little larger than those of the *Sonetto III*. Nevertheless, the latter did not disappoint me from the point of view of musical pleasure. On the contrary, it was always demonstrative on all my tapes I listened to.

Listening to **Emiliana Torinni's** *CD Tookah*, once again the clarity and speed of the medium gives me a superb voice and very well focused at the center of the stereophonic image. The guitars in the accompaniment have real sound boxes and the pinching of the strings is frank, clear and precise but without becoming too shimmering. Here, the work of the *DAD tweeter* brings a beautiful brightness to the recording without the front position

becoming too insistent. This high-frequency transducer remains soft at all times, and I repeat, its transition with the medium loudspeaker is frankly superb. I finish my listenings with the French-speaking Swiss **Stephan Eicher** and his latest album entitled *Around Your Neck*. His songs are little jewels thanks to his

lyricist **Philippe Djian** and his pianist/composer **Reyn** who whispers superb melodies to him. It is a mini album of only four songs that begins with the first track entitled *Sans Contact, Pt. 1* and ends with *No Contact, Pt. 2*; The first song begins with these words: *Without contacts, enclosed in our bags, half crazy, we lacked everything*.

This two-part room plunges us back into the atmosphere of an alienating period of confinement. These songs give rise to very powerful emotions and the little *Sonetto III* tower transmits them to me unambiguously and in a tangible way. **Stephan Eicher's** voice is picked up very close to the microphone and the charming Italian makes the singer magically appear in my living room.

### Conclusion

Yes, you will have understood, the song relates well to the plumage in the case of the *Sonetto III*. It is pretty to bite into, her finish is impeccable, and it sings like a great Italian singer. At almost \$5,200 a pair, it will certainly meet rivals but let's say that in this price category, there are few speakers that combine performance and aesthetics as well. As I have already mentioned at the manufacturer's **Sonus faber**, one does not go without the other, because it has a real attention to detail in terms of industrial design. For my part, it was a very nice meeting with the *Sonetto III*, and I hardly dare imagine the satisfaction that the models of the *Olympica Nova* series or even the *Homages* series would give me. If you come across a *Sonetto III* on your high-fidelity shopping trips, give it an attentive ear.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Mediagraphy

José James, No Beginning No End, Blue Note, FLAC, 24bit/48kHz

Julian Lage, View with a Room, Blue Note, FLAC, 24bit/96kHz

Emiliana Torrini, Tookah, RTRADCD, 685

Stephan Eicher, Around the Neck, FLAC, 24bit/44.1 kHz

Pat Metheny & Anna Maria Jopek, Upojenie, Nonesuch, 511496-2

#### Acknowledgements

The editorial team thanks the **Audiophile Experts** shop for lending the speakers.



# Buon gusto

By CLAUDE LALONDE

## WEINGUT BURG RAVENSBURG Wines that represent the ultimate of Germany !

Photo: Jochen Steinmetz

I recently met **Claus Burmeister**, *CEO and Winemaker* of **Weingut Burg Ravensburg** (and **Weingut Heitlinger**), Germany's oldest winery and possibly one of the 10 oldest in the world. Just think! It was founded in 1251! We tasted some of the finest wines from this winemaker at the **Auberge du Lac Morency** in St-Hippolyte, Quebec. And what a tasting, in the cellar of the **Auberge** followed by a gourmet dinner! A big thank you to **Benoît Lecavalier** of the agency **Benedictus** who represents **Claus** in Quebec.

### **Weingut Burg Ravensburg**

The vineyards of this historic and iconic winery are located in the Baden region, in Kraichgau more precisely. It should be noted that over the years, the winery has acquired a collection of vineyards that represent 80% of all the plots of Grosses Lages (Grands Crus) in the region.

It is a region composed of idyllic landscapes located between Karlsruhe, Heidelberg and Heilbronn. It houses the two wineries of **Heitlinger** and **Burg Ravensburg**. Located almost

15 kilometers apart, they give very particular wine profiles that represent the Baden wine region. With a total area of over 110 hectares, they are among the largest producers of organic (biodynamic) wine in Germany.

This winery is part of a very select group of about 200 German producers who have established a ranking of superior quality called *VDP Prädikatsweingut*. The classification of a wine is determined by its terroir; that is to say, its geographical origin defined by a series of specific qualitative

criteria. These wines will be recognized with the logo of a black eagle on the label of the bottle.

These wines are classified according to 4 categories: *Gutswein*, *Ortswein*, *Erste Lage* and *Grosse Lage* the best in quality. The wines of the latter classification come from grape varieties typical of the region and corresponding to the needs of each respective vineyard. The vines are precisely delimited by plots as well as so-called *lieux dits* in Burgundy. The dry wines of these vineyards are called **VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS®**.



Photo : Manuel Debus

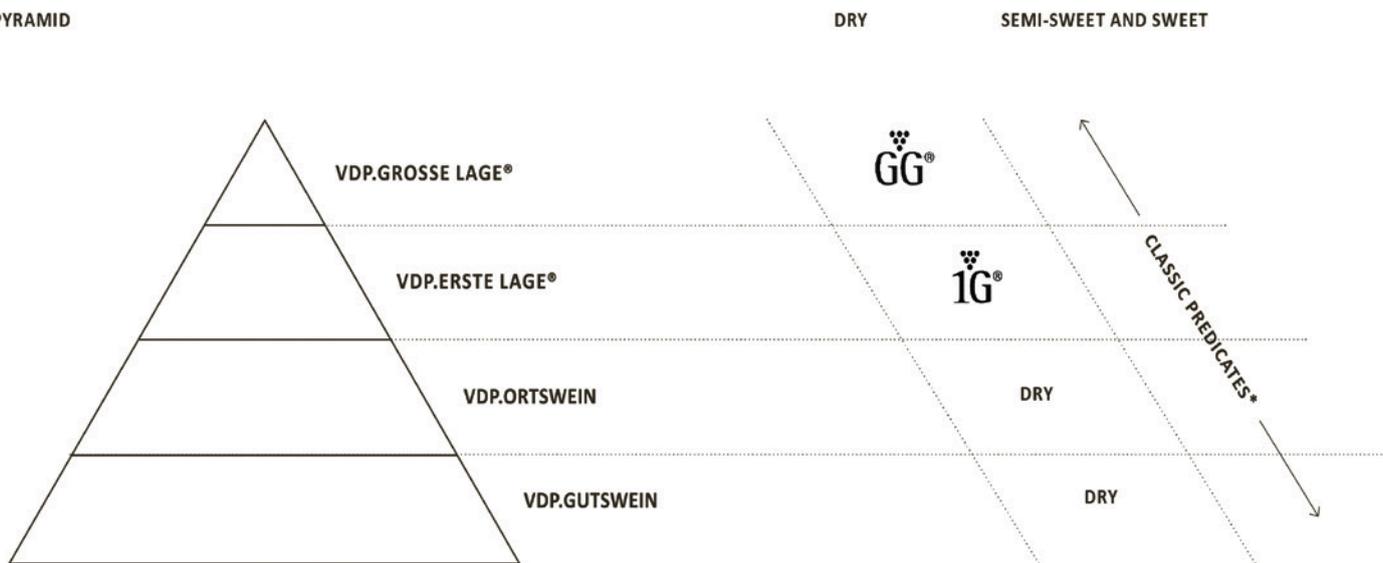


# Buon gusto

By CLAUDE LALONDE



## THE VDP.CLASSIFICATION PYRAMID



\*Wines that are semi-sweet and sweet bear the classic predicates Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese or Eiswein. They are unique specialties in the world of wine. Compared to other countries, Germany's cool climate provides ideal conditions to balance sweetness with pronounced acidity. Off-dry wines are designated as quality wines at all levels.



These Grands Crus come from plots on the south-western and south-eastern slopes, which bear historically significant names: the Riesling-dominated *HUSARENKAPPE* and *KAPELLENBERG*, the *Pinot LÖCHLE* and the *DICKER FRANZ* with its *Blaufränkisch* wines.

**Tasting**

Perhaps you have this image of German wines as sweet white wines and that they make virtually no red wines. Then think again. The white wines from this winery are very dry, meaning they have very low residual sugar levels. Moreover, their red

wines made from *Pinot Noir* do not allow themselves to be imposed by the *Grands Crus* of Burgundy. In fact, their aromatic profile is very close to it to the point of being misunderstood in blind tastings. Moreover, **Claus** regularly uses these comparisons with *Grands Crus* de Bourgogne in order to ensure that the wine sector achieves the quality level of its wines.

In addition, they are all developed according to the principles of organic and biodynamic farming. Finally, to our delight, they are sold at reasonable prices if we consider their respective high levels of quality.



Photo : Jochen Steinmetz

Heather red limestone marl

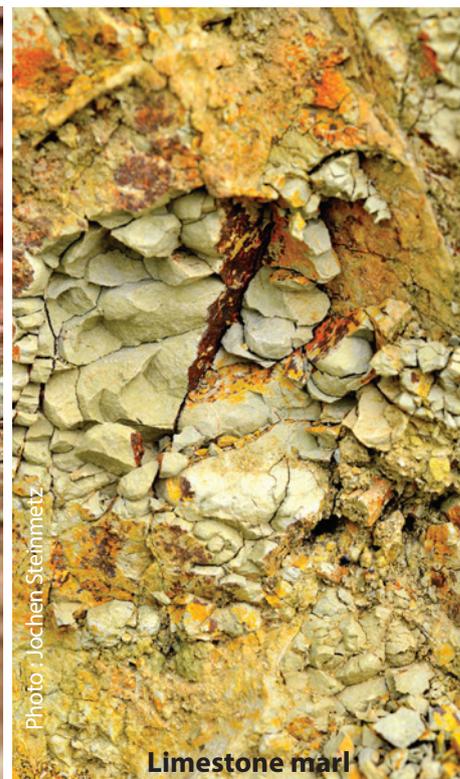


Photo : Jochen Steinmetz

Limestone marl

# Buon gusto

By CLAUDE LALONDE

## Orange Wine / Organik Kontakt 2021 Weingut Heitlinger Organic orange wine

This orange wine is in fact a white wine elaborated like a red wine where the juice comes into contact with the skins for 28 days.

### Tasting notes

Possibly one of the most beautiful orange wines tasted to date! The nose reveals very fragrant aromas of orange, barley sugar, orange zest and a hint of marmalade.

The palate is of a beautiful amplitude, a superb structure as well as a more than appreciable length. It's deliciously tasty!

### Orange Wine/Organik Kontakt 2021

Weingut Heitlinger

Vin orange bio

Grape variety: Pinot Gris

Price: 29,95 \$



# Buon gusto

By CLAUDE LALONDE

## Pinot noir, Weingut Heitlinger Troken, Wormsberg Qualitätswein Qba, Grosses Gewächs Organic red wine, 2016

Possibly one of the best *Pinot Noir* in Germany! Of a rare concentration of aromas and flavors while demonstrating a lot of elegance. It is a worthy heir to the knowledge of the Burgundian traditions combined with the best terroirs of Baden. And **Claus Burmeister** knew how to make it the pinnacle of his wines. It reveals itself on the nose notes of cherries, sour cherries and sweet spices that extend in the mouth in a pleasurable aromatic amplitude. It is rich, complex, bursting with flavors and endowed with a beautiful tension. And what can I say about its endless length?

**Pinot Noir, Trocken, Wormsberg  
Weingut Heitlinger  
Qualitätswein QbA, Grosses Gewächs  
Organic red wine, 2016**

Alcohol: 12.5 %

Price: 175,50\$

SAQ Code: 14212717



# Buon gusto

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## Riesling, Weingut Burg Ravensburg Sulzfeld, VDP Ortswein Organic white wine (biodynamic), 2021 (2020 also available)

Originating from biodynamic agriculture, the grapes are harvested by hand, carefully sorted and slowly pressed after a contact time with the skin of the juice of about 24 hours. Vinification and ageing are carried out in stainless steel tanks in order to preserve the aromas and fruity flavors.

### Tasting notes

This organic *Riesling* is discovered with aromas of lemons, limes, a hint of apples with a nice sensation of stony minerality without being too oily. Light, fresh vegetable mix. The aromas perceived on the nose take off in the mouth and are highlighted by a hint of white peaches and a very present acidity that balances the residual sugar. A lot of tension in harmony with a nice chalky minerality sensation. The amplitude is well maintained with a finish on citrus fruits. You will make beautiful pairings with seafood, shellfish and sushi.

## Riesling, Weingut Burg Ravensburg Sulzfeld, VDP Ortswein Organic white wine (biodynamic), 2021 (2020 available)

Grape Variety: Riesling 100 %  
Sugar: 8.2 g / l  
Alcohol: 11.5 %  
Price: 18,70 \$  
SAQ Code: 13453762

\* \* \*

## Riesling, Weingut Burg Ravensburg VDP Grosse Lage, VDP Grosses Gewächs Organic white wine, 2017

The over 40-year-old vines are rooted in a unique 220-million-year-old gypsum rock. The grapes are harvested by hand, carefully sorted and pressed slowly after a skin contact time of several days. **Husarenkape** is defined by an incredible shelf life!

### Tasting notes

What a beautiful *Riesling* that can be revealed itself on the nose with citrus scents, subtle petrol notes and some floral notes. On the palate, the radiance of the flavors of lemon, lemon zest and a touch of honey blends with a chalky mineral sensation. Beautiful contrast between the slightly oily texture and the well

present acidity. Superb length with a finish on citrus fruits and this superb sensation of minerality.

You will make beautiful pairings with poached and fried fish, white meats, salads and Asian cuisine.

## Riesling, Weingut Burg Ravensburg VDP Grosse Lage, VDP Grosses Gewächs Vin blanc bio, 2017

Sugar: 1.8 g / l  
Alcohol: 12.5 %  
Price: 49,00 \$  
SAQ Code: 14212688

\* \* \*

## Chardonnay, Weingut Heitlinger Grand Cru / VDP. Grosses Gewächs Heinberg Organic white wine, 2018

Cultivated on light chalky marls. Whole grapes crushed, left to rest for 4 hours, pressed using a screw press and fermented in 400 litre barrels (wooden barrels) 1<sup>st</sup> + 2<sup>nd</sup> aging for 8 months. Then 8 months on whole lees in stainless steel tank.

### Tasting notes

This superb *Chardonnay* is revealed on aromas of ripe pears and apricots, dry herbs as well as a sensation of minerality and buttery notes.

On the palate the texture is rich and slightly oily. The whole is complex, quite powerful while maintaining a nice balance and a nice acidity, with a long finish. Beautiful woody flavors as well as a hint of vanilla complete this beautiful aromatic picture. Length appreciable.

## Chardonnay, Weingut Heitlinger Grand Cru / VDP. Grosses Gewächs Heinberg Organic white wine, 2018

Price: 88,00 \$

\* \* \*

## Pinot noir, Weingut Burg Ravensburg Sulzfeld, VDP Ortswein Organic red wine (biodynamic), 2019

This organic wine is made from *Pinot Noir* grown in the vineyards of Baden region considered suitable for this grape variety given its terroir and climate. Soils composed of minerals and clay-limestone are ideal for *Pinot Noir*.

# Buon gusto

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Originating from biodynamic agriculture, the grapes are harvested by hand, carefully sorted and fermented into whole grains in small containers. The objective is to obtain a clear, elegant, persistent, fruity pinot noir with a fine tannic structure. The malolactic conversion takes place in used barrels, in which the wines mature for 8 to 12 months.

## Tasting notes

This *Pinot Noir* reveals itself on aromas dominated by sweet spices that fade a little to give way to notes of cranberries, raspberries and some notes of violets.

On the palate, the flavors of sour cherries, undergrowth, cherry kernels and cranberries combine with a well-present acidity and are supported by well-balanced tannins. The amplitude is medium with a slightly acidic finish on sour cherries and cranberries.

You will make nice pairings with roasted poultry, pork, veal and a duck breast.

## Weingut Burg Ravensburg

### Pinot Noir

#### Sulzfeld, VDP Ortswein

#### Vin rouge bio (biodynamie), 2019

Sugar: 1.4 g / l

Alcohol: 12.5 %

Price: 21,80 \$

SAQ Code: 13859501

\* \* \*

## Pinot noir, Weingut Burg Ravensburg Kraichgau, Lochle VDP Grosse Lage, VDP Grosses Gewächs Organic red wine, 2016

LÖCHLE is located in the southern part of Burgberg. The vines are partly terraced, partly sloping up to 40%. The grapes are harvested by hand, several passes of harvest guarantee that only the ripe and intact berries reach the cellar. In the cellar, they are sorted and fermented in small bunches of whole berries and whole clusters in wooden vats.

The objective is to obtain *black pinot* greedy in fruit, complex, persistent, with a fine tannic structure. The malolactic conversion takes place in barrels, where the wines age for 8 to 12 months.

## Tasting notes

This *Pinot Noir* reveals on the nose notes of cherries, raspberries, blackcurrants with light notes of undergrowth and roasted notes.

On the palate, it is the radiance of the flavors that amazes with a nice concentration of cherries, blackcurrants, sour fruits as well as a hint of blackberries, undergrowth and slightly woody notes. The whole is supported by balanced tannins, well woven tight and a very fresh acidity. A lot of elegance that extends into a joyful length...

You will make nice pairings with a fillet or roast of beef, a beef bourguignon, lamb or a rooster with red wine.

## Pinot Noir, Weingut Burg Ravensburg

### Kraichgau, Lochle

#### VDP Grosse Lage, VDP Grosses Gewächs

#### Organic red wine, 2016

Sugar: 1.8 g / l

Alcohol: 12.5 %

Price: 49,75 \$

SAQ Code: 14212709

\* \* \*

## Pinot noir, Weingut Heitlinger Konigsbecher Qualitätswein QbA, Grosses Gewächs Organic red wine, 2015

*Königsbecher* is a steep and highly protected site whose soil is composed of ferruginous limestone marls that store the sun's heat and return it to the grapes during the day like no other site on the estate.

The grapes are delicately harvested by hand, with several passes of harvest to ensure that only the ripe and intact berries reach the cellar. Picked by hand, 50% whole grapes and 50% whole berries are fermented spontaneously in a 5000-litre wooden tank. The objective is to obtain *Pinot Noir* with a frank fruit, elegant, persistent with a fine tannic structure. The malolactic conversion also occurs spontaneously in the spring undergrowth, here the wines ripen for 8 to 12 months.

## Tasting notes

This *Pinot Noir* Konigsbecher reveals slightly meaty notes, sour cherries, plums and sweet spices.

The palate shows well-balanced and tight tannins that support the flavors of cherries as well as some notes of coffee and chocolate.

## Pinot Noir, Konigsbecher

### Weingut Heitlinger

#### Qualitätswein QbA, Grosses Gewächs

#### Organic red wine, 2015

Price: 75,00 \$

# Buon gusto

By CLAUDE LALONDE

## Dicker Franz, Blaufrankisch Jubiläumswein Weingut Burg Ravensburg Qualitätswein QbA, Grosses Gewächs Organic red wine, 2015

The only *Blaufränkisch* sold in Quebec and not the least!!! I really enjoyed this wine!

The soils of the *DICKER FRANZ* site are a mixture of gypsum-keuper, formed in the Triassic period about 250-210 million years ago. The rock is poor, heat-retentive and very calcareous, making it ideal for the production of full-bodied red wines.

The site is named after Baron **Franz Göler von Ravensburg** (1701-1765). He loved culinary delights and has entered the family annals under the name of *Fat Lord* or *Fat François*. Not only the old building of the dungeon of the castle, but also his favorite vineyard bear his name.

### Tasting notes

This wine is discovered on the nose on complex and deep aromas of blackberries and plums, pepper and earthy notes. On the palate, it is supported by a fairly present acidity and tannins which are balanced and tightly woven. Flavors of red and black fruit as well as notes of clove and anise create a most

appreciable aromatic universe. And what an amplitude that lasts for our greatest pleasure!

### Dicker Franz, Blaufrankisch Jubiläumswein Weingut Burg Ravensburg Qualitätswein QbA, Grosses Gewächs Organic red wine, 2015

Alcohol: 13 %

Price: 49,00 \$

SAQ Code: 14212725

#### Claude Lalonde - bio

Sommelier by training, for me wine is a matter of passion and pleasure. Visit my *Vinformateur* page on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vinformateur/> for some humor and daily wine suggestions. On my blog *Vinformateur* ([www.vinformateur.com](http://www.vinformateur.com)), you will find complete tasting notes including food/wine pairings for more than 1,000 wines as well as several meetings with winemakers from all over the planet.

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# An all digital device offering an accurate

By ROGER MCCUAIG

It seems like everyone is coming up with an *All-in-One* home audio component of some sort. The SA-C600 is **Technics'** entry-level unit into this rapidly growing segment in home audio. They have become very popular over the past few years and rightly so, who can resist the lure of one small box that can *play/stream* anything from anywhere, and in high resolution of course! At first, I looked at such product with the much trepidation as they just didn't fit the traditional mold. The many music streaming alternatives now available make this type of unit a logical evolution. The SA-C600 offers an interesting combination of elements for the *all-in-one* concept along with an intriguing electronics design that treats all the signals in the digital domain from start to finish. Let's discover how the product *sounds* with this *all digital* orientation.

**T**echnics has been around since 1965. Their product line expanded over the years and by the 1980's, they were producing everything from entry-level to high-end, but they are probably most famous for their direct drive turntables, the SL-1200 turntable being highly sought after by both *DJs* and home audio enthusiasts. By 2010, **Technics** had become basically a *turntable* company and there was no demand for turntables, so the company simply shut down. The rebirth of vinyl led to the rebirth of **Technics** in 2016. In their first life, **Technics** had shown a capability of producing very high-end products and not just their turntables. Their return strategy was to start at the top with, of course, their legendary turntables and an entry into the very high-end *Reference Class* electronics components.

Now, six years later, **Technics** offers, in descending order of price, the *Reference Class*, the *Grand Class* and the *Premium Class*. The *Reference Class* is their *best we can do with unlimited budget* products for those who are willing to spend the price of a SUV for their audio system. The *Premium Class* could be described as *audiophile* sound for the budget conscious.

**Technics** characterizes the *Premium Class SA-C600* a *Network/CD Receiver*. Connect to your home network and send music to it over *Wi-Fi*, from a *Bluetooth* device or via *Ethernet* cable. Play digital audio via coax, optical cable or *USB* cable from a *PC* or direct connect through a *USB* memory stick packed with music. It also has an analog line level input and a phono input. To top it all off, pun intended, a *CD* player is mounted in the top of the unit.

By far, the most intriguing attribute of the SA-C600 is *end-to-end* digital design. All the source signals received remain digital all the way through the unit. Yes the *Line IN* and even the *Phono IN* signals are converted to digital format (*PWM*) as they enter the unit. Talk about breaking the mold! Think digital re-mastering in recording studios.

## Technical Description

The overall look of the unit is neat and modern. The combination of colours and textures conveys a slick technology meets modern-art presentation. The information provided on the display is clear and uncluttered and high enough resolution to enhance the overall quality impression of the unit. One can clearly see the *CD* label through the circular black translucent cover and when the cover clicks closed, the player starts turning and the *LED* comes on inside. Cool!

The display window has touch sensitive control points for scrolling through the input choices as well as the usual *Play-Rewind-Fast Forward-Skip* commands. The same commands are available on the Remote along with a few more features, most importantly, the full *Settings* menus can be accessed from the MENU button. To fully exploit the *Settings* options, it is useful to download the long version of the user manual from the **Technics** web site. The Remote was designed for several **Technics** models, so not all the buttons find a use on this unit.

# ate and detailed musical transcription

«The CD player performed perfectly, and I got identical results when I switch to my own CD transport connected via the *Optical Input*. The complex textures and nuances of **Chapman's** voice on this album can be difficult to reproduce, and the **Technics** was up to the task. Everything was there with a stress-free presentation. »



## TECHNICS' PREMIUM CLASS SAC600S NETWORK/CD RECEIVER



The easiest control interface to use is the **Technics Audio Center App**. This app, a free download available for *Android* and *iOS* devices, makes source selection quicker and easier and provides access to some of the more frequently used settings. One of these is *Space Tune*. This changes the output to the loudspeakers to adjust for their position in the room. Switching between the five options does make a noticeable difference. Room acoustic properties and loudspeaker placement can significantly alter the sound of any system, a factor that is too often undervalued when selecting and installing components. Loudspeakers end up in all sorts of places so isn't it logical to provide a quick and easy method of matching the loudspeakers to the room? On a shelf, on the wall, in a corner or even a different placement for the left and right loudspeaker can be set. There is even a *Measured* option for those running the App on *iOS* devices.

The phono input accepts moving magnet cartridges and has the required equalization built in. A constant complaint from audiophiles is the noise levels coming from built-in phono stages found in many components. **Technics** has recognized this and has incorporated a separate, purpose designed, power supply and shielding in the phono equalizer, both with the objective of reducing noise.

The SA-C600 supports all the popular CODECs well into the *Hi-Res* zone, including *DSD* up to 11.2 MHz. It also has a *MQA* decoder as well as *Airplay 2*, *Bluetooth* and *Chromecast* built-in. There is also a seemingly endless supply of Internet radio stations at your command via the **Technics Audio Center App**. *End-to-end* digital processing is the most innovative feature of this unit. Not that it has never been done before but it does set the SA-C600 apart from the crowd. **Technics** explains that this reduces signal degradation caused by noise when compared to an analog amp. This is not digital inputs sent to a Class *D* amplifier, this is **Technics** in-house design digital amplifier and jitter management circuitry. The big question, of course, is *What does this full digital box sound like?*

### Unpacking and Installation

Getting the unit up and running turned out to be quick and easy. Much more so, in fact, that some other units that have given me connectivity headaches in the past. I used an *Android* phone for the initial setup. Just open the **Google Home** app and follow the instructions to connect the **Technics** unit to your home network. If you are familiar with **Google Home**, it should be easy, if not it may take a few more minutes to get up to speed with that app. The first thing that I did after the unit was connected to the network was to install the **Technics Audio Center** app on my phone. Via the app, your phone becomes a remote as well as a tool for accessing your online music sources. Now you have easy access to **Tidal**, **Amazon Music**, Internet Radio, **Spotify** and more.

### Listening Impression

I started my listening time with the SA-C600 connected to a pair of bookshelf loudspeakers, in the \$300 to \$500 range. These loudspeakers tend to play a bit on the dark side and lack some liveliness. I chose **Tracy Chapman's** *Our Bright Future*, one of my favorite test CDs (Dark side – Bright Future! It wasn't intentional). The **Technics** gave the loudspeakers a *push* in the right direction with improved clarity and detail. Overall, they were tighter, faster and more articulate than what I am used to from them. The SA-C600, no doubt, had more to give and was being held back by the speakers.

I then switched to my reference loudspeakers. Connected to a pair of high-end loudspeakers should reveal what the SA-C600 is capable of. The CD player performed perfectly, and I got identical results when I switch to my own CD transport connected via the *Optical Input*. The complex textures and nuances of **Chapman's** voice on this album can be difficult to reproduce, and the **Technics** was up to the task. Everything was there with a stress-free presentation. I also tried streaming from my PC-based music server as well as various sources such





**The following are emails between RSX's designer and the editor of Positive Feedback Online. They are unedited and unchanged except for format.**

Hello David,

Have you had a chance yet to listen to the new RSX Benchmark AC Power Cords I sent you? At just US\$200, they're the first RSX cables where the actual cable part can be machine-made instead of assembled from multiple component materials by hand. That saves us a lot of money in labor, and I've put all of it into better materials and higher performance. The terminations, of course, are still all done by hand, using our own special connectors. What do you think?



Roger

Hi Roger... Yes, I've had a chance to listen at some length to your new RSX Technologies Benchmark AC Power Cords. Since you sent two samples to me, I used them to supply our PS Audio PerfectWave SACD/CD Transport and our PS Audio DirectStream DAC stack. I run a lot of SACDs through there on a regular basis. The AC end was plugged into the very fine RSX Technologies Power8 Power Distributor, which in turn was fed with your Beyond AC Power Cable. Given that the prior power cables were very expensive reference-level products, and considering the very low price (for audiophileland!) of \$200.00 per cord, I was quite surprised that your Benchmark Power Cords did so well by comparison. They punched well above their price class, sounding more like AC power cables in the \$1,000.00 - \$2000.00 range than their actual (surprising) MSRP.

Right out of the box, it was clear that the Benchmarks were going to need some break-in. They sounded congested, bass-shy, and rolled off initially. 25-50 hours of break-in cured that first impression, however. They started to bloom about 10 hours in, and then really opened up by 50 hours...not bad at all for break-in.

Once shaken down, I got a clear picture of the Benchmark Power Cords. Dynamics were excellent. Transparency was good, which in turn led to solid performance in the areas of detail, imaging, and soundstaging. They also did a creditable job with harmonic structure...much better than I would have thought, frankly. I'd say that audiophiles on a limited budget for AC power cables should be digging in on the RSX Technologies Benchmark. At \$200.00 per, this is one of those rare no-brainers in high-end audio. Benchmark is a price-performance killer!

All the best,

Dr. David W. Robinson  
Editor-in-Chief  
Positive Feedback



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1-909-870-9292 | See [rsxtech.com](http://rsxtech.com). For info, [info@rsxtech.com](mailto:info@rsxtech.com)

**TECHNICS' PREMIUM CLASS  
SAC600S NETWORK/CD RECEIVER**

as Tidal and my Amazon HD Music account which promises CD quality streaming bandwidth. There followed some listening time with the Internet Radio feed as well as some local FM stations enabled by the installation of a dipole FM antenna. The bandwidth provided from these last two sources is usually much less than CD quality so my comments regarding the sound of the SA-C600 will exclude them. For the record, the latter two online sources sounded fine.

The SA-C600 has a Setting called RE-MASTER. The manual says that this will increase the bandwidth of the signal being played. It does not, however, state what inputs this applies to and what the bit depth and sample rate are for the re-mastered signal! I did briefly try switching this On and Off during CD playback without detecting a noticeable difference. So, to be consistent, it remained in the Off position during the testing.

The SA-C600 has the speed, detail and dynamics and the very low noise characteristics of a good digital component. It doesn't have any hint of the dreaded digital music edginess or digital fatigue. Many of the latest generation of digital-based audio components have conquered the demon *digital sound problem*. Gone are the days when the remedy to this problem required a 40-thousand-dollar DAC! Maybe it's time permanently put it to rest? The only clue that one gets that this is a digital box comes from the level of detail and the lack of coloration. This is about as neutral as neutral gets! The sound is smooth and silky, but just enough to remove the edge.

For those who enjoy the warmth and slightly over-emphasized mid-range character offered by tube amps, it would be interesting to explore mating the SA-C600 with loudspeakers that tend in that direction. There certainly are some options for that available. You would then be in the envious position of having the warmth



you crave and the speed, detail and very low noise floor that is pretty much impossible to attain from a tube amp in this price range. There are some very intriguing combinations hatching in my head as I write these lines!

What about the two analog inputs; *Line* and *Phono*? I was very curious as to the impact of the *end-to-end* digital signal path on analog inputs so by the second day of testing, I plugged in a turntable and gave it a try. The turntable that I chose for this test had a 25-year-old **Shure M95** cart in it. The *M95* can sound smooth and refined or quite brutal depending on the quality of the phono stage it is connected to. I put on **Oliver Nelson, The Blues and Abstract Truth** and the **Beach Boys, Pet Sounds**. The three characteristics that were immediately evident were big dynamic range, low noise and lots of speed and detail. The *M95* sounded smooth and full bodied. **Technics** clearly wanted to make a design statement; this phono stage is significantly better than what one would expect to find in this category of product. The same characteristics are found in the *Line In* however, that became a bit anti-climactic after listening to the phono stage!

### Conclusion

The *SA-C600* covers all the bases, from *CD* player to subwoofer output and even two analog inputs, including a very impressive phono stage. You could even connect your cassette tape deck! My first thought was, *who wants a CD player?* Now I think it's a great idea and I have enjoyed spinning my large collection of *CDs*. The *all-digital* processing clearly has a significant impact on the overall sound of this unit. The *SA-C600* offers the low noise, speed, accuracy and detail of the digital domain while still maintaining a smooth and relaxing presentation. The neutrality and lack of coloration is remarkable and may even be a bit disorienting for a while. After a few days, it may be hard to go back! Put it all together and the **Technics Premium Class SA-C600** scores very high on value for your money.

### General Information

Price: 1 499,99 \$

Warranty: 3 years, parts & labour

Manufacturer/Distributor: Technics Canada, T.: 514.245.0383, <https://www.technics.com/ca/>



# *Towards New Horizons*

By ADRIEN ROUAH

I appreciate from the outset the name of this Italian company which, not without a certain humor, sends us a kind nod by calling itself **New Horizon**. Admit that with the surge of turntables, new creations or old updates, it is rather fun to choose a name that would make listening to what has been the main source of music for many of us, as a *new sound avenue*. **New Horizon** works and seems entirely dedicated to vinyl reading with turntables, dedicated stabilized power supplies and all kinds of additions related to them: pressure pads, cushioned adjustable feet, felt tray cover, etc. For the time

being, I will tell you about the entrusted model that is the **301** vinyl turntable equipped with a **Pro-Ject** tonearm and an **Ortofon MC3 Turbo** cartridge.

**S**ome Italian manufacturers and designers always aim to present us with a perfect association between the solidity and fluidity of the lines. It is not easy to make an object elegant when you want strength. And here, it's a great success! Because the return of the vinyl, more than the loudspeakers, is enhanced by a better aesthetic research, it is absolutely necessary to introduce into the minds a more original, more modern apparatus.



# s in Analogue Reading

## Presentation and technique

You have to look the lower part of the main frame to see if it is solid wood or compressed wood, as at first glance, the main part of the base reminds me of a solid wood board,. I must also say that I have been rewarded with the most sophisticated of the vinyl turntables, the 301 from **New Horizon**, with its wood essence called *Redditch*. It is simply beautiful and ultra-lacquered, to accentuate all the grain of the piece of wood.

The top plate is made of sand-blasted acrylic – so not transparent, with a thin external toric belt that assumes rotation thanks to an alternating current synchronous motor. This motor is cleverly suspended by 4 springs that keep it in suspension by stretching. Thus, there is an effective isolation of the motor vibrations from the main base and, a total annihilation of the slightest vibration, if any, by the belt.

It is also for this reason – the vibration control provided by the belt - that we mainly find this drive on most of the turntables. But direct drive also has its advantages... The axis of rotation of the plate is not conventional either. It is a solid tube – the male part, integral with the main base, on which a ball rests and which serves as a point of support for the plate – which contains the female part of this axis of rotation. In general, the conventional being the female part located in the base, receiving the axis integral with the plate. We are not called **New Horizon** for nothing! The tonearm, referenced *NH95* by **New Horizon**, is in fact a **Pro-Ject** right



tonearm with cartridge holder in the profile. This tonearm is made of aluminum and is 9" long. Its balance settings are of the conventional type with dynamic sway and addition of weight corresponding to the chosen cartridge. The anti-skid compensation is done by means of a nylon wire on a stem.

The cartridge proposed by the distributor for this test is an *MC3 Turbo* by **Ortofon**. It is a moving coil (*MC*) cartridge but with a high output level. It is therefore possible not to have a preamplifier dedicated to moving coil cartridges and to use this **Ortofon MC3 Turbo** instead of a mobile magnet (*MM*).

The RCA connections are of very good quality, installed in a compartment hollowed out of the main chassis. Note that the cavity that receives these connections is entirely lined with copper foil, to complete the shielding of the receptacle. The power supply comes from a wall-mounted

transformer which is connected to the rear of the vinyl turntable 301.

The speeds – 33 and 45 turns, will be changed manually by adjusting the diameter of the main pulley. **New Horizon** doesn't deliver any mat with its turntable, but you can choose one from its catalogue or opt out. For my part, true to what manufacturers offer in general during product reviews, I have not put any. A transparent methacrylate protection is provided with the 301 turntable, protection which is placed on the axis of the plate and comes to protect the tonearm and its cartridge. It's not a dust cover, but it protects against unfortunate gestures!

## Installation and settings

Since the **New Horizon 301** turntable was delivered with a cartridge already installed, I only had to replace the main counterweight, adjust the balance, then adjust the weight and mount the required anti-skid. Everything is simple and easy. But I was careful to perfectly align the horizontality of the 301 turntable with the 3 adjustable legs, before the tonearm adjustments! I could not stress enough the importance of the support of our turntables, which must be stable and solid, as well as the perfect horizontality to be obtained before the adjustments! The connections to my phono preamp are made using the same cables that are used with my integrated amp, for reasons of wired homogeneity... And also, out of habit for my written accounts.

**NEW HORIZON 301** TURNTABLE AND **ORTOFON TURBO MC3** CARTRIDGE



« I then move on to my second favorite record, **Sweet Smoke** for its recording performance, simple and effective. The reading is precise and majestic, without any part seeming to either be featured too forwards or backwards... as some might say, some of whom see in this materialized medium – the vinyl record, a rather ancient definition! »

**Listening**

The biggest advantage of having had the privilege of describing new vinyl turntables to you, since a few issues of your favorite magazine, is that I rediscovered my vinyl disk library! However, I would say that for many years my listening was from vinyl and radio, at a time when the radio was broadcasting music! Of course, even if I have to replay 2 or 3 songs systematically, to really put me in the mood and at ease during my tests, I must say that my choices are always varied. And that's normal because who are you actually, fellow readers? Lovers of classical music, jazz or world music fans? It is imperative that my

listening – and your reading – reaches you, musically.

Here is my first approach with this beautiful Italian 301 vinyl turntable by **New Horizon** and my 2 reference discs. It is **Jacques Bertin** who starts my listening sessions, with *Menace*, a long premonitory text, half-sung, half-spoken, with an accompaniment that seems almost improvised. I have already tested an **Ortofon** cartridge – the *MC1 Turbo*, with great pleasure. I find here with the *MC3 Turbo*, the pleasure of a warm voice well transcribed and perfectly analyzed, indisputable superiority of the moving coil cartridges.

I then move on to my second favorite record, **Sweet Smoke** for its recording performance, simple and effective. The reading is precise and majestic, without any part seeming to either be featured too forwards or backwards... as some might say, some of whom see in this materialized medium – the vinyl record, a rather ancient definition! Warm transcription of the **New Horizon 301**, the **Project** tonearm and the **Ortofon** cartridge set working in total cohesion.

And if we move on to classical music, what happens? Instantly, the music fills my room, the in the same way, warm and lively. *The Four Seasons* by **Vivaldi**, an older



and lesser known interpretation of **I Musici**, easily transport us and invite us to a very attentive listening session. With vinyl disks, I find that my attention is often more sustained, more captivated! Is it normal? Of course, yes, and just like tube electronics, there is this particular warmth that sometimes makes listening almost magical. The sound stage layout is good, but it is the definition that surprises the listener, by its precision and its lively temperament, the dynamic is quite normal, understand very good in our case the of **New Horizon 301**, without exaggeration, which could reveal an unbalanced part of the spectrum.

And I finish this account with **Berlioz** and his *Fantastic Symphony* for the grandiose aspect of the work, but also for this fabulous recording that propelled me into the high spheres of vinyl records transcription: what memories! I have often regretted the high speed of execution of this work – but this is my personal impression, the brass is present in a masterful way, the air that comes out of it is a breathtaking reality. Perfect for our set, it is an obvious no-fault, despite the *rather naughty challenge* side of me. Note that one easily defeats a turntable with classical music and a violent orchestral mass as I did!

### Conclusion

Bad tongues just have to behave themselves. I tell you again, apart from lower performances for vinyl reading – understand:

on paper, in absolute figures of distortion, bandwidth, etc., vinyl is not dead, and I understand why. When a turntable like the **New Horizon 301** – very well balanced by its **Pro-Ject** tonearm and its **Ortofon MC3 Turbo** cartridge, all this well-tuned, arrives at my home and I describe what I hear, I think to myself that when you meet some characters who will tell you that vinyl is dead, you can laugh, you who will have followed my product reviews. Check what I have told you, and buy this beautiful and well-made turntable, absolutely well arranged to guide you towards *new horizons* and capable to make you live great musical emotions, believe me!

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Distributor:** Asona Ltd., T.: 905.947.9229

#### Discography

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

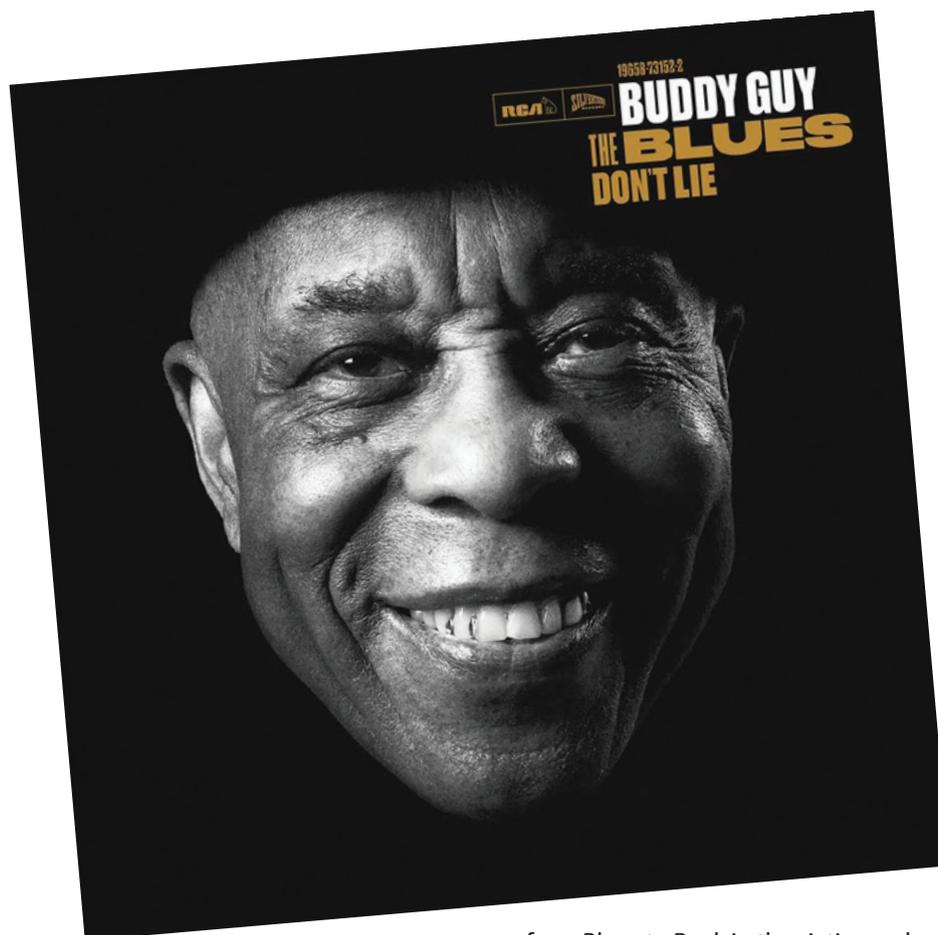
Sweet Smoke, *Just A Poke*, EMI Columbia, 2C, 062 28 886

Vivaldi, *The Four Seasons*, I Musici, Philips, 6514 275

Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie Fantastique*, Dir. Carlos Païta, Decca, 7659

# Blues

By PIERRE JOBIN



## BUDDY GUY

### The Blues Don't Lie

RCA Records, 19658-73152-2

**Buddy Guy** needs no introduction. He is a living, original, dynamic link between the electrified Southern Blues of **Muddy Waters**, **Willie Dixon** and **Howlin' Wolf** of post-war Chicago Blues and the Blues rock and psychedelic Blues of **Hendrix**, **Clapton** and others. *The Blues Don't Lie* by **Buddy Guy** is the kind of album of a lifetime, an unveiling of vivid and powerful memories, that go a long way back and up to the present day! It is, also, reflection in song on the world today which has never needed so much love, as expressed in *The World Needs Love*, the only composition entirely by Mr. **Guy** of this opus. This new release is a dense and successful assemblage of old and new, of original titles and covers and of favorite musical styles which depict the life of an artist of the *facts of life* who has remained anchored in the blues tradition. Because of his intense and unique playing, the Louisiana born six-string ace is also an avant-garde guitarist, an inspiration for the transformation

from Blues to Rock in the sixties and seventies. In 1967, he was invited to the *Mariposa Folk Blues Festival* in Toronto where he received such a warm welcome from young Canadians because he was the one who had played with **Muddy Waters**, he told me in an interview for *Les Amis of the Blues* in 1997. He said that he had been so deeply touched and moved by the enthusiastic attentions of this audience which chanted his name, that when he returned to Chicago, he gave up his day job in a service station to devote himself to being a full-time bluesman. *Stone Crazy* on **Alligator Records** (1979), was a milestone for him; *Damn Right I've Got the Blues* in 1991, was too. Since then, his discographic regularity and his professional successes have been there! In 2008, beginning with the album *Skin Deep*, he teamed up with producer **Tom Hambridge**, drummer, songwriter, solo artist and his formidable crew. These people supported and inspired him so well that he leaped to the summit of the blues scene with renewed energy. *The Blues Don't Lie*, his sixth studio album since **Hambridge** as producer is a new peak of creativity, relevance and *savoir-faire*! It is a generous

# Buon Gusto - Recipe

**By** Léa Gariépy

## Classic Oatmeal Cookies

These oatmeal cookies do look yummy!  
You wish you had an easy recipe to whip these up.

Dont waste a minute and go to page 24, where you will find how easy it is  
to prepare these scrumptious cookies. Just follow the recipe and Bon Appétit!



# Blues

offering of sixteen titles which summarize of his entire career. It ranges from **Slim Harpo's** Louisiana Swamp Blues *I'm A King Bee*, played on his **Martin** acoustic guitar, to his current more contemporary Blues. The texts are rather rarely from the guitarist's pen alone, but they are excellent, connected to his life experiences, as well as to his vision of the world, of the society and human relations. In the opening tune, *I Let My Guitar Do the Talking*, he expresses himself through his impassioned singing and his fiery guitar playing. *The Blues Don't Lie*, the title track that follows is full of interesting anecdotes and is signed by **Tom Hambridge**. This author often writes in collaboration, notably, with **Richard Fleming** and **Gary Nicholson** who co-sign several titles on this new release. The results, as always,

are very convincing. This album is so rich in content and styles, in contributions from writers and musical contributors. Guest artists include the legendary **Mavis Staples** and **Bobby Rush**, as well as the acclaimed James Taylor, Elvis Costello, Jason Isbell and Wendy Moten, on vocals. *The Blues Don't Lie* could be considered as a substantial and updated artistic legacy from bluesman **George Buddy Guy** from Lettsworth, Louisiana. Due to his great respect for tradition, to his proximity to people and to his openness fueled by his dynamic sense of play and innovation, **Buddy Guy**, is among other things, a deep rooted and from heart bluesman. As far as I'm concerned, he is an *Ambassador of the Blues* with a capital A!



## PAUL DESLAURIERS & ANNIKA CHAMBERS

### Good Trouble

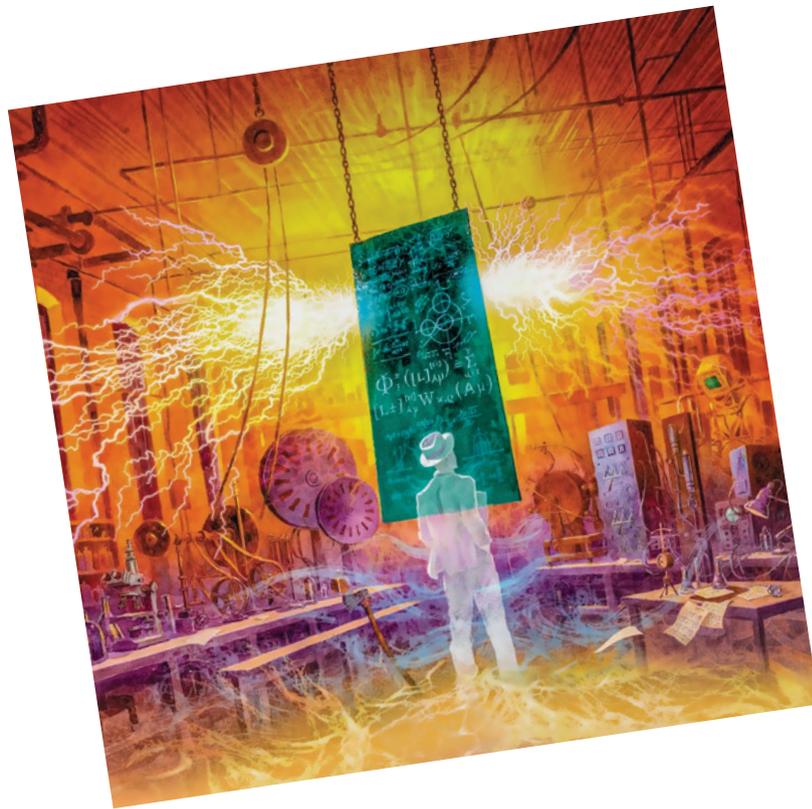
Bros discs, BROS22201

**Annika Chambers** and **Paul Deslauriers** met for the first time in 2018 at the Memphis *International Blues Challenge*. They united their destinies in 2019 and offer us in 2022 their first album, *Good Trouble!* This opus presents itself as a dynamic and warm fusion of the blues rock of **Deslauriers** and the *soul blues* of **Chambers**. It enhances in synergy the soul and know-how of this Quebec guitarist and this Texas singer. Excellent guitarist **JP Soars** and **Chris Peet**, the drummer of his *band*

**The Red Hot**, friends of the couple, have made a significant contribution to this record on their respective instruments, on almost all tracks as well as on bass on some selections. During COVID, they all worked together *live* in the studio, adding to the complicity and connivance in the energy of the recording. In 2022, **Chambers** won the *Blues Music Award* in the *Soul Blues Female Artist of the Year* category, which she also received in 2019. **Deslauriers** also won several *Maple Blues Awards* as *Acoustic Act of the Year* (2013), *Electric Act of the Year* (2016) and *Entertainer of the Year* (2016 and 2017), as well as a 2<sup>nd</sup> place with his group at the 32<sup>nd</sup> *IBC* in Memphis (2016). As you might expect, *Good Trouble* covers vast territories from blues to rock, from *R&B* to *soul*, not to mention a cover of **George Harrison's** groovy, dancing *Isn't It A Pity*, full of the *soul* of **Chambers's** energetic and powerful voice! Four of the eleven titles are original pieces. Southern music and a dense and warm atmosphere infuse this offering. The *R&B* also left its mark with **Joe South's** 1970 cover *Walk A Mile in My Shoes*. Further on, **Deslauriers's** bluesy electric guitar introduces us to the slow blues *I Need Your Love So Bad* where **Chambers** excels in vocal nuances and expressiveness! High-temperature fusion! The album is a rolling fire of well rendered rhythms and styles! If you like blues, *R&B* and their offspring played and sung intensely, seasoned and without compromise, this album is for you!

# Progressive Rock

By RICHARD GUAY



## ARENA

### The Theory of Molecular Inheritance

<https://www.arenaband.co.uk/>

**Arena** finally offers us its tenth album. The British neo-prog band, which needs no introduction, has been offering us superbly well-crafted and valuable opuses for over 25 years already. Thus, it is with happiness that we find, once again, our three founding partners, **Clive Nolan** (keyboards), **John Mitchell** (guitars) and **Mick Pointer** (drums) who have not aged one *iota*! We also get back the excellent bass player **Kylan Amos** the fourth of the course, who replaced **Ian Salmon** for more than 10 years, as well as a brand new singer, **Damian Wilson**, a well-known figure in the world of progressive rock for some thirty years and only the fifth to hold this prestigious position. His high voice and his ability to modulate it and take on difficult harmonies, even those with a strong emotional content, will make a big difference and add a lot to the sound and quality of the ensemble. With an obscure and impenetrable concept, this album is highly seductive on

a musical level. The full collaboration of the members of the group is undoubtedly a major factor in this. The ensemble thus shows a real musical coherence where each one, easy to identify, finds exactly its place. The neo-prog music-making approach, which is rather *hard*, is well known and causes few surprises. The guitar solos of **John Mitchell** are always catchy, as are the enveloping keyboards of **Nolan**, which makes extensive use of the *church organ* of his synthesiser, which is particularly transcendent. The thundering drums of **Mick Pointer** rumbles, as always, in a metronomic way. The work is relatively long, at over one hour and 11 minutes. The album has a certain homogeneity, although there are several rather quiet and strolling passages. Musically much more successful than the previous two, *The Theory of Molecular Inheritance* is an album of pure neo-prog British music that is as good as it gets, masterfully produced by top stars who really have nothing left to prove.

# Progressive Rock

## GALAHAD

### The Last Great Adventurer

<https://galahad1.bandcamp.com/album/the-last-great-adventurer>

**Galahad** returns with its thirteenth album, if we exclude the *Galahad Electric Company* by **Stuart Nicholson** (voice) and **Dean Baker** (keyboards). For this new version, the duo is joined by **Spencer Luckman** (drums), the drummer and founder, by **Lee Abraham** (guitars) as well as a brand-new bass player, **Mark Spencer**, who is doing very well in this position. Much less heavy than many of its compatriots also working in the neo-prog genre, **Galahad** is more refined and does not hesitate to flirt often with a more classical progressive rock or even *cross-over*. It was this delicate balance that led to records like *Year Zero* (2000) or *Empires Never Last* (2007) to name but a few. And what about this *Last Great Adventurer*? We won't be disappointed, oh no! This pandemic break has probably done our artists a great deal of good, and they offer us a work of rare creativity. Seven medium-sized pieces, lasting almost an hour, follow one another at a furious pace while transporting us into different dimensions. The voice of **Nicholson** has lost none of



its verve and multi-harmonic power, despite its lyrics being much less politically committed than usual. The swirling keyboards of **Dean Baker** and the incisive guitars of **Lee Abraham** are in constant negotiation and in great demand. Extracts such as *Alive*, *Blood, Skin and Bones* and *Omega Lights* are a reminder of why this band sits at the highest altitudes of British neo-prog. *The Last Great Adventurer* is therefore a logical continuation of this brilliant career. Balanced, a bit racy, complex, thorough and very playful, this opus has all the necessary ingredients to have a memorable time.



## COLLAGE

### Over and Out

<https://collageband.pl/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CollageProg?ref=profile>

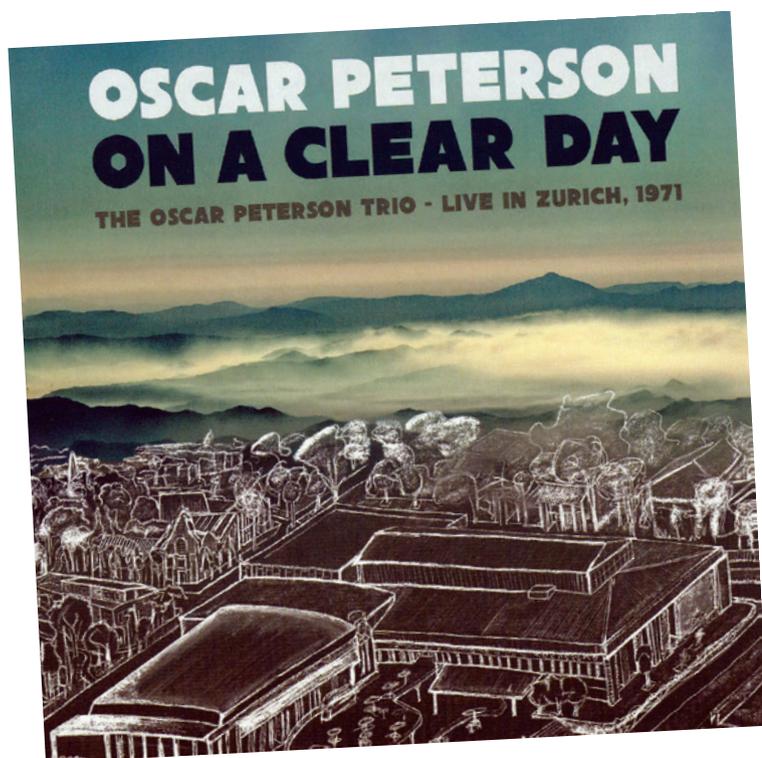
**Collage** is inevitably part of Poland's progressive heritage. Founded in 1985 and dissolved in 2003, it united again over the last few years to offer us an improbable fifth album. Note that the fourth album, *Safe*, came out in 1995, making it 27 years old! The latter was a follow-up to *Moonshine* (1994), considered by purists to be one of the defining works of *neo-prog*. The

**64** [tedpublications.com/en](http://tedpublications.com/en) January - February 2023

story of **Collage** is also that of **Satellite**, a band made up of musicians from the cult band that released four superb albums between 2003 and 2009. These two ensembles, which are in fact one and the same, have as their common basis the duo **Krzysiek Palczewski** (keyboards) and **Wojtek Szadkowski** (drums, guitars, keyboards), who are responsible for the compositions. The return of the bass player **Piotr Mintay Witkowski** and the singer's **Bartosz Kossowicz** were therefore an excellent pretext for reusing a mythical name. The music produced by **Collage** takes us back to the middle of the 1980s, at the time of the first **Pendragon**, **IQ** and **Marillion**. Moreover, the participation of **Steve Rothery** in this opus says a lot about the links with this period. *Over and Out*, which no one expected, is living proof of this. The structure of the songs, the tempo, the lyricism, the well detached vocals, the guitar scores, in short, everything which brings us back to the very exciting **Marillion** of the beginning, the one where **Fish** ruled! The first extract, *Over and Out*, lasts 21 minutes and includes everything that can be found in a full, authentic and masterfully crafted piece of progressive rock. The powerful and theatrical voice of **Kossowicz** dominates the musical ensemble and sets the course throughout this epic saga, which obviously contains an introduction, a development and a conclusion. *A Moment of Feeling* with its frenzied rhythm, it should also give us guilty feelings. Many will even recognize the guitar of **Steve Rothery** in *Man in the Middle*, a more tranquil suite that brings a grandiose conclusion to this *extreme party*. Is it necessary to add that *Over and Out* is an absolute must-have opus?

# Jazz

By CHRISTOPHE RODRIGUEZ



## OSCAR PETERSON

### The Oscar Peterson Trio

#### On a Clear Day - Live in Zurich 1971

Unpublished

Mack Avenue / SRF

First of all, a very nice year 2023 to you, faithful readers. We open this column with an unpublished piece by the phenomenal Canadian pianist **Oscar Peterson** recorded in 1971 in Zurich. During his European tours, our friend **Oscar** made an alliance with the **MPS Record** company, which offered him a royal jewel. In addition to a box set of six vinyls released in 2021, some recordings had remained hidden like the one you will hold in your hands, which come from Zurich radio. This little miracle recovered by the American record company **Mack Avenue**, which also pleased us with a series on the pianist **Erroll Garner**, is a real delight. To use a familiar expression, we can say that it is pure **Oscar Peterson pure juice**. Accompanied by his accomplice, the double bassist **Niels-Henning Osted Pedersen (NHOP)** as well as the solid drummer **Louis Hayes**, the pianist revisits, in his own way, a succession of standards. In this luxurious jewelry box, the whole history of jazz as well as the piano can be heard with infinite happiness. Some *Swing* obviously, without frills and imperturbable, mixed in with some *bop* accents, this was the recipe of the great **Oscar**. The track *The Lamp Is Low* in itself is a silversmith's craft, as is the indomitable *Mack The Knife*. It is also good to hear how he works: *Soft Winds* as well as the formidable: *On The Trail*. A delight for all jazz enthusiasts and collectors as it should be!

## ENRICO PIERANUNZI

### JASPER SOMSEN

#### Journey in Time

Challenge Records/Naxos

Here is a pianist who is very discreet, and yet! In the romantic line of the late **Bill Evans**, this 88-key architect has developed a very personal language with sometimes classic accents as you will quickly realize. *Voyage in Time*, without being the testament of his career, is a *suite* in 9 movements. An atmospheric disc, very internalized, we find the soul of **Erik Satie** with *Pavane*, if not *Sarabande* as well as the very pretty *Valse*. With his colleague, double bassist **Jasper Somsen**, the pianist weaves a bewitching canvas that will keep you warm during the long winter evenings. Never neglecting its country, Italy, you will almost smell the olive trees as well as thyme in the very charming *Sicilian* composition. A hybrid novelty with a lot of charm supported by an undeniable talent of the double bassist as well as the pianist



# Jazz

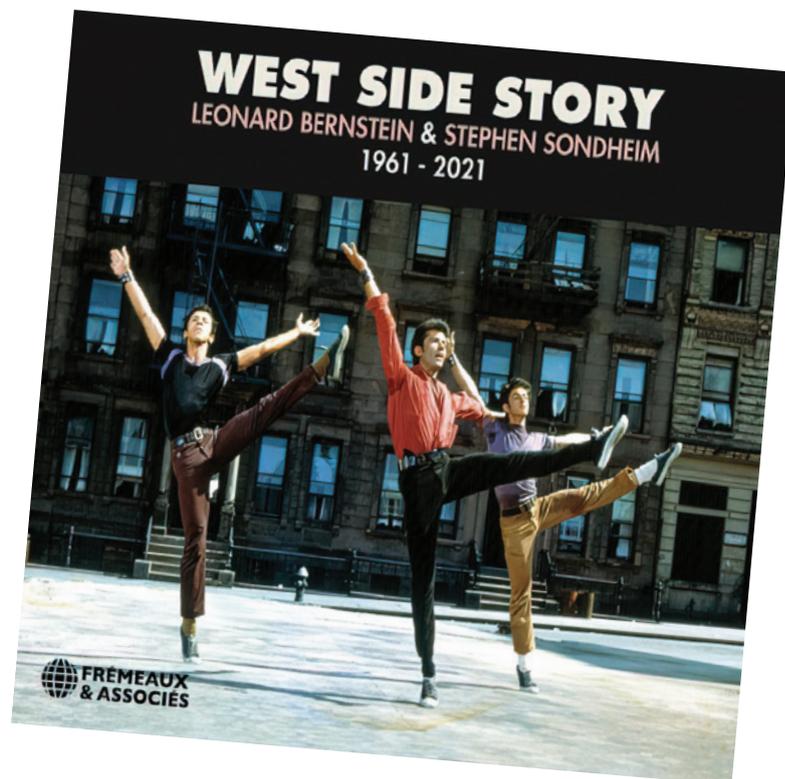
## LEONARD BERNSTEIN & STEPHEN SONDHEIM

### West Side Story

1961-2021

Frémeaux & Associés, 2 Dc

And it's not just a compilation for sale. Knowing very well the talent of archivist as well as memorialist of the record label **Frémeaux & Associés**, this *Complete West Side Story* will save you many unnecessary purchases. Coopting the jazz *Broadway* version, the musical comedy and the classical universe, the tandem **Leonard Bernstein** (music) and **Stephen Sondheim** (lyricist) made a miracle that still lasts. It should be noted in passing that the **Steven Spielberg's** new version is very much inspired by the original, especially for the euphonic content. The first disc includes the original matrix of the film with its share of *immortals* such as *Maria*, *Jet Song*, *I Feel Pretty* or *Somewhere*. Always as lively and sensual, the effect is immediate. In our minds, we revisit the film while making the synthesis with the choreography as well as the dramatic aspect. In the second part, it is takes taken by those who marked jazz, such as the pianist **Oscar Peterson** with his quartet (*Something's Coming*), **Dave Brubeck** (*Maria*), **André Prévin** (*Gee*, *Officer Krupke*), without forgetting the pianist **Ludovic De Pressac** who dedicated a complete record to *West Side Story* with the fine flower of French jazz musicians, as well as several vocal surprises. More than good, a real gift that is aimed as much at film lovers as at those who love jazz and musical comedy.



## DAVE BRUBECK

### Live at the Kurkhaus 1967

Fondamenta / Devialet / Naxos

Having long since disappeared from record stores, it was necessary to pay a high price to obtain this 1967 **Brubeck**. As with the great Bordeaux wines, this cuvée was exceptional because it symbolized aerial jazz, finely worked with a dream quartet. If only for: *Take Five*, composition by alto saxophonist **Paul Desmond**, *Three To Get Ready* on strange rhythms or the Spanish ritual, *Cielito Lindo*. For **Dave Brubeck** and more, Mr. **Paul Desmond**, the one who was never replaced in the jazz galaxy.

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