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Subject: Re: An observation from GPAF

Posted by [Barry Solof](#) on Sun, 08 May 2005 22:18:05 GMT

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Wow. Let me try to take a bite out of all you have said.>The folks you hang with agree and validate your position. You are rewarded emotionally by participation and the positive feedback from the members of your group. This is true of audio (as well as many other beliefs in life) and it has a couple of sides to it. You may become a believer of the cause (triodes, transistors, vinyl, mp3's) because you meet a group of folks that believe that cause. You talk with them and like them and eventually absorb their philosophy as your own. Alternatively, you may hang with that group because you already believe and are looking for people to help justify your beliefs. This isn't just an "audio" thing since it happens in politics, too.>Over time your hearing adjusts to satisfy the need to fulfill this philosophy and reap the emotional windfall of approval from those of the group. Perhaps. I've met audio zealots that could only listen to a certain type of equipment. But most folks at the show didn't seem to be that way. For example, there were a lot of positive reactions to Dr. Geddes speaker even though it was being demo'd with a solid state amp. It sure wasn't what a SET crowd would expect.If everything was tied to a belief system as strongly as you have implied the set/high efficiency crowd would have snubbed the speaker. This clearly did not happen. It wasn't always each listeners favorite speaker but everyone seemed rather pleased with it overall and always ranked it highly.There were horn guys heaping a lot of praise on the FredArrays, too. If there were really an "agenda" then Fred's babies would have been snubbed by the horn guys. It just didn't happen that way.Fred's post on the differences in his audio clubs sort of hit close to home. One group spending freely on one type of technology and another group taking a completely different road. Neither of them right and neither wrong (and Fred seems to like them both).>Science guys listen first only to confirm the measurements.>Listeners without science backgrounds will deny the ability of measured results to adjust for independant organic analysis.>Mediators will provide for quasi-technical explanations that seek to create false congruencies between the two camps. This is the ultimate chicken/egg issue in audio. Is the science more important than listening? We could argue that for generations and still not have the right answer.Ultimately, the human ear is what decides on the product to purchase. If the product was designed strictly by scientific method, strictly by human evaluation, or by both doesn't much matter. If it make you happy enough when you listen you'll buy it. To paraphrase Duke Ellington: If it sounds good then it is good.>All-in all the music preferences will define which system works best with each venue; or type of recording and that will be the false proofs cited by each camp picking recordings that flatter that assemblage of equipment. This works both ways, too. Certain gear does favor different types of music. A friend has a system that handles certain types of music particularly well. Guess what? Those are the types he listens to most of the time. My system does particularly well with my favorite styles. If a system could do every type of music well (as it would in a perfect world) then there would be no need for such silliness. Until then, we buy gear that suits our personal music preferences.>Too much bandwidth but I really want to thank you for using reason to point out the discrepancies at the show.I still don't think of them as discrepancies (even after our lengthy diatribe). It just seems that folks really do hear things a lot differently or have different sets of priorities for the flaws they will accept. Trying to figure out why each of us likes particular things would be as difficult as figuring out why some people like Kenny G. and others want to do him bodily harm.There was a lot of nice gear at the show and most of it was not expensive compared to much of what is offered in the retail shops. It was a great learning experience.Wow. Now I've eaten too much bandwidth...

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