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Subject: Re: Line Array discussion

Posted by [DanWiggins](#) on Sat, 04 Sep 2004 14:38:31 GMT

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Jim, Thanks! I agree that Lipshitz and Vanderkooy, and Geddes as well paint a pretty bleak picture of near-field line arrays (NFLA). I don't think they're THAT bad - clearly enough people enjoy them that their strengths carry a lot of weight with lots of people! And I've perused most of the other references (although I have not spent in-depth time); my understanding is that most acknowledge the acoustical issues when operating in the near-field, but feel these can be shaded down so that listener preference is positively influenced. I've built quite a few arrays, and I've always found that in the near-field, I simply don't like the sound. Far-field, well, they can do some really cool things...;) But I just don't like the near-field. Likewise, I'm not a big fan of large, near horns either. Dynamics are great, and you can have great accuracy in terms of phase and frequency response (like the Unity horns). But to my ear, they sound like wearing a really big set of headphones - image is all left, right, or middle - nothing in between. I think the extreme dispersion control removes too much of the reverberant field of the room that I believe is fundamental to the creation of a large and open image. Personally, I've designed NFLAs for clients, and will do so in the future too! If the client is happy, then I'm happy. I may not like what the results are like personally, but then again it's not for me. I do the same with drivers, amps, and other audio products all the time. And I hope that no one assumes that because I personally do not enjoy listening to near-field line arrays that I automatically relegate NFLA adherents to the lunatic fringe or dismiss them! Preference is, IMHO, inviolate. Those who find their path to sonic nirvana should pursue it, but also allow others to follow their own path. Preference for a different path does not make anyone's path lesser or greater. However, I also believe that the more we can tie hard physics and acoustics to preference (Tolve's 1989 article in JASA is, IMHO, a landmark work on the subject) the better off all designers are. And to do this means that everyone needs to fully acknowledge the strengths AND drawbacks of their path. Knowing how the path for you is set allows you to extend it even further and faster... Those who are in to extreme dynamics should know what they really like, and go after it. Those into extreme flat frequency response likewise. Those into broad images, the same. It's about learning the stones that make your path, and the underlying physics that creates those stones, and searching out ways to make more... Thank you and everyone here for the cool, level-headed place to discuss this! Definitely class acts! And if there ever are questions anyone has about my likes/dislikes and experiences with arrays (line and circular), just ask! Dan Wiggins

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