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Subject: Re: Critical Listening

Posted by [elektratic](#) on Mon, 19 Dec 2005 17:09:02 GMT

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MWG,I wasn't going to respond, because I probably have nothing useful to add. But what the heck.I am a total subjectivist. I've never heard all the wonderful things that Stereophile says you should hear from particular speakers. Maybe I just don't have "golden ears." I used to try like crazy to hear all the things that learned reviewers heard: that peak at 400 HZ, that trough at 1500. No luck. This used to embarrass me, but I've gotten over it.The bottom line, I audition speakers, or electronics, by playing music I know and love and seeing if my hair stands on end. The output may be a travesty when viewed via one of those Stereophile graphs, but I just don't care. If Jimi Hendrix doesn't make me shake my head in wonder, the equipment is out. If Frank Zappa doesn't make me laugh or snarl, it's out. If the trio in Rosenkavalier (three soprano voices from God) doesn't make me cry, it's out. If Mahler's Ninth (complex orchestra) doesn't make me melt, it's out. If the Big Aria in Pagliacci (tenor) doesn't stun me, it's out. If Hagen's Lament in Gotterdamerung (bass) doesn't give me the heebiejeebees (sp?), it's out.On (perhaps) a somewhat more practical note, I tend to think the human voice is a particularly good test vehicle. If a good soprano sounds harsh and screechy, there's something wrong. If a tenor doesn't sound the way I "know" he sounds, there's something wrong. etc. Notwithstanding that at my age my treble hearing should be going, I continue to find many or most speakers overly bright. That's probably my fault; the Stereophile readouts are probably ruler-flat, but unfortunately it is I who am listening to the recording, not a test mike.I'm not, by the way, criticizing others. To the contrary, I'm jealous of those who can hear with more precision. Unfortunately, as Clint would say, a man's got to know his limitations. The good news is that I love music and that reproduced music can me laugh or cry or whatever. If I can't have both, I suppose I rather have that than the ability to detect that peak at 400 HZ.

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