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Subject: DIY Theatre 4PI: First impressions (unforgiveably long)

Posted by [BillEpstein](#) on Thu, 25 Oct 2001 20:39:13 GMT

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They've been playing for just a few hours, being fed by my "B Team" A/V receiver and I'm very favorably impressed. Surprised, in fact! I shouldn't be, though. I went with this design over several others because I was so impressed with Wayne Parham; his knowledge, his facility for unraveling complexities and above all, his patience and sense of humor. When you can't audition, you have to hang your hat somewhere. Thanks, Wayne. And I'm a little nuts. I've never heard an SET amp, but I sold my wonderful RM-10 and ordered Bottlehead Paramours. My experience with speakers is limited to Acoustat 1+1's, JSE Infinite Slopes and Meadowlark Kestrels. So 15" woofers and horn tweeters? In a packing crate? I expected odd colorations and boomy bass. Figured it would be tamed by the 2A3's when they arrive. What I have is excellent clarity true to the recording (CD) and a nice tonal balance up and down the scale. More weight and authority in the bass but not out of synch with the mids and highs. Piano is more convincing, not just because it needs a bottom, but also the percussiveness of the top two octaves. That percussiveness was missing from the Kestrels. The Argerich Rachmaninoff re-issue; Phillips 50 Greatest, reveals what was missing before the Pi's. Pop female voice is very natural. I tried Joni's "Blue" and Emmy Lou's "Wrecking Ball". Joni's just as sweet as she should be and the title cut on "Wrecking Ball" reveals the excellent balance of the production which stops just short of overdone. The interplay between the electric bass and drums, as much as I've enjoyed it in the past with the transmission line Kestrel's, is a brand new experience with the big Pi's. There's no substitute for cubic inches. After some more break-in and the arrival and construction of the Paramours I'll revisit the sound. I haven't had any luck finding a digital camera among my poor acquaintances. For now I'll just say that I wired the attenuation with .47uF 200 volt Auricaps and 16 ohm 10% Mills wirewound resistors from Michael Percy. Internal wiring is Jena Wire, 18 ga. stranded copper in a poly dielectric, from Bottlehead, twisted double runs to the woofers. I debated over thicker cabinet walls but went with standard 3/4 Fibrecore. To dress things up a bit and re-inforce the baffle, I glued a second layer of MDF on top of the baffle full width from the bottom to just short of the horn. The reveal on the Eminence Delta 15 is 3/4" so now it is flush with the thicker baffle. I rounded over the edges of this second piece and painted it black: Rust-Oleum Textured; a little more "technoid" than regular enamel and not as rough as Hammerite. Makes a nice contrast with the birch veneer Fibrecore. If you're debating about something a little different in speakers, as I was, \$600 and a few evenings is all it takes. The results are gratifying.