Subject: Turntable Thoughts
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 01:29:12 GMT
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Pondering a possible move on the table currently a stock 1984 Linn Sondek with a Black Ittok type III. I can upgrade; that would include a new main bearing and some suspension parts/outboard motor controller. Linn parts would equal about 1500$ for thosse upgrades if I bought used.I am looking at the Loth X non-suspended table using a solid acrylic plinth and huge DC motor with a titanium main bearing of some integrity. The platter is massive. The Table is 1500 w/o arm. A nice Morch UDX 4 would compliment that set-up beautifully and runsabout 1200$ putting me at 3K$ with a brand new Shelter cartridge; 601 probably.I use a pair of Loth X ION's as my small speakers and if you are familiar with them then enough said.My quandry is one; I love the feel and warm sound of the linn even with the mid-bass hump; which compliments the flat frequency response of the PI Theater 4's nicely warming up the usual detail and open sound of the PI's.But the Linn is a guilty pleasure in the sense that it helps older recordings; especially Jazz but can smooth out newer quality stuff a little more than should be acceptable. Especially using the Denon with a slightly rising High end.Anyway I know I am not the only guy facing this choice; so I wonder what the general consensus might be regarding these types of considerations. Hopefully there are some replies here so I don't have to migrate to a more accepting site for this discussion.Now more than ever there are serious re-issues of many eccellent older recordings of note. This makes the possibility of just chucking vinyl and focusing on CD less attractive than two or three years ago.Looks like Vynil is here to stay.This is brought home to me when I see beautifull re-issues of Buck Owens and The Buckeroos live at Carnegie Hall and the Byrds back catalogue. The Spirit Double Album I have been listening to is so organic and real I can't take it off the table. And my Copy of Appalachian Spring is transfixing.

Subject: Re: An uninformed post
Posted by Bill Epstein on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 02:26:29 GMT
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"I've never heard a Linn but I'm sure..."Taking everyone's word that the Ariston is a Linn in other clothing, I can say that simply replacing the 20 year old springs and bolts made a substantial difference in the "balance" of sound. And the Dynavector 10X5 reveals the good and bad of recordings,'Spirit'. Great group. Can't say enough about Joni's 'Miles Of Aisles'; one of the great live recordings of anything.I'll be at a record ahow Sat morning surrounded by all the obsolete and dead vinyl of music unobtainable on CD unless at 2 and 3 times the price."12 dollars? You overpaid for that Sonny Rollins." Right, and $18 for a CD is a good deal, right?

Subject: Re: An uninformed post
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 08:54:42 GMT
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The Ariston is a decent deck; so's Sota; VPI; Well Tempered; it's just the Linn is still avilable and can be upgraded. And of course the musicality. I'm not really a Dynavector fan. I like the heavy massive MC's low output. If I had the means I would do an EMT, but the Shelter or the Denon is the next best sounding cart now that Fidelity Research is gone the way of the Dodo. Unless I can find another Empire MC gold. After that; Audio Note IQ. Although the Audio Technica ML 150 is for sale at Audio Cubes; thats a possibility in MM carts.The record shows; those sharks save all the good stuff for e-pay and leave the leavings for the proletariates like us. I walked out of the big one in Manhattan and demanded my money back; they had so much dreck on the floor while they have lists of "Rare and Distinctive recordings; go to their website." But yes; if you can get the good recordings then 18/20$ is more than fair; if you can get them. Really; 35$ is fair for good Jazz comparatively speaking to what they used to cost in real dollars.

Subject: Re: An uninformed post
Posted by Bill Epstein on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 11:32:03 GMT
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Your experience in Manhattan is a shame. Here in Columbus it's more of a "flea market" and the 15 or 20 LP vendors bring everything they have. 4 copies of Sgt. Peppers $10 to $15 and the like depending on condition as well as rare Jazz stuff for $50 to $100.I just want to hear the music I want to hear; rarity or chic means nothing to me so I generally leave with a bag full of vinyl.I wish the dealers would quit throwing away the Opera until I've had a chance to go through it, dammit!It's really true that I've only once heard a Linn and then only in passing. Back in the 'flush' Eighties when I was moving up from an AR-XA the VPI HW-19 III and the SOTA's were "it", at least in S. Florida. Tone arms were ET, Dynavector and Souther. Cart's were Grado on the low end, ADC such as the XLM in the middle, Sumiko and Kuetsu on top. I thought the SOTA's had too much bass and didn't trust the vacuum system. Likewise, I didn't see how the extra complexity of the DV or Souther arms could be a good thing. Went with the VPI/ET combo which I thought was smooth and neutral. Step-up devices were way expensive, like Cotter so my Muse Model One or NYAL Minuet pre-amps saw the Talisman Virtuoso Dti hi-output.Now that was a "musical" combo. The Ariston/ SME I now have is more 'colored' than what I remember of the VPI/ET and adding the 10X5 seems to tone that down some. Yes, it is a bit 'hot' on top but the Grado's I tried were too romantic. Steve Brown has an XLM on an SME arm and that is a VERY good combination. Now that step-ups are common, simpler and waay cheaper I plan to try a Denon soon.Music is always "fun" to listen too; Vinyl LP's are "fun", in contrast to the aluminum discs, before you ever put them on the platter.

Subject: Re: Turntable Thoughts
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 14:25:36 GMT
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Oh, wow, that would be a cool deal. I'd loooove to hear that table sometime.By the way, on vinyl, I see a bit of a resurgence. It may be nostalgia, or maybe the large number of folks that still have record albums and need a way to play them. But whatever the cause, it seems there has been renewed interest in vinyl these days, with even some new mainstream turntable products being offered for sale. So I agree with you that vinyl records and turntables will be around a while longer.

Subject: "12 dollars? You overpaid for that Sonny Rollins." Right, and $18 for a CD is a good deal,
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 14:27:28 GMT
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Subject: Used record shops
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 14:31:52 GMT
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Yeah, you can get pretty decent vinyl records in the used music stores here in Tulsa too. Looks to me like a younger generation gets hand-me-downs and goes to the record shops and sells them en masse. But then that just lets 'em get snatched up by the audiophiles!

Subject: Re: Used record shops
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 16:31:46 GMT
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With us older guys you seem to get two types of buyers. Guys like Bill who were involved in the past and are now seeking to become involved again through the used shows and stores. For Bill the shows are a very good thing because if you are looking for Classical/Opera or rock then there are countless bins of 2$ records in very good shape.Truthfully I envy that situation considering that I purchased most of my albums throughout the years for a higher price than I can get them for now. Unfortunately guys who went my way now have most of what they want but the records that are now worth chasing have been hoarded by collectors and as I say are sold on E-Pay for ridiculous prices. One of the reasons I now buy most of the Jazz stuff on CD.Upon re-reading my post earlier I wish to ammend the tone somewhat. Regarding low-output MC's I don't recommend them unless you are a hard-core vynil lover. The added cost of a step-up or MC amp coupled with the stylus that cannot be replaced just ain't worth it anymore. I like colored sound(if that is what it is) that you get with big fat low output MC's like the FR or Empire and Denon somewhat. It just

sounds more musical to me. Cartridges like the Dynavector are easier to deal with and probably more accurate in playback. Comparing cost then there is no contest since the quality of a cartridge of that calibre is unobtainable with LO MC unless you are wealthier than I am.I went through the Grado phase and realised I don't care for them after succumbing to reviews in audio rags.If I were to be asked I would say that for 250$ the Audio Technica ML 150 is my personal choice in fairly priced MM cartridges. Your Mileage may vary. If you have 500$ the Shelter is the clear winner. Now if you asked me what I could love; Ortofon SPU and THe Ortofon Tonearm. I just don't happen to have a spare 3500$. Then the EMT on the EMT Table. After that; the Denon is a steal but you need a good step-up. So then 250+225 for the transformer; tough call.Regarding LinnTT. They are fat sounding and slow on detail recovery. It's just a sound you either love or not.But time seems to have passed them by somewhat; hence the Loth X exploration. Although with a little upgrade work who knows?? The Linn companies upgrades are insanely priced so unless you get them used.

Subject: Re: Used record shops
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 21:08:35 GMT
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I have an old Audio Technica cartridge too, their top of the line in the early eighties. I have always liked that cartridge. I also have a Rega Super Elys, which is by all rights a better cartridge. Sounds nice too, but I still have a fondness for the AT. The Audio Technica sounds more neutral to me, while the Rega sounds a little fatter on the bottom end.

Subject: Re: Used record shops
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 22:32:21 GMT
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Yep; thats exactly it; the Regas have a fat bottom. Man The Exact used to shatter granite with that bass. Talk about a hot cartridge. For a long time the AT 150 disappeared but it seems to have been resurrected. I would also put in a word for the Audio Note IQ series.

Subject: Re: What about that Audio Note IQ?
Posted by Bill Epstein on Thu, 02 Feb 2006 23:48:25 GMT
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I have the AN Kit amp and love it but have always been offput by PQ's showmanship and league-leading 'conspicuous consumption' pricing. Come to think of it, I don't even know how much an IQ costs!How's about some details and comparisons to other carts, MB?

Subject: Re: What about that Audio Note IQ?
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 03 Feb 2006 01:30:12 GMT
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Well; a very short exposure sounded very nice; smooth and detailed. Then several conversations with people I trust who like it and the general quality of all of the AN stuff is what my recommendation is based on. The IQ I believe is around 300$ but maybe we can get a more accurate price on here. Just so you know the IQ is loosely based on the Goldring cartridge except it has I believe better winding and a different stylus; like a modified Goldring. One of the reasons I looked at the AN originally is due to the fact that I lived with a Goldring for a couple years and liked it. Bass-heavy and won't track the high levell on the HFNRR tester but nice sound overall. With the improvements made to the stock unit it has to be a winner.Tough choices; all in the 250/300$ range. I go by my tonearm which is pretty massive and I think that is why the Denon works well in that arm. On that you would have to consult AN regarding their opinions on arm compatibility.I like the idea of equipment from the same manufacturer also.Like Wayne likes the Rega in his Rega/ makes sense to me.

Subject: Re: What about that Audio Note IQ?
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 03 Feb 2006 20:08:59 GMT
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I agree with Bill and John on a couple of things. I like having all one OEM, if possible. Sometimes hybrids are cool, like a big block Chevy in a Camero with a Ford nine-inch rear end. But in audio, I like all one brand, unless one particular piece is crap. Now that I think about it, that reasoning fits the nine-inch differential in the Camero too, but that's another matter.On Audio Note, I like their Kit One and Kit Two, and I'm sure I'd like the preamps and other stuff. Their statement products are just that - Statement products, never expected to sell, just used to wow the crowd and get 'em talking. It's shock value like a show car for a trade show, at least that's my opinion. That's cool, as long as the company supports the real stuff. Sometimes they'll sell one of the show pieces, but mostly they are trade show dressing. There has to be some "actual" products that have realistic market prices. And towards this aim, as far as I know, Audio Note makes various grade levels so that each piece of equipment is available at several price points. But I don't know about their cartridges.As far as their company reputation, I've been watching Audio Note for a few years and have even spoken to them about what I think I've seen. I consider David Cope a friend of mine, and Peter Qvortrup is an interesting fellow too. Brian Smith has been pleasant and supportive, and seems like a real good guy. So they seem to be industry leaders, and I wouldn't want to think of them as following the pack instead of setting the tone. It's like a company self-worth thing, trying to make appearances. Seems to me the best thing to do to set oneself apart, is to set oneself apart. Audio Note can stand on its own reputation, just like Harley-Davidson, Bosendorfer and Lear. So I'm thinking maybe there is some pruning that could be done, and some renewed growth in different directions.

Subject: Re: Turntable Thoughts
Posted by DRCope on Tue, 07 Feb 2006 13:14:44 GMT
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Nostalgia ain't the driving force. It's sound quallity. A good vinyl rig kicks the snot out of a good CD rig several to many times the vinyl rig's cost. I've seen it, heard and demonstrated it over and over and over. Audio Note digital gear is probably the part of the line up we get the interest in, and for good reason, but at shows we play vinyl till somebody asks if they can hear a CD. I expect this will be case at GPAF, the question is with what and by whom? With the schedule conflict vis-a-vis VTV and the incremental distance/time/cost involved, it's quite possible that Peter Qvortrup, owner, designer and major domo at Audio Note UK will be at GPAF while I may do the NY/NJ show. For Peter, the diff between flying London to NJ or OK is not that big. For me, OK is 24 hours of driving vs 4 hours to NJ.The "with what" part refers to the fact that I tend to show the mid-range stuff while Peter tends to show the no holds barred goodies. Dunno. Haven't figured it out yet. But one of us will be there one way or another.

Subject: Re: What about that Audio Note IQ?
Posted by DRC on Tue, 07 Feb 2006 13:51:01 GMT
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Hi Wayne,Looks like I shoulda read a little further down before I plunked down the mention of what AN is doing this Spring.Yes, Audio Note makes some very expensive pieces of kit. But they're not statements; they're "what would happen if . . ." exercises which find a niche. It also just occurred to me that in some ways the upper level stuff makes it possible for a small specialist manufacturer to offer the less expensive stuff.Using the E speaker model as an example: Until two years ago our most expensive E sold for $30-40k a pr. Then, because Peter Q was one step away from a complete, pure-silver-nose-to-tail signal chain, he built a version of the E using what feels like 50lbs of silver foild caps per channel in the crossover besides the silver wire, chokes,voice coils, binding posts, blah blah blah. He was amazed at the sound and took it to the '04 TOPs show in Milan, Italy with no name, no price and no plans to sell it. More than one show-goer tried very hard to buy them on the spot. And so the Sogon speaker was accidentally born. Following the exhibition of the same system at CES '05, reviewers, forum folks et all went nuts. Peter's intentions and ancestry were called into serious question. So were mine, since I had the bad luck to be running the room at times.I've made the observation (repeatedly) since then that yes, if someone wants a pair, we can build E/Sogon spkrs. We also build 9 other performance levels - sub-models, if you will - starting at $4,300/pr. Kit E's are available at $1,050 (std drivers) and $1,950 (HE woofer, silver voice coils).I've seen a Ferrari Enzo listed at something $1,000,000 used, but AFAIK, no one is protesting their offering such a car. Doing a little (rounded, calculator-free in-head) math, to offer as broad and egalitarian a range as AN, Ferrari would need to offer a $10k kit car.Meanwhile, back at the original topic, The IQ1, 2 and 3 retail for $375, $525 and $800 respectively. The 3 is a wolf in sheep's clothing, using the square cross-section titanium cantilever and stylus tip from the $2,650 IO1 lo output mc cart.Gads, this thing is long. Better quit . . .

Subject: Re: What about that Audio Note IQ?
Posted by Manualblock on Tue, 07 Feb 2006 14:54:08 GMT
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Well; that clears that up. 375$ is a pretty good number for that level of performance.

Subject: Re: What about that Audio Note IQ?
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 07 Feb 2006 15:02:31 GMT
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Yes, indeed. That's a good price point, very affordable.

Subject: Re: Turntable Thoughts
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 07 Feb 2006 15:12:18 GMT
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Looking forward to seeing Audio Note at GPAF. I would enjoy meeting Peter Qvortrup very much, but I'd like to see you too. Always a pleasure.I'm still amazed that Kittleson scheduled his show on the same date as GPAF, which has been set for this date over a year. What an oversight! I like the idea of regional shows, and I obviously agree with his choice of suites, since he picked the same ones we've been using. But I do wish he had not overlooked the date, as it inconvienences all of the exhibitors. It's too small a market for this kind of oversight.Wonder if and when VTV will even be published again? I sure liked the magazines, but it's been a couple years since the last issue. I hope he'll put one together soon.

Subject: Re: What about that Audio Note IQ?
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 07 Feb 2006 15:35:38 GMT
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Don't misunderstand, statement products are important for all the reasons you've described. They are "what if" exercises, designed to push the envelope. They are marketing jewelry too, things that wow the crowd and show them what is possible at the 0.0001% end.One can have the best product out there for a few hundred bucks, that is to say, the best product in that budget price range. They can have the best in that all important few thousand dollar range. Or they can have the best period. These are different price points, different markets and different design and manufacturing conditions. But they all represent greatness, which is to be the best that we can be.What I think is important is being true to yourselves, and true to your customers and the buying

public. I mean, we're sort of alike in this goal. There are choices one makes, and those choices say a lot about one's motives and character, and also of their passions. Would one strive to be the best, or do they spend more energy trying to look the best? When one is confident, they don't follow, they lead. That's how I see it, and I think you and Brian and Peter do too.
