Subject: The State of Hi Fi
Posted by smartt on Sun, 06 Nov 2022 03:08:30 GMT
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This thread I read says it all. Long live Hi Fi because we are becoming extinct.

https://forums.stevehoffman.tv/threads/what-is-the-average-non-audiophile-music-system.1120045/

Subject: Re: The State of Hi Fi
Posted by Rusty on Sun, 06 Nov 2022 13:42:56 GMT
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Couldn't read through all that. Lost interest. Audio nuts like us I think have always been a minority. Most people seem to be fine with minimal fidelity. We don't have the brick and mortar shops like we did growing up but there's all manner of audio related online possibilities. I kind of think that the vinyl trend going on now will eventually taper off as us baby boomers start tapering off. But there will always be audio geeks out there. Long live audio geeks.

Subject: Re: The State of Hi Fi
Posted by Wayne Parham on Sun, 06 Nov 2022 14:56:34 GMT
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I agree, Rusty.

I've been in audio for nearly fifty years now and have heard this same warning cry the whole time. I expect the same song was uttered for fifty years before that.

First I heard - in the 1970s - was complaints about Japanese imports. Then those actually became some of the most sought-after components. Next it was the introduction of digital in the 1990s. Then it was the sad decline of vinyl. Of course, that's definitely not the case now. I expect there are more vinyl sales that there are of compact disks.

So I don't agree with any suggestion that high-end audio is dying. That's an old worn out discussion that pops up pretty regularly in the audio world.

What I would observe is that online sales have hurt all brick and mortar institutions. I'm of two minds there.

I really hate seeing some of my favorite retailers suffer and die. Record shops are more scarce, often surviving because of their resale offerings. High-end audio shops are scarcer too, but they've always had trouble because they're selling into a small market. Big Box retailers attract people away from them, which was the case long before the popularity of the internet.

On the other hand, niche market products are much more available now. Audio has never offered a big income for individuals, so the most talented designers don't usually choose an audio field as a career. But they often create their own systems and sometimes offer them online. This brings a whole new selection of high-end products to the market.

I sold my speakers by word of mouth in the 1970s. It was a hobby, not one I aspired to make a living with. So my speakers were popular only in and around Tulsa, Oklahoma. But the internet changed all that.

And I have found a similar story at literally dozens of small companies. When I go to audio trade shows, I see a vast assortment of truly high-end products from passionate designers. Every one of 'em has a story just like mine.

So I would go so far as to say high-end audio has never had it so good.

Subject: Re: The State of Hi Fi
Posted by smartt on Sun, 06 Nov 2022 18:09:25 GMT
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What I think is true, back in the 1970s and 1980s it was normal for young guys and older guys to possess hifi systems. My friends and I all had hifi systems. But back in the 1960s all we had was a junk all in one phonograph. The sound was bad. How times have changed. Long live our hifi because we like good sound.

Subject: Re: The State of Hi Fi
Posted by Rusty on Sun, 06 Nov 2022 20:06:43 GMT
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In the 60's I was a kid up until the latter part of the decade. And even then couldn't afford anything nice. But there was wonderful equipment to use in that decade, just unobtainable. I remember if I'd go to a department store with the folks, I'd always gravitate to the music and gear section, ogling all the cool stuff. Even after getting out on my own my budget was small. My first system consisting of an integrated amp, bookshelf speakers and budget turntable was very modest, cobbled together from a warehouse sale.
But the common theme for us audio nut cases is that we wanted better and strove to improve upon it.

I eventually took up woodworking and started building speakers, leading me here with Wayne's fabulous high end speakers for audiophiles on a budget. And also doing diy kit building. I'm glad I went that route too. The continual upgraditis some do as their income blossoms seems sort of shallow to me. I like the hands on approach better.

I don't think all younger folk today are totally immersed in social media and video games. There's some out there digging music that can sound more real than an earbud can ever do.

Subject: Re: The State of Hi Fi
Posted by gofar99 on Mon, 07 Nov 2022 02:19:04 GMT
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Hi, I'm pretty much in sync with Wayne. I have heard the story over and over again. I bemoan the loss of many of the brick and motor stores, but welcome the availability of on line sales. True you can't audition gear now...but then I design and build my own anyhow. Listening to music though is still popular, but it comes in different formats than many of us grew up with. As long as there are artists making music then there will be some variation of hi-fi as individuals like to listen to it. Yes the quality of what one person desires vs another varies hugely. It really always has. The folks with 5 tube all American radios had different preferences to those with Scott , HK, Bogan etc. What I see now is an increase in interest in high quality reproduction by younger individuals. They are sparking a revival IMO of vinyl. Many of us never gave up, but if you look in the LP isles now they are stocked with new groups as well as vintage ones. I will be first to admit that I have a tough time getting into much of the new stuff and I suspect many of my peers have similar difficulty. So guess who is buying the new stuff? The big chain stores would not be carrying it if there was not a significant profit margin. As little as three years ago there was no vinyl in most of them. Now there are very limited CDs and DVDs but often more than one row of vinyl. So while the landscape of hi-fi has changed the underlying desire probably has not.

Subject: Re: The State of Hi Fi
Posted by Wayne Parham on Mon, 07 Nov 2022 03:41:34 GMT
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The problem of auditioning was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the small regional audio shows. Some of that was folks wanting to get together to "hang out" but it was driven primarily by a desire to be able to see and hear audio gear. Attending shows allows people to audition products from a variety of niche market companies.