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Subject: Bose buys McIntosh?!!

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 21 Nov 2024 18:32:20 GMT

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This has been the audio buzz for the past couple days, but I'm so busy I hardly paid attention. When I heard it on Tuesday, I mentally tuned it out as noise, thinking it some branded marketing rubbish.

Then just now, Kelly said to me, "Did you hear that Bose bought McIntosh?"

For some reason, her saying it made it resonate. I was sure she got that wrong, so I looked it up and sure enough. Bose bought McIntosh.

I've never been thrilled with Bose because of its original technology, the "direct/reflecting" loudspeaker. I always agreed that the reverberant field was important and that making it uniform and balanced with the direct sound was the goal. But the way to do that, in my opinion and frankly, I think most others in the industry, was by using controlled directivity and really, by controlling reflections. Make sure that the off-axis sound is uniform, but reduced. Bose did it by increasing off-axis sound, multiplying reflections.

In fairness, the multisub approach uses a similar idea, but it's done in the modal region, where sound isn't a reverberant field. Multisubs introduce something like a reverberant field in the sound range where it really doesn't exist. This is very different than the "direct/reflecting" approach that Bose used, which simply energized the reflected energies much more than the direct sound. To me, that has always been the wrong direction to go. It's interesting for a little while, but gets old quick.

But I digress. Bose has "come a long way" since then. They are no longer really a loudspeaker company. They are an electronics marketing company. I think they're probably better known for their noise-cancelling headphones than they are anything else. Today's younger buyers have probably never heard of the "direct/reflecting" approach that Amar Bose championed in the 1970s or its flagship, the Model 901, introduced in 1968.

Still, this has me wondering what's next for McIntosh. They've always been the Rock of Gibraltar in the world of audio. Nothing controversial about McIntosh. Maybe for a while - back when Bose was getting its sea-legs in the 1970s - McIntosh might have seemed dated as the hifi market moved towards solid-state. But they had been around for decades before that, and like the rock, they lasted steadfastly even as the hifi market changed. A few decades passed, and a resurgence of interest in tube amps brought McIntosh well into view. They're like a classic car, but one you can still buy.

So what gives with this Bose/McIntosh marriage? What do you think it'll bring? End of an era or beginning of something great? Or maybe an oddball marriage that lasts a couple years but then fizzles or ends with a bang?

Subject: Re: Bose buys McIntosh?!!  
Posted by [Barryso](#) on Fri, 22 Nov 2024 01:11:32 GMT  
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Mac has been owned by several companies over the past few decades. Most of those companies have pretty much left them alone to run their business much as they always have run it. So the company we see today is pretty much intact in spite of having gone through several owners.

I've no idea if Bose is smart enough to leave them alone. When buying other businesses many companies go in and muck around and change too much. I've not seen anything at all regarding the Bose track record in this regard.

Still remember going into stereo stores back when I was a teenager and drooling over the Mac gear. I sure didn't have the money for it back then but always figured "some day".

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Subject: Re: Bose buys McIntosh?!!  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 22 Nov 2024 02:09:36 GMT  
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...and here we are at "some day!" :d

I am going to be optimistic that this marriage between McIntosh and Bose is a good thing. I mean, nobody wants to buy something just to kill it.

Except Walmart. They killed Vudu. Well, they didn't kill it. Even worse. They abandoned it. They could have turned it into a service that was as big as Netflix, but they didn't. They just let it rot, and then sold it to Fandango at a loss. Oh, whoops, I meant an "undisclosed amount." I can't understand Walmart sometimes.

But I digress. Silly me. :roll:

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Subject: Re: Bose buys McIntosh?!!  
Posted by [Rusty](#) on Fri, 22 Nov 2024 22:42:41 GMT  
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Private equity likes to kill things. Sears, Toy R Us. And a lot of medical. I know first hand from that. I've read it isn't just McIntosh. But more legacy name audio companies might fade from our collective memory. I guess many audio companies have been picked up several times and now may be their sayonara. What else, low sales volume.

The old stereo biz we all grew up with and seen their gradual decline may be put to rest finally. RIP, Klipsch, Denon, B&W. At least McIntosh gets a reprieve for awhile.

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Subject: Re: Bose buys McIntosh?!!

Posted by [Leot55](#) on Sun, 15 Dec 2024 01:11:45 GMT

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Yeah, Wayne, I've never heard of how the Bose company came to be or about it's failings. I've only known them for their noise-cancelling headphones, which are pretty amazing. They were innovative at the time, too. Thanks for sharing that bit of history about the company. It was interesting to read.

I'm less excited about this news than you guys are. Private equity doesn't like competition or waiting for long-term gain. They usually buy companies up and kill them. I guess we'll see what happens.

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Subject: Re: Bose buys McIntosh?!!

Posted by [gofar99](#) on Sun, 15 Dec 2024 01:43:23 GMT

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Yeah, I heard it too. Since their product lines are quite different it might work out....but then us mortals have no say in that.

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Subject: Re: Bose buys McIntosh?!!

Posted by [Rusty](#) on Sun, 15 Dec 2024 03:02:47 GMT

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I guess its a tough business audio is. My tube gear designer has downsized his business model. He now just sells PDF file plans for his best legacy products. And the small parts for those models. He calls it, Bag-of-parts. No chassis, transformers, big chokes or tubes. Actually he's omitted tubes for some time. So, his business is really geared for true DIY builders now. Guess he's semi retired from the trade. He did quite a few products over his 30 year run and maybe he's just at the point that the ideas for new gear is stretched thin. Just a guess. But, tube gear is kind of a tiny niche in the scheme of all things audio. OTL tube gear even more so. Alpha, that period inbetween and omega.

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Subject: Re: Bose buys McIntosh?!!

Posted by [gofar99](#) on Mon, 16 Dec 2024 02:55:10 GMT

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Yes a tough business, we (Oddwatt Audio) have been on the side lines since the pandemic. Just his week I finalized the circuitry for the long time pending all tube (in the audio sections) phono preamp\*. Now all we have to do is figure out how to make and sell them. I cringe at the thought of

sending out bags of parts...even if it had the PCB. To obtain the max performance requires some skill in building it. I can almost hear the trouble calls now. So I sympathy with your tube gear designer as we are in the same boat.

\* I have been using one for about 6 months now and am satisfied that it does what I think it should. Super quiet, detailed, musical etc. I am really picky about sound and it does what I like. I don't see any real way to make it better and not induce some sort of anomaly to the sound (like going from pure class A to one with NFB). The actual tubes are now the weak link. Since I like tubes I can deal with the residual noise they have (wide band the preamp is at -94dbv unweighted). If I want quieter I can use the IC based preamp I cooked up a while back it runs at just under -100dbv. I can't hear the difference and I seriously doubt 99.99% of the population could either.

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Subject: Re: Bose buys McIntosh?!!

Posted by [Rusty](#) on Mon, 16 Dec 2024 06:35:53 GMT

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No different a bag of parts now then the bag of parts he sent with his full blown kits. He'd gone to point to point wiring some time ago. My last kit of his is point to point, a line preamp with phono circuit built in. It didn't include tubes. He'd eliminated that in his initial scale down. My monoblock amps were his first OTL in kit form that used circuit boards and came with tubes and everything.

I think as I'd mentioned prior that his stripped down business model now is really for more advanced builders that can punch out and drill the chassis and obtain the heavy parts, the transformers and the tubes. His plans show a layout pattern from his prior kits that included chassis with full instructions and pictures. His legacy products are well regarded.

Funny though. My first build, a line preamp was from a schematic published in his book called Audio Reality. I had some chutzpa then. Sourced all the parts, even made the chassis. I made a whole heaping helping of mistakes wiring it up but I persevered till I got it going right. Still in use today with my secondary system.

I don't know if the supply chain still effects designers here in this country to get reliable access to circuit board fabrication and all the other aspects of getting a product out the door. But I'm guessing it might. We used to be like what China has carved out for themselves. Like the old Chuck Berry song, Back in the USA. "Anything you want, we got right here, in the USA".

Ahh the days of old.

Hope you all can get your line up and running again.

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