Subject: Beliefs
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 04 May 2005 17:57:07 GMT
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You know we study engineering and call it a discipline composed of facts determined by data leading to formulae that can predict and control forces; and yet we talk about "beliefs" and What we "believe". Odd.If someone designs the best piece of equipment; then there is no need for anything else. Therefor there should be only one or maybe allowing for differing room and environmental situations two or three designs currenttly in production. Funny how the road is littered with countless designs that purported to be "better". While certain great sounding old speakers just keep chugging along; totally based on individuals accrueing a sense that they have a rightness to their sound independant of all principles of proper testing or data-based analysis.

Subject: Sorry, but newer is better.....
Posted by colinhester on Wed, 04 May 2005 18:53:30 GMT
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Just sit that worthless tube crap and those big old ugly speakers of yours out by the curb. I'll do you favor and get rid of it for you, and I won't even charge for hauling it off.....Colin

Subject: Re: Sorry, but newer is better.....
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 04 May 2005 19:28:17 GMT
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What a guy! Your a legend in your own mind. 35 yrs ago this stuff was everybodies headache filling up the garage while their shiny new Pioneer recievers they brought back from the far east while serving in Viet Nam stacked up in their living room blasting the neighbourhood with that SS screech. Perfect measurement though. Vanishingly low distortion. I swear thats what killed Hi-Fi in America; they just don't realise it.When I was a kid every house on the block had a console tube stereo that may have been boomy and slow as a result of the crummy cabinets but still sounded like music. By 1973 everyone dumped them and jumped on the bandwagon. By 1977 nobody listened except teenagers.On garbage night there would be several of those old consoles and the empty boxes from the Japanese light show models at the curb up and down the block.

Subject: Colin was kidding, John
Posted by akhilesh on Wed, 04 May 2005 19:43:53 GMT
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I'll raise you one up. Not only will I not charge you like Colin, but i'll actually give you a few dollars for each tube amp that works. What say you? -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: Sorry, but newer is better.....
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 04 May 2005 19:45:55 GMT
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Say C-man; whats the scoop? Any news your way? I see on the Joe list he is selling off some old horns and stuff pretty cheap too. I didn't go through the whole list but there are some goodies there.

Subject: Re: Sorry, but newer is better.....
Posted by colinhester on Wed, 04 May 2005 19:53:38 GMT
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Thanks for the heads up. Do you have the URL? I seem to have filed it somewhere and cannot find it.....Colin

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Subject: Re: Colin was kidding, John
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 04 May 2005 21:39:57 GMT
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AK; I knew that. You can't have the tube stuff; Peter Aczel would not approve. And they're not on the Sensibel Sounds recommended best buy list. BTW; right now I am listening to the GainClone on the Altecs and the T-amp on the Pi Theater 4's. That SS stuff; it's just so easy to use. The T-Amp BTW sounds darned good on those Valencias; imagine a 25$ amp on those speakers. Anyone who might be interested I have just completed the ESP Death of Zen pre-amp. I will be taking it out for a trial run next week as I am still waiting for one pair of BC 559 transistors that mouser failed to include in my order.BTW your boy looks just like you!

Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Martin on Wed, 04 May 2005 22:42:17 GMT
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"If someone designs the best piece of equipment; then there is no need for anything else. Therefor there should be only one or maybe allowing for differing room and environmental situations two or three designs currenttly in production."Sorry, can't agree with that theory. But lets say for the sake of arguement that Brand X amplifier is perfect. And lets say that speaker Brand Y is a perfect speaker and a perfect match for Brand X amp. And lets go one step further, the local high end emporium has the perfect room for this system of perfect components. I bet if we both went in and listened we would hear different things and describe different strengths and weaknesses. Each one of us has different hearing and even worse our personal tastes are probably different. In conclusion, I don't think that any one brand or type of equipment will ever be judged the best by everybody.Martin(an engineer who strongly believes in math, science, measurements, and simulations for engineering speaker designs)
Quarter Wavelength Loudspeaker Design

Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 04 May 2005 23:01:26 GMT
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Good reply Martin; thanks. However(There's always a but!) I do strongly believe in a standard of sound that can be recognised and appreciated by the many verses the concept that each piece of equipment will be judged by individuals requiring an individual conclusion that assigns a measure of quality unique to that piece.I can't get past the fact that musical instruments and musicians,(I think I remmember you play, is that correct?), are designed and forged through training by ear. Master Stradivari built his Violin w/o the use of waterfall plots or frequency response graphs. I am not trying to be coy here; but what is the explanation for the universal aknowledgement of excellence of his instruments? Its a lot of people agreeing they excel through listening to them, all coming to the same conclusion.The argument expressing the need to hear what the composer intended; not what the equipment does for the music begs the question; since the recording process distorts any and all attempts at perfect reproduction from the moment the sound touches the recording device.Thanks for engaging in this discussion; I think it is the only reason to participate in audio.You're still up in Albany right?

Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Martin on Wed, 04 May 2005 23:35:06 GMT
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"However(There's always a but!) I do strongly believe in a standard of sound that can be recognised and appreciated by the many verses the concept that each piece of equipment will be judged by individuals requiring an individual conclusion that assigns a measure of quality unique to that piece."If you assemble a good system, it probably does 90% of the things needed to reproduce music correctly. Most people would listen to it and be thrilled if they had the system in

their home. Getting better then 90% is difficult and may require extreme efforts and probably some significant expense. I have had people come to my house and be blown away. Comments like "Now I understand why you enjoy listening to music.". I have also had a golden ear or two come to my house and offer criticisms. I accept criticism but only if one strength is mentioned for each negative. In that format, the negatives sound fairly trivial. I don't claim that my system is perfect or even truely great, but I do believe that it has the potential to be appreciated by all levels of audio enthusiast. My system is also different from other people's systems, and they can also be enjoyable.I once got a very interesting comment fomr a real audio unenthusiast, my wife. She claims not to hear the benefits of my efforts and is totally not interested. We were in a hifi store once looking for a set of chep headphones for work and the salesman insisted on showing us his top of the line set of speakers. I was not very impressed and was polite, my wife told him they sounded like crap. "I can't get past the fact that musical instruments and musicians,(I think I remmember you play, is that correct?), are designed and forged through training by ear. Master Stradivari built his Violin w/o the use of waterfall plots or frequency response graphs. I am not trying to be coy here; but what is the explanation for the universal aknowledgement of excellence of his instruments? Its a lot of people agreeing they excel through listening to them, all coming to the same conclusion."Nope, don't play. How many instruments do you think he made that sounded bad, then so so, then pretty good, and then perfection? He probably learned by trial and error and a natural understanding of what he was after firmed up through experimenting. When you engineer a speaker you are trying to get 80% or 90% of it right through computer simulation. Same method, just no sawdust. "The argument expressing the need to hear what the composer intended; not what the equipment does for the music begs the question; since the recording process distorts any and all attempts at perfect reproduction from the moment the sound touches the recording device.Thanks for engaging in this discussion; I think it is the only reason to participate in audio."In my opinion, reproducing recorded music will never ever be as good as a live performance. It is an illusion only. The goal is to get certain aspects right so that it is close enough to be enjoyed. Close enough to enjoy is a very personal definition."You're still up in Albany right?"Yup, a few miles north of Albany.Martin
Quarter Wavelength Loudspeaker Design

Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 05 May 2005 00:16:42 GMT
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Yeah; I gotta get up there. Hows your typical schedule?

Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Dean Kukral on Thu, 05 May 2005 00:27:17 GMT
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There is, as a rule, no such thing as the "best" piece of equipment. First of all, technologies

change. What might have been "best" before is not necessarily "best" after a technological breakthrough. For example, when compact discs came along, nobody in their right minds listened to records any more if the same music were available in the new format. Yet, for many years, records were the "best" way of delivering music to consumers. (Tape would certainly have been better, but the engineering design trade-offs have to include things such as cost, size, etc.) Second, virtually every design in engineering represents a series of trade-offs, compromises in the real world. The quality of items is not linearly ordered. One item may be better at one thing and worse at another. For example, one amplifier may be capable of lower distortion within its operating limits, and another my have higher distortion with wider operating limits. Neither one is "best." One is better at one thing, and another is better at another thing. The form follows the function.

Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Martin on Thu, 05 May 2005 00:32:50 GMT
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This month is two dance recitals which means two dance classes a week. Add that to three kids taking paino lessons. Then there is school homework and activities. In early June a 5th grade moving up day for my middle child. As I get into June and the summer things start ending and time is available.Martin

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Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 05 May 2005 11:36:31 GMT
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I hear that; it just doesn't quit. Summers nice up there I'd like to see what you have.

Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Earl Geddes on Thu, 05 May 2005 12:36:40 GMT
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There were a lot of responses to this post and many objected to the term "best".As an engineer I prefer to use the word "optimum", becasue there always is a optimum solutions to a problem and a given set of contraints. The "optimum" may not be the "best".As an audio engineer the thing I have always liked about the "older" stuff is its simplicity. But, also as an engineer, we have come a long way in our understanding of audio and the materials and tools that we use in our designs. As engineers we would be doing a pretty poor job if somehow we hadn't improved on the old. I consider myself a good engineer so I think that I can improve on the old. But I always try and do it

as simply as possible. Don't usematerials that don't matter. Don't add components that don't make a difference. Don't pay more for something if it isn't any better. In short - optimize the design.In my expereince, the audio "optimum" is converging on some final principles. I won't belabor them all here, but a few are readily apparent. In electronics its minimize feedback. Among amplifier designers that I know (some of the best) this is pretty well standard thinking - tubes have always had this. In loudspeakers, it appears to be good polar control. The Harman guys and I certainly agree on this point. Room acoustics - well thats still in turmoil I'm affraid to say.At any rate, I am partially agreing with you that as the constraints become less and our knowledge increases, the "optimum" solutions should (and will) converge on a finite set of answers. In principle this set can be as large as the number of degrees of freedom in the contraint set, but in reality, I think that it will be a whole lot less.

Subject: Re: Colin was kidding, John
Posted by akhilesh on Thu, 05 May 2005 12:47:51 GMT
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Sounds like you are having fun, John! I am gojng to get one of those sonic impact amps as well. I heard the one by Bob BRines, and it sounds good. For $30, how can you go wrong? I'll probably run my klipschorns off it. -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by akhilesh on Thu, 05 May 2005 12:51:44 GMT
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I think measurements can take us to a system that is 90% there. Beyond that, it becomes personal tastes. Some people like a non-flat freq curve, some people like more even order distortion. I think the paramters that govern whether we like or dislike a system are few: mainly frequency curve & distotion, but once the curve is reasonably flat, and the distortion reasonably low (say below 4%) then it becomes subjective. Just my two cents. -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 05 May 2005 13:42:33 GMT
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I agree. The recording process is the next frontier. But please allow for the instinct of the design artist who manipulates the intangibles. What I notice is; So many of the most recent efforts seem to result in the drive to isolate aspects of the sound to the point that music is defined and compartmentalised into a progressively more narrow presentation.I think that is the result of 2x

tests that by design require the participants to seperate out the more obvious artifacts. Now they record all this pop jazz to sound good on the hyper-revealing speakers; but those same speakers become irritating when called upon to resolve very complicated recordings as the music developes this etched quality that real music doesn't have.It seems they lose that organic tunefullness that you hear in real life.That is why I listen to music and that seems to be what is removed when these issues are addressed in this manner.I don't know; maybe it's the regressive fallacy raising it's ugly head but I know what sounds like music.Thanks for your attention to this thread.

Subject: Re: Colin was kidding, John
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 05 May 2005 16:50:21 GMT
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Absolutely; I would encourage you to try that. I am having fun; why else do this? Nothing sillier than someone who takes this stuff too seriously.

Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Martin on Thu, 05 May 2005 22:16:00 GMT
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Where are you located?I have had people visit before during the summer and one guy drove from as far as southern NJ for an afternoon/evening listening session. One guy hauled a set of speakers up and we had a great time swapping the three sets of speakers in and out of my system. Then there is my buddy up the street and we go back and forth a few times a year.If you want ot make the trip, I should have a new amp and preamp by the early summer. Any time after I replace my failing Adcom preamp would be a good time. Once fall starts, the school activities, dance lessons, and piano lessons grind starts again.E-mail me off line in June and we can see if a date and time can be worked out,Martin
 Quarter Wavelength Loudspeaker Design

Subject: One man's trash.....
Posted by colinhester on Fri, 06 May 2005 03:05:09 GMT
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It's interesting that you use this particular example as the basis for the demise of American Hi-Fi. This is precisely what started it for me. When I was 2 weeks old my father was shipped off the Viet Nam for several years. During his tour, he shipped many boxes home. One of the earliest memories I have from my childhood was going with my mother to the post office to retrieve one

such shipment, his new "screeching" SS stereo. This new stereo, which my parents still use on a daily basis, taught me to appreciate both the music and the machine. My father always let me "play" with the controls, so I could figure out what they did. I was able to load RTRs before I could ride a bike. The music that came out of those speakers also set the mood for every Christmas since 1970, when we were stationed at Presidio of San Francisco. That Christmas my father recorded on the RTR a day's worth of Seasonal tunes off of KFOG. For years after, that was the only Christams music we ever played (I can still hear the fog horn blow as I type.) Yeah, the Far East stuff the GI's brought home might have killed the American Hi-Fi industry, but it was the beginning for me.....Colin

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Subject: Re: Beliefs
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 06 May 2005 11:18:48 GMT
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Oh; I plan on it. I am in Long Island but I make trips your way to visit friends, so yes I will contact you in June and make arrangements.(I need to study up on QWLT in the meantime.)
