Subject: measurements II
Posted by Manualblock on Sat, 05 Feb 2005 16:11:02 GMT
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You know whats funny, I see some exceptionally good empirical science expressed here, and one unifying theme seems to be to shun any hint of subjective analysis; and rightfully so. However the concept of no fundamental archetype for understanding subjective impressions has always puzzled me and this is why. As a muscician for many years I will state that when I express a musical concept to another muscician they appear to understand exactly what I mean, and the subsequent discussion also appears to indicate that in fact, they do. Whole musical desicions regarding recording/orchestral arranging/hall construction/ensemble playing; are made based upon these subjective conclusions that appear to be universally understood. How can that be?

Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by Damir on Sat, 05 Feb 2005 20:00:15 GMT
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Hey, I can`t say I`m an musician, say an amateur with >20 years of practice (bass & guitar). I noticed one (between many) interesting thing in "jamming" with someone that sometimes happened - you don`t need to express yourself/your song/musical concept by words, another person "in the same film" intuitively know everything...

Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by Wayne Parham on Sat, 05 Feb 2005 23:49:08 GMT
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I think artists and musicians are more comfortable talking subjectively with one another than engineers are. Engineers need specificity in order to quantify themselves, but artists need to express emotions more. I think both speak in abstractions, but engineers put more emphasis on physical processes and artists place more emphasis on the effects the physical processes have on the people observing them.

Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by Manualblock on Sun, 06 Feb 2005 18:59:09 GMT
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I hear that! The thing is the basic contention seems to be that there is no way to reconcile

subjective criteria in music; but musicsions do it all the time and have no problem equating subjective terms to an exact meaning that is reproducible every time. Go into a studio and the mastering guy says give me a fatter sound on the bass drum. The drummer knows exactly what he means.Tell a speaker guy that he needs more warmth in the mids and he refuses to accept the term "warmth" because it is subjective.How come we can do it with music but not with stereo?

Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by hurdy_gurdyman on Sun, 06 Feb 2005 19:41:51 GMT
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I'm sure I could have a better and more meaningful conversation about how a given speaker sounds with a musician then an engineer.Ya know, it may be just me, but I think I'd get greater joy listening to a speaker that a musician with no engineering background has "tweeked" to perfection then listening to a speaker that an engineer with no musical talant or experience has "tweeked" to his version of perfection. Of course, someone who is both musician and engineer may come up with the best one of all.Dave

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Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by Wayne Parham on Sun, 06 Feb 2005 20:33:24 GMT
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I agree. I think the best engineers of audio equipment are those that have had some music education and/or play an instrument. Most of the designers I know have backgrounds in music. Maybe that's natural, since the musical background cultivates an interest.

Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by akhilesh on Mon, 07 Feb 2005 17:39:00 GMT
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HI everyone,I don;t think any of us are disagreeing at all here, just saying the same thing in different ways, so i'll add my bit as well.If we want the music system to offer high fidelity, then we mean it should reproduce the signal the way the recorded media sends. Notice that RECORDING the signal (in ther words encoding the live event) is also done by an engineer, who may equalize certain aspects of the performance to produce effects. Nevertheless, the goal of the sound system is to REPRODUCE this signal, not to reproduce the LIVE event.A system at home that can reproduce the signal as it was recorded MUSt reproduce all frequencies flat, and offer neglibile distortion. Otherwise it is adding its OWN signature. Now comes the subjectivity: some systems are not perfect (surprise!) and do add their own signature. In some cases that signature will

enhance the recording (for example the second order distortion and non flat freq curve of a SET amp may make a female singer's voice a little more life like) so it appears more lifeliek to us, even more lifelike than perhaps the recording engineer intended. By the same token, the same amp may distort another recording to the point where it sounds pretty bad. (try playing ZZ top with a SET and single driver set up!) Overall, if we are concerned about fidelity, then we need to be concerned about simple measurements. If we are concened about just how recrodings sound, then there are a lot of variables involved (liek what is the recording, what effects were used ,etc) and systems with poor fidelity will often enhance some recrodings and worsen others. It's really all a matter of taste, finally. I am at present trying to pursue fidelity, but in my midrange (dfrom 60 hz to about 3500 HZ) i do have a set powering a high impedance driver! However, i am using a cheap sub for the below 60 hz a,d a cheap tweeter fr the treble, all powered by SS! The overall reposnse is far flatter than just using a SET with a full range driver, and to my ears more pleasing (much more pleasing actually). In other words I can now listen to both PAtricia BArber AND ZZ top on the same system ,and actually really enjoy both!Not to mention complex orchestral arrangements! -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by Manualblock on Mon, 07 Feb 2005 23:25:17 GMT
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Sounds like you have that system balanced out nice! I just expressed my confusion as to why subjective impressions work for muscisions and not for people who design audio. The signal purity argument is another whole debate.

Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by akhilesh on Tue, 08 Feb 2005 10:37:56 GMT
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Thnaks John. I like its sound. Here is an analogy that may explain the engineer's point of view:WOuld a TV display help us enjoy a movie better over another? Probbaly, if it cinveyed the true original print better. In some cases, some displays may actually create an illusion of reality that surpasses the original print, maybe by making the trees greener, and the water bluer. Some viewers may like that, esp for movies that have landscapes. SUch a monitor would not be great from a fidelity perspective, but would work well for folk who watched landscape movies. Finally: here is a thought provoking question: In order to select a movie monitor, would we prefer the judgement of an actor or director over a tv monitor design engineer?-akhilesh

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Subject: Re: measurements II

Posted by Manualblock on Tue, 08 Feb 2005 15:09:11 GMT
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AK good to hear from you; I admitt you have me floored. I have no reply to the TV monitor question.

Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by Manualblock on Tue, 08 Feb 2005 15:11:15 GMT
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Damir; if you make music; you are a muscician. You don't have to be the best muscician.

Subject: The truth doesnt matter to most
Posted by Mike.e on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 23:29:34 GMT
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Aslong as it gives them that emotion...I wouldnt mind delving into this 'happy' area of audio,Im not going to forget where I am objectively because I study electronics and networking,Im always reminded by the facts CheersMike.e

Subject: Re: The truth doesnt matter to most
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 15 Feb 2005 05:00:11 GMT
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The truth is that if alcohol or pretty girls are involved, we'll agree to just about anything.

Subject: Re: The truth doesnt matter to most
Posted by Mike.e on Thu, 17 Feb 2005 20:47:28 GMT
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haha so true! During january while not studying,vodka + large groups of people -fun times at local club with WSX hornsubs in a tiny space.. Reggae,dancehall,drum n bass[synthesised type with

crazy LF],and bouncy breakbeats

Subject: That's an igloo with an attitude!
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 18 Feb 2005 03:57:34 GMT
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Subject: Re: measurements II
Posted by Earl Geddes on Sun, 27 Feb 2005 17:21:01 GMT
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My 2 cents here:My brother is a profesional musician and I once worked as a profession sound mixer. I now design loudspeakers and am technically trained. So I have a lot of experience with the two sides of this problem.The musician creates art while the audio engineer reproduces art. The two things are completely different. The first is completely subjective and in the extreme the second is completly non-subjective.That is not to say that subjective impression does not enter into audio design because it does, but in a completely different way than to a musical artist. In audio design the understanding of subjective impression helps us to know which tradeoffs are worth making and which aren't. But if there were no tradeoffs then subjectivity in audio design would be unnecessary.In my experience, the reason that a subjective discussion about audio gets so confused, is because the discussion wanders back and forth between the musical side and the reproduction side. We talk about loudspeakers sounding good just like we talk about a concert sounding good, but they are not the same thing. The loudspeaker only sounds good if the performance sounded good - otherwise it sould sound bad, right? You see how confusing it gets almost immediately.The only way to have a reasonable subjective discussion about audio is to use well defined terminology that is unambiguos, which is to say completely independent of the musical terminology. To intermix the terminologies invites an immediate argument due to the ambiguous nature of the terminology.Thats exactly why musicians can discuss these things with complete understanding, because they are using a terminology that is defined in their domain and hence is totally unambiguous.Hope this helps.