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Subject: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [GarMan](#) on Wed, 31 May 2006 13:54:37 GMT

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I've heard the term tossed around a bit but not sure what it really means. Can anyone provide a description, be it technical or not?

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 31 May 2006 14:13:24 GMT

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To me, it's midrange-heavy. For "real" vintage sound, reduce the bass but make it a touch flabby, add a high Q midrange peak in there and remove the treble. I'm sure there are probably more flattering ways to say it, but when I think of a "vintage sound", that's what I think of.

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 31 May 2006 15:54:04 GMT

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I don't know but my Altec Valentias have a nice overall presentation and they are vintage; 1967, does that qualify? One other thing; have you found anyone who can quantify the sound of a speaker technically speaking? If by vintage you mean the sound people hear from vintage speakers; or some kind of frequency anomaly? If I think of vintage I think way back to KLH or Advent; maybe anything Henry Kloss designed? That would be considered vintage I think.

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [GarMan](#) on Wed, 31 May 2006 17:01:11 GMT

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MB, I'm of the believe that anything and everything can be quantified. The issue is, are we measuring the right things and are the measurements interpreted correctly? Going back to vintage sound, I was looking for both quantitative and qualitative descriptions. Quantitative could be in the form of frequency extension, frequency response, sensitivity, dynamics, directivity, etc. To tell you the truth, I don't really know what I mean by vintage sound. It's a term I've heard used more than once and was interested in what it referred to.

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 31 May 2006 18:49:55 GMT

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G-Man; would that concept not in and of itself be contradictory in nature? To say we are measuring something but we are not sure if that something we measure is the right thing or is interpreted correctly? Would you not have to have some assurance that for a measurement to have meaning it must be measuring some exact quantity then assigning to that quantity a correct interpretation? Otherwise; what are we measuring? Mechanical parameters and nothing more. That's why they remain pretty much useless as a way to gauge sound quality. But as far as vintage sound; I have no idea either what that could mean. That's why I suggested some of the popular speakers of yesterday as a reliable indicator of what people might mean by that term. Maybe if you used say an example someone offered regarding a particular speaker. Then again it occurs to me that Klipschorns are vintage as well as Quads; and they hold up pretty good in modern terms soundwise. Nothing like the big closed box speaks of yesteryear. So maybe what you ask is a sound that pertains to a specific design style. What was it that brought this up? You know there was a very thorough comparison in Listener magazine between two systems; one called "modern" and one "vintage". It addresses your question if I remember correctly. They used Quads for the vintage and I believe Audio Physics for the modern.

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [hurdy\\_gurdyman](#) on Thu, 01 Jun 2006 12:24:39 GMT

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I doubt if there is one sound that could be used to represent "vintage sound". Look at big classics like Jensen Imperials, EV Patritions, EV Georgains, Centurion, EV Aristocrat, Altec VOTTs, Klipschorns, La Scalas, and Heresys all from the 50's/60's era. Then compare those to AR, Advent, Koss and Fisher air suspension speakers from the same era. Not even close to the same sound. And then there's Quad electrostatics, Bozak Concert Grand IB's, Wharfdale, Karlsons and many others, all sounding different. If anything, I'd say the vintage sound means a highly varied sound covering almost everything. Dave

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 01 Jun 2006 13:00:04 GMT

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I think the concept of "vintage sound" is used to describe things negatively by many people. Those speakers you mention all sound very musical and enjoyable when they have new passive parts and cabinets that are tightened and braced properly. After all; 40 or 50 yrs and they still sound good even without the updating says something for those designs. But after they are calibrated they compete with most modern speakers in tonal quality. IMO.

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [hurdy\\_gurdyman](#) on Thu, 01 Jun 2006 18:32:37 GMT

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I have heard almost half of these speakers at one time or another and agree that they can all sound good. Some of my favorite speakers are vintage EV fullrange drivers. I just think that no one word (or group of words) can describe such a wide variation of different sounding speakers. They did make some great drivers and system designs back then, didn't they. I've heard "vintage sound" being used in both complementary and degrading sentences. Guess it just depends on where you're coming from. Dave

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 01 Jun 2006 20:10:37 GMT

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Good point Dave. I find I have to really listen and be sure of what I like. Otherwise I find myself falling into that trap of trying to like something. It's hard not to romanticise the older smoother sound of some of them; not to mention the beautiful cabinetry.

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [doucanoe](#) on Fri, 02 Jun 2006 02:15:54 GMT

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I agree with your assessment Wayne. I happen to enjoy a somewhat rolled off high end personally. The midrange is where I live but I need to have a nice low end present to complete the package. It doesn't need to be subwoofer low but present and tuneful. That's what I get using EV and Altec drivers. My EV 12trx's, SP15's and SP12B's give me what I would refer to as "vintage" sound. Not everyone's cup of tea but it works for me. RC

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [akhilesh](#) on Sun, 04 Jun 2006 15:03:10 GMT

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Warm tones...smooth midrange. Relaxed, like a good single malt. Like the singer/instrument is there. Not clinical. -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Sun, 04 Jun 2006 23:35:25 GMT

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Boy; we are all stepping into this trap...audiospeak. A good single malt; thats darned good! As compared to say; Grey Goose or Jack D? Or Johnny Walker Blue? Ever try that vintage? Little too rich for my taste but I have sampled; 9.00\$ a shot.MaCallams is my fav. And Bushmills. Which I guess isn't a Scotch really.Ever see how they make it? In those old barns dug in pits under the peat to age? They need a certain peat from a particular location for the fires too.And they think we are obsessive...Sorry I broke my own rule of staying on topic.

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Subject: Re: What's Vintage Sound?

Posted by [Pikelet](#) on Sun, 04 Mar 2007 01:27:57 GMT

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For me, it's the sound of Quad 22/II, Garrard 301, London Decca arm, Goodmans Axiette 8 alnicos left and right and an Axiom 12" center playing Clifford Curzon and the LSO. That's what I was listening to at the age of 8 and I've owned many many different combinations since but never been able to capture the emotional magic provided by that combination. Time has proven that, despite many advances in audio, there were a some companies that knew what they were doing back in the fifties and sixties. Vintage can = exceptional quality, not just nostalgia.

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