
Subject: Dr. Lee and his review of RMAF

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 05 Oct 2005 12:03:51 GMT

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Read an interesting essay regarding the lack of attendance at RMAF this year. Dr. Lee approaches this through the lens of speaker design. I agree with much of his analysis where speaker sound is concerned. It does take some time to learn a speakers sound/speakers do grow on you when they are designed well while poor designs tend to grab you initially then get tiresome eventually. You must bring your own music when auditioning loudspeakers. He is aggrieved at the lack of attendance and blames mis-information held by most attendees regarding amplifier use and front-end applications. The front end does matter even though 75% of the sound is the speakers and the room and the music; but thats a dead horse around here so let me address something on my mind. I believe the real issue is this; there is no music around that anyone would care to listen to. Outside of all that elevator jazz recorded for SD speakers and a few independant labels that are mostly in the Americana and roots divisions of the lexicon there is nothing worth hearing. All of the classical repertoir has been done and the re-issues of old jazz do not require a good system to play since most are recorded in mono anyway. In the 60's/70's the music drove the stereo industry. People bought because they loved the music and wanted it to sound good. In the 50's the original audio pioneers loved the great jazz from that period as well as the classical offerings. Even in the 90's there was a reasonable output of good country and new jazz music. But we have reached a point where nothing inspires. Until that changes the audio world is doomed to a long slide down to irrelevancy.

Subject: Re: Dr. Lee and his review of RMAF

Posted by [akhilesh](#) on Wed, 05 Oct 2005 21:27:39 GMT

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Good thought John. I would say that we have plenty of good music, after all we have by the law of conservation of mass, we have ALL the music from the past, plus MORE music now. So, from a sselection standpoint, we are better off todaythan in the past. The problem may be that there are other other outlets for potential music listeners, such as: 1. Other choices to dazzle the senses such as computer/console games 2. Outlets for the socially disinclined such as the internet 3. An increasing selection of acceptable, but not optimal, playback formats and gadgets, such as mp3 players that reduce the need for a full blown stereo system that occupies so much space. IS it any wonder that most denizens of this & similar fora are in their late 30's plus???? akhilesh

Subject: Re: Dr. Lee and his review of RMAF

Posted by [FredT](#) on Wed, 05 Oct 2005 22:00:31 GMT

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Where can I find the review?

Subject: Re: Dr. Lee and his review of RMAF

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 05 Oct 2005 22:00:42 GMT

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Absolutely agree AK; the puzzling part here is exactly what you say it is; since there is all of the music from the past available and it also has the advantage; at least for those older folks among us, of being well recorded for the most part you would think people would re-stock their collections to take advantage of newer and better play-back equipment. This may go back to the concept that people tend to like the medium they grew up with and I remember you and I had a discussion a while back concerning how recordings are done for the medium they will be played back on. There are a couple aspects of this situation that stem from these points. I think it makes a good topic.

Subject: Re: Dr. Lee and his review of RMAF

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 05 Oct 2005 22:02:56 GMT

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Give me a couple hours and I will try to post it; I saw it on the Joelist. If that doesn't work I can e-mail it to you. It's a couple pages.

Subject: Re: Dr. Geddes and his review of RMAF

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 06 Oct 2005 04:40:50 GMT

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Regional audio shows don't bring in tens of thousands of attendees. CES and NAMM do, but the regional shows don't. The regional shows bring in a few locals and a few friends. Hundreds of people show up, not thousands. The guys that have made friends with one another in this hobby put aside some money to make a trip every year or two, make it a vacation to see one another. They do a little show and tell and enjoy each other's company. It's a club, sort of. If an exhibitor's motive is primarily mass exposure, they might consider mass marketing. It's expensive and it is not selective. It is a shotgun approach. They won't get aficionados, they'll get plenty of warm bodies to fill the seats. If profit motive is the primary drive, they can use psychoacoustics to find out what they think the public wants to hear and they can use financial experts to study what price should be set to maximize profits. Get the bankers to fund it, or do a public offering 'cause this is all big money stuff. Marketing is all about perception, making the customer believe he has the best product is more important to some companies than actually providing the best product. I've seen a few small companies try to straddle the fence. They don't want to do an IPO or anything

that might "sell out" and make their small companies big and unmanageable, but they want the kind of exposure they see corporate advertisers getting. So they go to CES, get a room at a nearby hotel and tell everyone they'll be there. Seems like there's a cottage industry of small shows being parasitic to the big shows. What good comes from taking high-end hifi to a show where most people are looking at computers and televisions and iPods? It doesn't provide any more useful exposure than the regional shows, because the people that want their exclusive products aren't going to the mass market shows. The ones that do go, are going to the exclusive "appendage" of the show, not to the show itself. So it's basically tacking a niche market show onto a larger commercialized show, maybe driven by some sort of odd inferiority complex about market share or something. If you're looking for a 1931 Bugatti Royale, you don't go to wholesale auto auctions. You go to something a little more exclusive, but there aren't that many people shopping for cars like that so there will be fewer people there. What I'm getting at is the nature of high-end anything is pretty exclusive. Not everyone drives a 500HP+ car. Not everyone owns a high-end hifi, and most don't use tubes. Most people aren't pilots, and most don't collect guns, stamps, rare coins, whatever. It isn't that the niche industries are dying, it's that they never were very popular in the first place, at least not as a percentage of the total population. There may have been some impact from the hurricanes last season, but in general, I've seen a growth trend in high-end hifi. If anything, I think the high-end audio market is on the upswing. It is something that middle age men can afford, and it is something that the whole family can enjoy. Hot rods and sports cars have always been popular with most guys, but with gas prices going up, it's not as much fun to have a muscle car to take out once a week. Same with boats. They drink gas like elephants. But high fidelity systems don't cost any more to use than an incandescent light bulb. Personally, I have really enjoyed the audio shows I attended, but maybe that's because I didn't expect them to be like CES. I didn't want them to be. I like seeing all you guys there, and hearing your systems. I like going out to dinner afterwards and visiting with everyone for a few hours in the evening after-hour parties. I went to MAF in 2003, and my motive was to meet some of the friends I had made over the years by telephone contact and E-Mail correspondence, but whom I had never had the pleasure of meeting. I wanted to see Bill Martinelli, Bill Epstein, Ron Semega, George Duemm, Wayne Mark, Duke LeJeune, Mike Baker and a few dozen other people. I was absolutely thrilled to see these guys. It had the same feeling of a high school reunion, one where we were seeing friends we hadn't seen in way too long. In this case, we were people with shared interests who had visited with one another many, many times, but never met. Last year's GPAF was wonderful, and I'm looking forward to next years event. I think we'll probably do seminars next year, like we did at MAF. I'll do the "Crossover Electronics 101" seminar, and I'm hoping Bob Brines will talk about single driver speakers and maybe talk about mass-loaded transmission lines. Maybe Earl Geddes will do a talk on home theater and room acoustics or on oblate spheroidal waveguides and high-order modes. Todd White will probably do an Altec history presentation and I'm hoping Johan Van Zyl will discuss basshorns. We'll probably have a few other industry members scheduled too. These regional shows are pretty exclusive. They're where you see the best of the best, and you visit with others that are like minded. We don't go there to make a sale, we go there to network with one another and to enjoy each other's company. If you go to RMAF, GPAF or MAF expecting to bring in 10,000 people and get a dozen new distributorships, you're going to the wrong kinds of shows. These high-end hifi shows are the places you go to see the people that are passionate about quality, not about quantity.

Subject: Re: Dr. Geddes and his review of RMAF
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 06 Oct 2005 05:55:35 GMT
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Wayne; I'm sure that was directed to the retail exhibitors amongst us but lest there be any mis-understanding I was not there personally; these observations and opinions of RMAF are those of Dr. Lee. I just commented on possible reasons that have crossed my mind lately for the meagre participation numbers at these events. Why those numbers have declined is the reason for the post. And the body of the post is simply my opinion and attempt to express a feeling of frustration with the amount and quality of the music available currently. Even with re-issue's flourishing I think new offerings are what motivates buyers of equipment and software.

Subject: Re: Dr. Geddes and his review of RMAF
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 06 Oct 2005 06:43:02 GMT
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I knew that, John. I hope you didn't misunderstand me either. You and I go way back, so I think we understand each other pretty well. And Earl and I hung out at GPAF, so he and I have discussed these things already. I just wanted to express the idea of the exclusiveness of niche markets to others that might read this thread. High-end hifi is a specialty that represents a very small percentage of the overall consumer electronics market. The best way to entice new people into buying quality hifi products is to make them more affordable, to lower the cost of entry. That's probably why DIY is popular, because it allows people with midfi budgets to enjoy hifi quality. I think hifi sales have been pretty consistent over the years, and I don't think the market is experiencing a downturn. I expect it is like other luxury items in that the very wealthy are unaffected by economic factors, but that most people will buy more when the economy is good and less when it is not so good or when people are insecure about the future. From my experience, it appears that high-end hifi is in a general upward trend right now.

Subject: Re: Dr. Geddes and his review of RMAF
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 06 Oct 2005 07:59:44 GMT
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Well; for your sake my friend I am glad to hear that. Being in the business you have a better perspective than I do. I hope everyone is experiencing the same situation; it would be a sad day to see people have economic problems in the hobby. I was re-acting to Dr. Lee's essay but maybe that was an isolated instance; hopefully. The really odd thing about this thread is how many folks are posting at 3am..does this mean something?? I was asleep and AC; my dog jumped up into the bed and squished between myself and the wife..he thinks he owns the place. He's looking up at me with his head on the pillow.

Subject: Re: Dr. Geddes and his review of RMAF
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 06 Oct 2005 09:25:41 GMT
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I've been busy getting prepared for the Prosound Shootout. Lots of candle wax melted from burning it at both ends.

Subject: Re: Dr. Geddes and his review of RMAF
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 06 Oct 2005 11:37:23 GMT
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Good luck with it and don't forget to notify Homeland Security; the massive volume may confuse them. They might scramble the jets.

Subject: At least "Classical" is in good shape
Posted by [Bob Brines](#) on Fri, 07 Oct 2005 16:42:38 GMT
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"All of the classical repertoire has been done...."Well, sort of. The big name orchestras and conductors continue to crank out more versions of the main repertoire. We probably don't need another Beethoven symphony cycle. The smaller orchestras, though are mining any number of "minor" composers like Field and Hummel in the classical period and Chadwick and Hanson in the romantic. There is also some interesting work being done (well not exactly new) in the HIP (historic instrument performance) field. My personal Beethoven cycle is by Hogwood and the St. Martin-of-the-Fields orchestra. Very, very different from the standard romantic orchestra presentation. Also, compare Brueggen's Haydn Paris/London symphonies to a standard large orchestra performance. My expertise lies in the baroque, and here there is an enormous repertoire yet to be mined. granted, we don't need another copy of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons", but how many good copies of the OTHER 8 concertos in Op.8 are there? Except for Op.8 #9, which is "the" oboe concerto, recorded too many times. But then how many recordings are there of Op.8 #9 on the original violin? Staying with Vivaldi, Manze and Carmignola are doing some fine work with the more obscure violin concertos with small orchestras, and using theorbe and archlute for the continuo rather than harpsichord. Bach to the standard repertoire. The record companies are re-releasing seemingly their entire pre-CD holdings. This is good and bad. A re-release costs only a minor fraction of a new performance, and with so many orchestras in financial trouble, this is not good. On the other hand, some of these old performances are very, very good and offer a look at performance practice of yester year. Also the sonics on some of those old "single-mic" recording is just hands down better than any of the multi-mic recordings of today. In sum, the classical CD repertoire is in good shape. There is much more out there than I can afford. Bob

Subject: Re: Dr. Lee and his review of RMAF
Posted by [DRCope](#) on Wed, 12 Oct 2005 10:06:44 GMT
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Well, the halving of attendance at RMAF is alarming, (and somewhat irritating to someone who devoted more than a week to the show!)

If there's any training going on, it's from the "in-your-face" loudspeaker designers, as he says. The extraordinary volume levels used by many demonstrators, at least on the part of the 5th floor I was on, was deplorable.

The rest is quite silly. Differences in caps, resistors, transformers, cable are all clearly audible. I don't think I've ever met anyone (without hearing aids), who couldn't easily discern the differences.

Subject: Re: Dr. Lee and his review of RMAF
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 12 Oct 2005 11:46:29 GMT
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I think you'll like GPAF. It has the same feel as MAF did. Hope to see you next year!
