Subject: Rocky Mountain Show
Posted by slinco on Tue, 24 Oct 2006 15:24:53 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

I was wondering if anyone on this forum attended the Rocky Mountain Audio Festival, and if so, what were your impressions of Rodger Russell's new array, the IDS-25. There's been some discussion on various forums about why they shouldn't work well (comb filtering problems), and I was hoping someone here would share their impressions.

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Show
Posted by Jim Griffin on Tue, 24 Oct 2006 17:45:36 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Read the exchange that Fred Thompson and I had about the IDS25 in the General forum on this site. Fred attended the show and he owns a set of Selah Audio line arrays so I value his comments.

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Show
Posted by slinco on Fri, 27 Oct 2006 13:38:01 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Thanks a lot Jim. Here's a couple of other opinions I just found that you might be interested in. Looks like comb filtering may be less of a problem in real life than we think, which could open up some new thinking....
http://www.avguide.com/news/2006/10/23/rocky-mountain-audio-fest-ids/

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Show
Posted by Marlboro on Fri, 27 Oct 2006 16:04:34 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

From the responses, it seems as if the spontaneous reviewers had never ever experienced any kind of an array before. It seemed like they never saw one at all, like it was an alient that arrived from somewhere.One can only wonder how they might have talked if they'd had an opportunity to hear one that is electronically crossed, with a separate tweeter and woofer section. There is no wide range speaker that can do much more than 300 to 13,000hz adequately. What if they'd had a chance to hear real bass and real highs rather than just a mid range exposition?It does go to show how much an array can do even configured with inadequate speakers. Thylantyr has an

amazing array where he used 49 cent midranges.Marlboro

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Show
Posted by slinco on Fri, 27 Oct 2006 19:10:26 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Marlboro -Unlike you, I reserve judgment on a speaker until I hear it. Especialy one that's new and different. The point of my previous post was that PERHAPS comb filtering in an array of 3 1/2 inch drivers isn't as big a deal as the THEORY would have us believe. If people with good ears (Fred Thompson for one) find that THAT PART of the design seems sound, then that's an interesting development, don't you think? As far as whether the other folks had "ever experienced an array before", what the heck does that matter - good sound is good sound, isn't it?

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Show
Posted by Marlboro on Fri, 27 Oct 2006 20:32:02 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

What? Unlike I what?As to the 3.5 inch arrays and Russel you should go down the cue and read some of the previous discussion on Russel's array, and also some of the obvious lack of connection about the progress in building arrays. I have no idea what you are trying to say.Do you actually have an array? Have you actually built one? Or have you just listened to Russel's anemic variation at the show? I've actually spoken to several people who either ignored Jim's advice or who decided not to follow it. I dfidn't take the chance with mine. It does have comb filtering but it out near 17,000hz, which is at the limit of my hearing. The people I've spoken to have talked about the lack of sharpness and other warbly terms for their arrays. Have you actually seen the FR of arrays with bad comb filtering?Its not theory; its reality.Marlboro

---

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Show
Posted by slinco on Fri, 27 Oct 2006 22:40:30 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Easy brother, you're harshing my mellow. Of course comb filtering is reality, we all know that because it's measurable. The question is, does it make a difference in THE LISTENING. This highly controversial Russell design has been the subject of much discusion on various forums, and I for one think it's very interesting to see what people who heard it at the show thought of it. So far, all the reports are positive, and I find that intriguing. Obviously you don't. Anyone else care to weigh in?
http://fredt300b.smugmug.com/gallery/2040368/1/104741598

Subject: I'm sure they sound great; I don't doubt that.
Posted by Marlboro on Fri, 27 Oct 2006 23:16:23 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

You're not listening. I've made it clear that you can have a pretty dynamic set of sounding speaker from a 50 speaker 3.5 inch array. I've no doubt that they sound great. Geez!! My own array with the 17- 3.5 inch wide range speakers per channel sounded fabulous. But then I added the 30 Dayton Neo tweeters perr channel, and the high end that I thought sound great with just the 3 inchers suddenly seemed dead without the tweeters, and then I added the two 12 inch DVC 15 mm Xmax woofers and the bass was also fab. And my total system including the electronic crossovers, the pre-amp, and the 3 power amps, and constant Q equalizer, didn't exceed about $1700. No where near 18,000 bucks.Does anyone know what brand 3.5 inchers he's using for them?Marlboro

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Show
Posted by Jim Griffin on Fri, 27 Oct 2006 23:36:51 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

In the discussion on this subject in the general forum in the AudioRoundTable I asked Fred Thompson for additional comments on his listening at RMAF. You might like to read what he said in the link below and perhaps even read above and below this message if you are inclined.
 Fred's IDS25 Comments on Returning from the RMAF

Subject: Re: I'm sure they sound great; I don't doubt that.
Posted by Jim Griffin on Fri, 27 Oct 2006 23:40:36 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

The IDS25 use the Tymphany Peerless V-line (or just Vifa) TG9FSD10-08 3.5" full range (at least to 15,000 Hz) drivers. These are listed as obsolete discontinued on the Tymphany site.

Subject: Thanks
Posted by Marlboro on Fri, 27 Oct 2006 23:55:29 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Thanks, Jim.

Subject: I can make it for an even $5000.... and it'll be better.
Posted by Marlboro on Sat, 28 Oct 2006 00:23:58 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

OK, Jim says the speaker is discontinued. I couldn't find any of them in the USA, but in Australia you can get them for $47 US, which comes to a total of 2350 or so for the speakers. They use a dedicated equalizer, but what the heck lets buy a brand new top of the line Rane digital True-Q equalizer for them at $800 US$. Since they need no crossover, you don't need that. So you are up to 3100. Lets ask a skilled cabinet builder to build us a couple of boxes. Say $1500 a piece. Now we are up to $6100. Russell wants $18,000. WOW! This guy just got a cool 12 grand on each one.But you need a current model speaker. Reproducing his stuff, I'd buy a Aurasound NS3-193. ("Aurasound NS3-193 - This driver has smooth response with minimal breakup and very low distortion. Bass distortion and extension are the lowest of the group, and a full +/- 5mm Xmax is almost unheard of for a driver of this size. If I had to pick one of these drivers to run without any filter at all, this would probably be the one. Don't get the wrong idea however - it will need a baffle step circuit. Also of special note is the frame - care will need to be taken to seal the frame to the enclosure. Due to it's design and high output, it's prone to rattling from air leakage. A small bead of rubber cement around the opening will solve that problem. Great little woofer---Zaphaudio: http://www.zaphaudio.com/minitest/") These are super little speakers and better than the ones he used in my opinion, are only $19 each, so the total would be just 950 bucks. We can now make an additional 1200 bucks when we sell them for 18 thou!Marlboro

Subject: Explanation? The stealth McIntosh digital equalizer!!
Posted by Marlboro on Sat, 28 Oct 2006 00:30:58 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Jim,What do you suppose was happening? A. Did Fred, assuming he actual does imbibe, have a little too much champagne with Russell before the test? or B. Was there a man beind the curtain? Or, C. As is more likely, does the equalizer that Russel uses turn out to be a proprietary Stealth McIntosh digital model which rubs out most of the combing or at least blurs it a good bit.I'm betting on the last choice.Marlboro

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Show
Posted by Greggo on Sat, 28 Oct 2006 01:40:31 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

OK, I was there and gave them a good listen a couple of times. I have no established basis for credibility with any of this group, but perhaps my comments will be better than nothing for those who are curious and did not have the chance to hear them.First off, I will admit that I heard no obvious combfiltering effects, at least nothing that sounded like a rough upper end response with wild dips all over the place. Now of interest, I believe I have read, and would love for Dr. Griffin to

comment here, that comb filtering mostly shows up as massive dips at very specific and mostly narrow frequency ranges, many to be sure, but mostly dips and not artificial peaks. I have also read in numerous places that when a driver has a narrow dip somewhere in its range that it is much less noticeable than a peak for some reason. Perhaps, if what I have written above is at least in the ballpark of reality, that is why comb filtering does not irritate us as much "in room" as it does the more informed among us "on paper".Having said all that, I was not impressed with the IDS25. If I was given a mansion with ten listening rooms and allowed to pick ten systems from this past RMAF to place in each of them, I personally would no select the IDS25 as one of those top ten systems. I will not, however, be surprised if others disagree because there were some things that these speakers did spectacularly well. Here are my own pros/cons from my listening sessions:Pros:An obvious dynamic range that just slaps you upside the head and screams "you hear this buddy, this is real dynamic range compared to that other stuff you have been listening to...."A cleanliness to the sound that is very appealing, call it low distortion, call it lack of crossover, call it many drivers coupling themselves to the air space in the room, call it cylindical radiation, whatever.... more than just dynamics, there was a crystal clear quality throughout most of the range that was very, very appealing.Transient snap (not sure if that is the best pair of terms here...), or some type of quality that makes you feel like these little speakers speak quickly, and just let go of the notes so fast that everything seems to float a few feet out from the baffles and not exactly eminate directly from the cones/baffles, this quality really stuck me when hearing the percussion parts on recordings, one of the best of the show in this regardVocals, for the most part, where scary good, with a real clear window, and make that a big beautiful picture window, letting you see the face, lips, teeth and tongue of every singer, and even giving you a sense of their lungs and how much air was being pushed out and at the same time left in reserve with each note sung. Honestly, my reaction to some vocals on the IDS25 versus other very good speakers was like going from 720p on a good video projector to true 1080p, just when you thought you really knew what High Definition was someone comes along and gives you just a bit more. Not more of a jump than when going from SD to HD, but still a noticeable jump nonetheless.Cons:As much as I loved the clear quality of most of the full range of music, just like there was something new and better in the range where others have a crossover, there seemed to be something slightly better to be found in others with real woofers and real tweeters. Not sure if what I heard had anything to do with comb filtering, the quality of the drivers, or the affects of havey EQ, or some comination of all of the above, but I did find that the frequency extremes had a slightly artificial quality to them that I just couldn't get past. I am comletely open to the idea that this is part of my own subjective bias more so than any faults of the IDS25, but I can't get it out of my head that I am convinced something has gone somewhat astray at both ends.Though the imaging in general was very reasonable and sometimes better, I thought everything sounded bigger than it should, including vocals which in some cases sounded to me like they were being sung by giants. Some instrumental tracks, though granted I was not familiar with them, but at times I felt disconnected from the physical size and structure of the instruments and/or recording space.Conclusion - I would not throw these speakers out of my house, no doubt, and in fact for many of my own discs/records I would be having a blast and calling all my friends up to come have a listen to something that I was sure would blow them away. But at the end of the day, I would long for speakers that bring me a bit closer to the other things I value.Regards,Greg Jensen

---

Subject: Slow Forum, but this is why I'm not intrigued at all.

Posted by Marlboro on Sat, 28 Oct 2006 16:30:10 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Slinco,Unfortunately, this is a very slow forum. Its unlikely that anyone else will "weigh in". Would that this weren't true.I don't find it intriguing because of the very nature of ANY array with a large number of speakers. Any array with more than 10 speakers, and with increasing tendency will provide three wonderful characteristics that can be exploited.1. Frequency response dips and bumps tend to smooth out. And because there are some many of the speakers, each speaker may have limited output in the upper treble or the lower bass, but all speakers put out something in those areas. If you put enough of them together you can actually get some decent response in the areas even if the individual speakers don't have much to give. 2. All arrays whether with really cheap speakers(49 cent for example) or expensive($49 for example) have decreased distortion. Decreased distortion increases airiness, openness etc. 50 of them will really do that.3. All arrays have vastly increased dynamic range and increase sensitivity. One of the things that lends to a speaker sounding so much like Russell's are described is the ability of the speaker to play quietly with a flat response, and very low distortion. Almost all point source speakers, except horns, suffer from some disability in regards to being able to play very quietly and still have beautiful music. For these reasons, everyone who owns an array, and especially those of us who own ones that have a lot of speakers(each channel for mine has 17 wide range speakers, 30 dome tweeters, and one 12 inch DVC woofer) hears a level of dynamic range which blows away any competition.This is why I agree with you, but at the same time am not at all intrigued by Russell's speakers.Finally, with all these speakers he can do things with equalization that others can only drool at. In my opinion, a boost of 6 db in a spot source single speaker will be about all you can get in equalization before the speaker starts experiencing distress. After all, its handling 100% of the frequency range and amplitude. But when I go to equalize mine, each speaker handles only 3.3 % of the total amplitude, and frequency range. I have way way way more latitude to boost or otherwise modify the frequency response of an individual speaker, and way way more db's to work with. He can probably boost his mid ranges easily 10 to 12 db at 13000hz - 20Khz without any stress at all. So now the speaker handles 6% or 9% of the total by the equivalent of equalization: big deal. The speakers is still way way way understressed.Marlboro

Subject: Re: I'm sure they sound great; I don't doubt that.
Posted by slinco on Sat, 28 Oct 2006 18:33:06 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

I started this thread out with a simple question based on curiosity over whether comb filtering in a system such as this is as bad in real life listening as the measurements and theory would have us believe. Quite a simple query I thought, but soon people were running around with their arms flailing. These forums certainly are facinating, aren't they?I can assure you all I know how a line array works, and I know what comb filtering is and what its affects are. It's precisely this knowledge that makes me and some of the others here curious about the sound quality of the IDS-25.Anyway, I thank Greggo for his calm and reasoned reply, and Jim for his. I response to Jim, I did read FredT's post's on the general Forum (thank you for pointing me in that direction), and also his comment's on his own web site at the link below (I'm asuming it's the same guy),

which seem even more positive.I'm simply interested in whether this type of implementation can work or not, nothing more. It seems from what I've read so far that this is a reasonably good stab at a full range array, which makes it worthy of our curiosity. Is it perfect? I doubt it. But it is interesting....Sorry if I ruffled any feathers. Thanks gentlemen.Steve"A closed mind is like a closed book; just a block of wood" Chinese Proverb
http://fredt300b.smugmug.com/gallery/2040368/1/104741598

Subject: Of course it works! But it needs to be compared to other arrays!
Posted by Marlboro on Sat, 28 Oct 2006 20:16:23 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

By taking offense to my comments, you missed my point.Of course it works. My point is that an array is so damn forgiving because of its way of action, that you can put nearly anything together and it will beat out most point source speakers. But you really can't compare array designs with point source speakers. You have to compare them with other arrays. My second point is that Russell's bringin in his tepid array into the show was like bringing a wolf into a chicken coop. It would have worked adequately only if the wolf was also confronted with other wolves.You've not ruffled any feathers. We're just talking about different arrays, and the subject has mutated, like it does on most forums.

Subject: I gave them a listen
Posted by Danny Richie on Tue, 31 Oct 2006 12:51:42 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

No one was in the room when I walked in so I handed him a known disc. It opened up with a soft piano intro. My first thought was what happened to the highs? All of the air and space cues were gone. All upper end extension was gone. Upper end detail level was gone. Vocals were very nice sounding but two dimensional. There was no depth of the sound stage. It all sounded as if it were playing from the wall forward. I guess it should though, they were setting right up against the wall. This might have been compensating for the baffle step loss. These might have sounded pretty thin in a large treated room with the speaker well placed away from boundary walls. For how these speakers sounded verses what he was asking for them, I think it to be a bit insane. Sorry if this sounded a bit negative, but I call them like I hear them. Danny

---

Subject: Re: I gave them a listen
Posted by slinco on Tue, 31 Oct 2006 14:07:22 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

It's always good to hear differing opinions. I agree the price seems way high. I'm more interested in whether the concept works than the product itself. Thanks for responding Danny.

Subject: Re: I gave them a listen
Posted by Danny Richie on Tue, 31 Oct 2006 21:17:17 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

I can't really say that the concept works. It can do some things well as with any line source but it had short comings. I have played around with plenty of full range drivers and have a few of TB's finest laying around. I even have a pair of FR-125's, full range drivers, as computer speakers on my desk. As good as they are, and even though they do have good extension to 20kHz, there is no comparing them to a decent tweeter from 2kHz and up. Any time I start thinking that the FR-125 is really good, I compare it to our A/V-1 and realize how much of a compromise it is for a full range driver (at least receiving a full range signal) to have to do everything and do it all at once. Our A/V-1 blows it away. I get the same impression from those line sources. They had a dull, slow, and rolled off top end. They can EQ the hell out of them and get back some top end output but that does nothing for the resolution or detail level or the fact that there is still comb filtering all over the top end.

Subject: The sounds of the IDS-25
Posted by jeffreybehr on Mon, 06 Nov 2006 20:40:51 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

I heard it a couple times. Sounded pretty good, but there was SOMETHING not right about it...I just couldn't identify it.....until soon after I heard one of the Selah or Salk speakers that uses ribbon tweeters. THEN I knew what was wrong--the QUALITY of the treble--great in the ribbon-tweeter systems, not so good in the '25s'.Not for me.
