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Subject: New Geddes book on "Audio, Acoustics and Perception" - first chapter online

Posted by [Duke](#) on Thu, 10 Nov 2005 03:47:23 GMT

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Earl Geddes is writing a book aimed at hard-core hobbyists who don't have a highly technical background. First chapter online now at Earl's website. Enjoy! Duke

<http://www.gedlee.com/>

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Subject: Re: New Geddes book on "Audio, Acoustics and Perception" - first chapter online

Posted by [akhilesh](#) on Thu, 10 Nov 2005 14:06:04 GMT

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THis is fantastic! Thanks for the link, Duke. I look forward to reading this book! Hey Earl, if you like, I can even review it for you, as a contribution for our hobby. -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: New Geddes book on "Audio, Acoustics and Perception" - first chapter online

Posted by [Earl Geddes](#) on Thu, 10 Nov 2005 16:20:47 GMT

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An y and all comments will be considered, but there is no guarantee that they will make the cut. Please note that posting here will not necessarily get to me. Comments should be explicitly mailed to [gedlee@gedlee.com](mailto:gedlee@gedlee.com) as well as posted if desired.

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Subject: Re: New Geddes book on "Audio, Acoustics and Perception" - first chapter online

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 10 Nov 2005 19:21:07 GMT

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Mr Geddes; I read the first chapter of your book and found nothing I could disagree with. Can I ask a favor? If the Stradivarius Violin is recognised as one of the best examples of the Luthiers art as a result of it's tone and; well basically the sound it makes. And it is recognised as such by every artist of the instrument down through the ages without question. There are no Strad disclaimers. Then can we as audio hobbieists agree that the Stradivarius Violin represents what can be called a Reference Standard for musical sound? And that that is not an opinion but is in fact a truth?

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Concerning sound and sound quality?Is that possible in this situation?My point being this: the Strad can be understood by all just using their ears to be great sound. So why can't that same position be applied to audio reproducing that Stradivarius?This is not a criticism or even a reflection of the points you make in your book. It is merely me asking if you believe that is possible in order for me to have a way to reflect on the philosophy of your thesis.Thank You.I will send this question to your site also as I find it the most interesting theme in all of sound reproduction.

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Subject: Apples and oranges

Posted by [Earl Geddes](#) on Thu, 10 Nov 2005 19:58:38 GMT

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Very good post!The two situations are not comparable.One is the "production" of music and the other is the "reproduction" of music. The former is purely subjective while the later is, for the most part, not subjective at all.A musical instrument speaker usually has a lot of harmonic distortion because this makes the instrument sound richer. The player may even add more distortion. This is the artists right. But I have no philosophical right to add anything to the performance if I want to call it reproduction. And this is a very good question:"So why can't that same position be applied to audio reproducing that Stradivarius?" If listeners all listened to the Strad and then listened to a reproduction as a direct comparison then you have the beginnings of a valid controlled listening test. (You also have to control the environment, playback level, lots of things). But then the Strad doesn't really make any difference does it? I mean I could just as easily use a really crappy violin and as long as its poor sound was reproduced then the test is just as valid.Now what if the sound system somehow made the poor violin sound good, perhaps even better than the Strad. Would this then be a "good" sound system?You see you have highlighted a strong point that I will make in the text. That someone can only evaluate a sound system for good reproduction if they are intimately familiar with what is being reproduced.A classic example is having a musician listen to two sound systems with different conductors and orchestras playing on each but playing the same piece. They will almost inherently pick the one with the better performance as sounding better. It's easy for musicians to hear the notes, but it's much more difficult for them to hear the sound. You see the two things are quite different - a point that is often missed.I have a good friend who is a well known concert pianist. He's teaching me to hear the "performance" and I am teaching him to hear the "sound reproduction".

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Subject: Good Book, Will Be Mostly Ignored

Posted by [FredT](#) on Thu, 10 Nov 2005 20:10:14 GMT

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If the rest of the book is written as clearly as the first chapter this book will be valuable to serious audiophiles who are willing to consider some alternatives to the "conventional wisdom". But as Geddes points out, audiophiles' beliefs are formed in much the same way as religious beliefs, and most of us are not open to ideas that contradict what our "faith" tells us to believe. The

mainstream audio community (manufacturers, dealers, magazine editors, reviewers, etc.) will ignore it like they do most other non mainstream ideas and products. If forced to acknowledge the book's existence they will attempt to discredit its content, because it's impossible to get someone to accept a new idea when accepting it will cost them money, power or prestige.

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Subject: Re: New Geddes book on "Audio, Acoustics and Perception" - first chapter online

Posted by [akhilesh](#) on Thu, 10 Nov 2005 20:12:09 GMT

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Not a problem, Earl. I have way too much stuff to review in my job anyways. Look forward to seeing your chapters unfold, and hopefully getting a chance to read them. -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: Apples and oranges

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 10 Nov 2005 20:40:30 GMT

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Good answer; one question, has the point you make regarding the two orchestra's and the difference in performance been confirmed in the literature? That is the best answer I have seen in response to my question. Thanks. Looking forward to the rest of the chapters.

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Subject: Re: Good Book, Will Be Mostly Ignored

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 10 Nov 2005 21:17:18 GMT

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The audio industry is a funny bunch. It's pretty low tech really, so charlatans can prosper, sort of like alchemists.

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Subject: Re: Apples and oranges

Posted by [Earl Geddes](#) on Fri, 11 Nov 2005 03:06:14 GMT

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"has the point you make regarding the two orchestra's and the difference in performance been confirmed in the literature?" Not to my knowledge. That is based on personal experience with the

myriad of professional musicians that I am aquanted with.

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Subject: You may be right, but  
Posted by [Earl Geddes](#) on Fri, 11 Nov 2005 13:50:17 GMT  
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If there is no source of truth then how can we expect anything but ignorance. We used to think the world was flat and that the Earth was the center of the universe - the church said so - but science eventually prevailed. I think that your point is that it did not prevail without a fight and there were some serious cosequences to the "radicals", to wit Gallileo. I can wither the onslaughts, I have all along, and I just can't stand arround and let the charlitans win. Thanks for reading the chapter.

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Subject: Suggestion  
Posted by [akhilesh](#) on Fri, 11 Nov 2005 15:44:36 GMT  
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HI Earl, I agree with what you are saying, of course. Couple of suggestions: 1. The material in the first chapter seems too wordy. YOu may want to write more concisely, and make the same points. There seems to be some repetition. 2. Diagrams would help a lot. FOr example, waveforms showing cannons, orchestra, etc would be very helpful, and perhaps break the tedium of reading non-stop text. OVerall, a worthy effort so far! Stop me if you don;t like this kind of feedback, though I mean it constructively. -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: Suggestion  
Posted by [Earl Geddes](#) on Fri, 11 Nov 2005 16:07:29 GMT  
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"Wordy", I have found, is a personal point of view situation. If you know the material, and/or agree with it, then its wordy. If you don't know the concepts then repetition makes the points more clearly. It depends on where your coming from. If you want concise take a look at my first book! I don't think that pictures would be appropriate in the first chapter and I'm not suer where I would get those signals. I'm right out of cannons and kettle drums at the moment.

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Subject: Re: Suggestion  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 11 Nov 2005 16:20:57 GMT

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Earl, just a quick interjection to help refresh your memory. You may recall this already, but maybe not. Akhilesh was at the GPAF, and has his PhD in computer sciences. He is a professor at TU and is a researcher and writer. Several of those you met at GPAF have advanced degrees, and you may not have realized that because of the laid back nature of the event.

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Subject: Re: Suggestion

Posted by [akhilesh](#) on Fri, 11 Nov 2005 16:50:53 GMT

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Sounds good, Earl. Thanks, Wayne, for your kind words. Very worthy effort on the book so far, would love to see how it unfolds. -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: Apples and oranges

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 11 Nov 2005 20:45:48 GMT

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Fair enough. Thank you. And thanks for a thought provoking piece.

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Subject: Re: You may be right, but

Posted by [FredT](#) on Sat, 12 Nov 2005 01:12:13 GMT

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At least they can't put you in jail anymore for challenging the approved dogma (or can they?). Let's find out whether I'm correct about this book being ignored. I posted a link on the Stereophile Forum, Rants and Raves Section, at <http://forum.stereophile.com/forum/ubbthreads.php?Cat=&C=1>

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Subject: Re: You may be right, but

Posted by [Earl Geddes](#) on Sat, 12 Nov 2005 03:37:19 GMT

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There are actually two issues. The first is "do people want to know the truth" about sound quality and what it is, and the second is "if they are taught do they care?" I have pretty much found that the answer to the first is "not really" the mythology is more fun. And the answer to the second is, "well yes your right, but what I have is just fine". Sound quality, per se, is not a competitive advantage. It hardly even rates. Looks, size, prestige all seem to be more important. Just my experience.

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Subject: Re: You may be right, but  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Sat, 12 Nov 2005 12:59:30 GMT  
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Pure subjective research should be it's own reward. I think that if your points are carefully crafted and well thought out they will resonate with individuals and eventually impact the audio landscape. Especially if they provide a description of easily comprehended and recognised phenomena. Lord knows we need some sort of roadmap if only to allow for accurate means to define a commonality of quality and to direct the dialogue.

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Subject: Re: You may be right, but  
Posted by [Earl Geddes](#) on Sat, 12 Nov 2005 15:41:05 GMT  
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I whole heartedly agree with all but your first point - "Pure subjective research should be it's own reward." I'm not sure sure what you mean, but I think that I do. Unfortunately that's the altruistic philosophy which has kept any of this work from being done. As long as consumers continue to support the status quo with their purchasing dollars there will never be much work on "truth" as it can only hurt the industry financially. We do what we can, but alas what we do alone is only a drop in the bucket for what needs to be done. And, along the way Lidia and I have found absolutely no support for our work, either from consumers or industry. It's really like no one cares. Read the posts on my site about our distortion metric to get a flavor for this reality.

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Subject: Re: You may be right, but  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sat, 12 Nov 2005 17:05:52 GMT  
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It's the road less traveled thing. Philosophy, religion and science all share this common trait. Herd mentality and the social drive is evidently stronger than either the drive to find the truth or to find character. I can't judge anyone, I've been guilty of that from time to time. But I think an important start is honestly realizing what motivates oneself, and I think you're right in saying that a

lot of times it's aesthetics and/or perceived status rather than performance. Preconceived notions definitely have a strong influence, and I'd say most people have their minds made up, for right or wrong, and facts won't sway them one way or another. Most suffer an extreme case of contempt prior to investigation, which prevents them from honestly looking at anything other than what they already believe.

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