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Subject: REALLY 'Wrong Side of the Tracks' Meeting  
Posted by [Bill Epstein](#) on Sun, 19 Feb 2006 12:31:50 GMT

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My place. Yesterday. Steve Brown, Ron 'Speakerman' Semega, 'Piece-It Pete and Doug from Cleveland. Steve brought his Angela WE 91 300B amp which we ran casually against a very expensive 300B hybrid. The \$\$\$ amp does everything better but the 91 does it remarkably well. And Steve's build, with silver wire, was run flat out as we had no pre-amp, with NO HUM! BTW, get yourself the Sibelius Second Symphony and Stravinsky's Le Sacre du Printemps. They've become my #1 classical review CD's. The 2nd movement of the Sibelius opens with a theme played only by the double bass and cello which moves up and back, up and back between them. Great imaging test. The twelve-tone Rite of Spring has the most comprehensive solo acoustic instrument tones you can imagine as almost every instrument carries the theme inter-mixed with louder massed passages. My copy of the Stravinsky seems especially well-recorded: Seraphim Classics 73704 Oslo Philharmonic, Mariss Jansons cond. The Sibelius is from the magnificent 'Live In Tokyo 1970' 2 disc set available only through the Cleveland Orchestra store. Recorded on tour 3 months before Mr. Szell died it showcases "the Cleveland Sound" and each of the selections could be the best renditions you'll own. But I digress..... Pete, Doug and Ron ably demonstrated to me that the Beer Quart whose demise I have often wondered about has been replaced by the "20 Ounce". Steve and I shared a vintage (October, I think) bottle of Pinot Grigio as the hour was early and he had to get back to the Capital. Everyone agreed that precisely staggering the books, in-out, in-out, etc., so-to-speak in the new bookcase really improved imaging. And they will attest, GarMan, that it is replete with such literary classics as the Complete Works of W.E.B. Griffin. This "meeting" has to be called a great success as no one thought of leaving until "A", the beer was gone and, "B", the Hendrix album was finished. I had a great time. Thanks for coming by.  
Live In Tokyo 1970

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Subject: Sibelius  
Posted by [elektratic](#) on Sun, 19 Feb 2006 16:10:01 GMT

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Sounds like fun, Bill!! just had to chime in on, and second your enthusiasm for, the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius since I played through his symphonies yesterday -- seemed perfect for a frigid winter's day. Stravinsky's Sacre is perhaps the most famous piece of 20th Century classical music, but Sibelius is little known. To the extent people have even heard his name, I get the feeling they assume he's a minor, regional composer whose stuff is probably mediocre (otherwise, why isn't he better known?). Au contraire! By turns brooding and thrilling, his symphonies are masterpieces. I suspect that he isn't better known because he wrote in a fairly conservative idiom for the time (compared to, say, Richard Strauss or Mahler, much less Schoenberg, et al.), and because he lived too long (his dates are 1865 - 1957!). There has also been some unease about whether he had Nazi sympathies (the Nazis claimed him as a "Nordic genius", but as I understand it diary entries disprove sympathy; nonetheless, the stigma remains). At all events, the generally acknowledged master of his works is Sir Colin Davis, and the reputation is deserved. I saw Davis

perform five of the seven symphonies at a series of concerts at Carnegie Hall with the LSO and it was sublime. Davis conducts the complete symphonies (plus other works) on two Phillips Duos, which are highly recommended. Strangely, though, when I reach for these works I tend to pick out Leonard Bernstein's 1960's performances on Sony (part of the incredibly stupidly named and marketed "Royal Edition" -- what the Prince of Wales has to do with Leonard Bernstein, I haven't the foggiest). Lenny, as he usually does, tends to give the performances a little more "oomph" -- not as purist and contemplative a reading as Davis, perhaps, but a lot of fun for all but the most serious listening. Unfortunately, now that I look, they seem to be out of print, but if anyone's interested there seem to be some used: Bernstein Sibelius Vol. I:

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0000027NR/qid=1140366613/sr=1-37/102-3208809-0428959?v=glance&s=classical> Bernstein Sibelius Vol. II:

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0000027NS/qid=1140366805/sr=1-8/102-3208809-0428959?v=glance&s=classical>

Colin Davis and the BSO on Phillips Duo, Vol 1

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Subject: Re: REALLY 'Wrong Side of the Tracks' Meeting  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sun, 19 Feb 2006 17:27:58 GMT

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Sounds like a great time, Bill. Wish I could have been there with you guys!

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Subject: Re: Sibelius  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Sun, 19 Feb 2006 22:20:52 GMT

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Excellent work E; I finally have something you reviewed. For a while years ago I would buy out classical albums from Salvation Army because they were a quarter a piece. I saved a few hundred that I still have and sure enough that's one of them. Now I will go listen to it.

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Subject: Re: REALLY 'Wrong Side of the Tracks' Meeting  
Posted by [SteveBrown](#) on Mon, 20 Feb 2006 10:49:22 GMT

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Yep, Bill was a great host and it was a lot of fun to hear some new stuff. The experience of meeting other nuts in this hobby and exchanging ideas, sharing listening, etc.. really adds a missing element for me. Thanks, Bill!

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