Subject: Anyone noticing the huge amount of commercial products at DIY shows lately?
Posted by Manualblock on Sun, 02 Apr 2006 15:44:50 GMT
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This point in time is begginning to remind me of the late seventies when Audio Research and Conrad-Johnson began the backlash against the solid state nasties by offering kits of amplifiers and pre-amps. Then as more people realised the terrible sound they were getting from cheap SS and began to search for better sound DIY sprung up. It was nice as people bought old Dyna ST 70's for 75$ and went,"OOH" that sounds much better. Slowly it became popular to listen to tubes again and slowly the commercial interests drove the prices up and drove the DIY guys underground again. Until the CD came around and ruined sound for another ten years. Then the vinyl and tube revolution started again by DIY'ers fifteen years ago gained ground. Magazines like V.T.V. and Sound Practices supported the hobby groups and everyone was genial and enthusiastic. Clubs sprung up of guys building stuff. Kits came back like Bottlehead. Now the creeping commercialism rears it's ugly head again. More and More DIY sites look like Established Stereo Retailers. Advertising commercial gear in the guise of DIY.The wheel turns and returns. Don't get me wrong; it's a good thing. Because the music lovers will find another way to prevail; and the typical stereo jockeys will take on the same persona that irritated so many enough to drive them away from Stereo originally and into DIY."You are still listening to that old stuff; isn't it wooly and lacking in detail" Said with upraised nose and a barely controlled sneer of contempt." HI; I'm Looking for an amplifier?""How MUch Do You Want To Spend??"

Subject: Re: Anyone noticing the huge amount of commercial products at DIY shows lately?
Posted by lon on Sun, 02 Apr 2006 19:44:11 GMT
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I never get to shows but I know what you're talking about.The thought of going into an audio store these days gives me the creeps. The next question is what keeps them going?Are there enough readers of Playboy and now Maxim (I suppose)to keep that dream of the swinging bachelor pad alive? We'vediscussed before that women find little interest in these topicsso I wonder what 'the pitch' is from the sellers.And what are these pieces of retail gear to which yourefer?

Subject: Re: Anyone noticing the huge amount of commercial products at DIY shows lately?
Posted by Manualblock on Sun, 02 Apr 2006 20:46:18 GMT
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Hey Lon; I don't want to get into particulars; I only observe and make notes on the things I see

that involve the hobby. These opinions are mine only and are meant to reflect what I witness and how I feel about it. If the things I mention resonate with others than thats good because that means what I see is pretty common. If some of the events we notice help to shed light on things audio for others; so much the better.It's a good hobby and a lot of enjoyment comes out of it; so it's worth the time to express my thoughts on how it is evolving and improving or not improving and if not; whether things can be altered to help the situation.I don't like being a consumer; I prefer to be a participant. You can't improve a situation if you don't have an understanding of it so the more dialogue the better.

Subject: Re: Anyone noticing the huge amount of commercial products at DIY shows lately?
Posted by lon on Mon, 03 Apr 2006 22:06:05 GMT
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My reason for asking is my confusion about the sorts ofsetups made at a DIY event.Not many hobbyists are building cd players for instance.Many have made turntables.At a DIY show do the builders of product which is discussedin the forums here then exhibit their latest creations lookingtoward acceptance and sale in the marketplace?For this a yes or no will do.Or should a DIY show feature one-off builds by hobbyistsexclusively? This would apply to SET amps, speaks, pre'setc. And do kits count?

Subject: Re: Anyone noticing the huge amount of commercial products at DIY shows lately?
Posted by Manualblock on Mon, 03 Apr 2006 23:30:09 GMT
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There actually are some people building CD players; I can give you a link if you want. As far as DIY shows per se' I don't know of any shows dedicated to DIY stuff. N.Y. Noise used to be strictly DIY but I don't know if they are still happening.But you bring up an interesting point. When you ask if builders of equipment are looking for sales; I guess if they are ready to put a business model in place they might be looking to market their stuff; it isn't easy. I remmember reading in Stereophile a half-dozen years ago a essay detailing exactly how much capital is required to enter the high end audio business. They said it takes a minimum of 500K$; that includes advertising/product support/manufacturing/insurance/design blah blah.However; refering this post to the point I made regarding how so many amatuer and DIY forums are beginning to resemble proffessional retailers; in a similar fashion to the state of the industry that existed back in the early 80's; that was my comment on how similar the landscape is becoming to how things were back then. And of course we all know how people feel about those historical conditions; people abandoned the hobby in droves if I remmember it correctly.I don't see any problem with this BTW; because as I said; I believe the music lovers will always find an outlet for expressing their needs regarding audio and music. But what precipitates this morphing of a commonality of purpose into a profit

driven entity? Thats the really interesting part of this equation. I think what happens is guys begin to try and find ways to finance their hobby by doing or selling little things for small amounts of money to other guys who do audio. Soon they begin to see a little trickle of cash drifting their way and they begin to hoard. They hoard ideas and equipment and tubes and etc; in the hopes that the trickle will grow to a torrent. Thats when the peak threshold is bridged; when they start to manipulate the market of ideas and parts and design. Then little fish grow and begin to require serious business acumen to survive. Many are fleshed out at this point. I read once that most businesses go under at the one million in gross reciepts point.But I am not a graduate of the Wharton School; I just comment on what I see.BTW; I just recieved my Last Poets CD shipping e-mail. I should get it soon. In the meantime I picked up some NWA stuff; you know as per our talk about rap and whatever possibilities it might hold for listening.

Subject: Re: Anyone noticing the huge amount of commercial products at DIY shows lately?
Posted by lon@athenet.net on Mon, 03 Apr 2006 23:42:34 GMT
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This sort of brings to mind the notion of 'doing each other's laundry'for a living.I always envisioned the DIY audio as open source but now I amlearning otherwise as well. Certain softwares are now on a sortof subscription basis.This is what Lessig referred to (paraphrasing) as the privatizationof the commons. In other words, knowledge that was freely exchangedmay provide the basis of a new concept. When that concept goes up forsale there is a lack of recognition of the commons of information asa contributing factor.The other thing about Last Poets... HBO has a new film called Walkout about student acctivities in 1968. That should be a veryworthwhile thing to follow up on.

Subject: Re: Anyone noticing the huge amount of commercial products at DIY shows lately?
Posted by Manualblock on Tue, 04 Apr 2006 00:38:14 GMT
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Nice; thats the Edward James Olmos thing right?I think the upcoming V.T.V. Show in Jersey is what spurred this post. I think about them and the great magazine they used to put out. It just seems indicative of exactly what occurred in the past. At first they share information helpfully with enthusiasm for the hobby then They became known; started charging a fortune for little parts and repairs; putting on a show and boom; the magazine is gone and V.T.V. is a corporation.Can't be giving that information away if you can sell it now. There we have lots of companies started the same way; why is that a problem? Well; because inevitably once the money enters the picture the quality of the product slips and the arrogance grows. Look at Polk; used to make a nice speaker line.Lot of names I am sure you can come up with. So some poor schlub buys their stuff based on reputation except they are a corporate entity now. So lots of little shortcuts in manufacturing. Then literally dozens of outfits spring up only to go broke in two years and leave the buyers hanging. Oh

well; when those nice kits and congenial forums with helpfull people and inexpensive and shared designs go corporate;.. it just means eventually we'll have to start searching for new ways of getting at the hobby; a new world with new people and new places.Keep on truckin'.There will always be the birth of a new version of Sound Practices; rising up somewhere to pick up the slack. Anyone remmember that great little magazine Audiophila? Or The little pamphlets Bottlehead used to publish? Soon AudioeXpress will die and that leaves one huge hole in the audio press. Start saving all the stuff on the net now before they delete it all on you.