Subject: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by Mr Vinyl on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 12:56:14 GMT
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Hi All,I received my back copies of the Audio Critic a couple of days ago. I've had time to only skim through most of the issues. Before I get into what I think about Peter Aczel and the magazine let me start off by saying that so far it's been entertaining and worth the $30. If you're interested in reading a different opinion than the norm then this fits the bill. Was it the best $30 I've spent in audio? Probably not. That honor would go to certain albums I have purchased at one time or another. So what do I think? There is much in the magazine that can be debated and I'm sure would make for some very interesting threads. Way too much to put into one post. I'll try to summarize some of my thoughts below.1) If $30 is too much for you to spend ("risk") on the magazine go to the link below and read Peter Aczel's "Ten Biggest Lies in Audio". Basically the magazine is these same points drilled in over and over again. This will give you a good idea what to expect. 2) As colinhester says below, the guy is harsh. He even goes so far as to list the people in the industry that he thinks are good people (white hats) and the people he thinks are bad (black hats). This I think goes a little too far. Basically Peter Aczel's attitude is "in your face". Normally this doesn't bother me but I do think Audio should be fun. The constant bashing of other magazines and industry personal gets tiring. Of course several of the people he lists as good people advertise in the magazine. 3) If all preamps and amplifiers sound the same then why bother to review them? 4) I was disappointed to see that there were advertisements in the magazine. I don't know why but I thought it was ad free. IMO as soon as a magazine takes advertising money any reviews contained in the magazine are all suspect. 5) The magazine does get you to re-think many things audio. This is the magazine's biggest positive. I don't agree with all he says but he is thought provoking. So that's about all I have time for today. Overall I liked the magazine and thank Akhilesh for pointing it out to me. I am sure there are many hours of interesting reading yet to come.

http://www.theaudiocritic.com/downloads/article_1.pdf#search=%2210%20biggest%20lies%20in%20audio%22

Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by Manualblock on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 13:59:12 GMT
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Or you could just buy up the old issues and read them; it's all the same schtick anyway. And of course his history is suspect so you don't know what to believe.

Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 14:01:26 GMT
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Excellent points, thanks for making them. I bought the back issues and liked them, but reading your posts I realized I agree with you.

Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by akhilesh on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 14:31:03 GMT
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Glad you liked it MR Vinyl. One point you brought up: all amps and cables most certainly do not sound the same. After you read the articles mor eclosely you'll see he is simply saying, amps that are run with minimal distortion well below their operating capacities, with flat freq curves will sound the same. Cables that have indetical LCR charactersitics sound the same. It;s all there in the artciles, as you start reading closely. He also justifies why he reviews amps & digital sources, even though he expects them to sound the same. he repeats thsi in many reviews so we know why he is doing the review. basically, his point is, even if a cheap CD player and an expensive CD player sound the same, people may still prefer the more expensive one becuase it is built better, will last longer, looks better and measures a bit better. SAme reason why some folks will buy a mercedes, even if it performs exactly the same as a hyundai, UNDER NORMAL DRIVING CONDITIONS. Glad you got $30 worth out of it. THe more you read it, the more sense it should make (or the more you'll hate it!)-akhilesh

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Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by Bill Epstein on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 15:10:36 GMT
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I will now respond to these lies with some of my own....., 1.Different cable geometries do sound different from each other but not enough to survive more than a few minutes of "break-in", i.e., your brain processing the sound to conform to what sounds/feels good to you. Eventually, bad sounds good. 2. Tube amplifiers present, in general, different frequency response as to type, than transsitor amps. The differences in FR here are large enough to survive a great deal of "break-in".
2A. Topologies are much more audible than differences in driver tubes which have more audible differences than power tubes. 2B. Solid State Class "A" sounds quite different from Class *.* others3. Digital sounds different from Analog. Waaay different frequency response and signal-to-noise and no amount of familiarity can cause one to sound like another. I don't have a preference for either. They both sound good in different ways when done right.4.Blind testing is bad? It isn't possible to pick out differences in components with proper blind testing? Where did Aczel do his military service? In the Artillery?Back when I spent a lot of time at Hollywood Sound we would frequently A/B amps, pre-amps and sources w/o knowing which was "live" at the time. Not all that scientific but migosh, if you couldn't hear the difference between an Adcom and a Counterpoint or Melos or Conrad-Johnson .....5. I agree with Aczel here, but like a lot of generalities it needs to be tempered by "if properly implemented" or some such qualifier.6. Once

again, Aczel is right. "Break-in" is your brain processing sounds to conform to what it already is pre-disposed to hear as good or bad. The very first moments of sound you hear from any component are what it really sounds like.If you don't believe me. Try this experiment.Acquire a brand new compression driver, connect it to source/amplification and listen to it just sitting on it's box. First few minutes, very strange/bad. Continue to listen for a few hours.....7. Bi-wiring is the single most phony "mainstream" tweak. 'Nuff said.8.Power conditioners do sound different. See 1. above.9.I can't hear CD treatments either. But I can SEE them on DVD's.Go figure.10. Since I'm home today writing this 'cause I'm drinking 8 oz's of Sodium and potassium this and that every 15 minutes preparatory to another 'scope tomorrow I'm reminded that opinions are like assholes, everyones got one.Excuse me while I go play Ass Trumpet.

Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by akhilesh on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 15:18:35 GMT
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HI Bill,"4.Blind testing is bad? It isn't possible to pick out differences in components with proper blind testing?Where did Aczel do his military service? In the Artillery?Back when I spent a lot of time at Hollywood Sound we would frequently A/B amps, pre-amps and sources w/o knowing which was "live" at the time. Not all that scientific but migosh, if you couldn't hear the difference between an Adcom and a Counterpoint or Melos or Conrad-Johnson ....."-Are these all solid state amps?-are they level matched?-is it a double blind test or r u given subconscious cues by the test giver, who knows which amps ar being switched (that would be a single blind test). In a few of the articles in his back issues, Aczel describes the conditions for blind testing, and one of them is level matchng to 0.01 db. Apparently this is very difficult to do. He claims that once amps with similar levels of distortion, freq response and damping factor are used, in a level matched scenario (0.01 db +/-) you really cannot distinguish them in a double blind test, provided they are not overdriven. I haven't personally tried that, but I find it intuitive to believe. In other words, I buy it. Of course, I still use SET amps, becuase, as I have said many a time< I LIKE the distortion & weird freq curves they produce. Makes music sound more "natural" to me. -akhilesh

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Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by Mr Vinyl on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 15:32:04 GMT
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Hi Akhilesh, As I mentioned above, I'm sure there will be many interesting debates as to whether Mr. Aczel is correct or not. I seriously doubt the people on either side could take the debate to conclusion where one side is correct and one side admits to being wrong. All I can do is give you my opinion. You will either agree or disagree. But because this is what I think these kind of message boards are for, I will give you my opinion on his ten biggest lies when I get a chance to write it down. As long as it doesn't turn into a name calling thing I will be more than happy to participate. Should be fun. Thanks again for the recommendation.

Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by akhilesh on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 16:00:07 GMT
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I agree. We can debate endlessly, and after a while it becomes a non sequitur. You're welcome re: the resommendation! That;s waht these forums are for. I doubt there will be any namecalling....that is why this is moderated, right? -akhilesh

Subject: This guy is a complete idiot
Posted by Damir on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 16:11:56 GMT
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Thanks for posting this idiotic "article" about "10 lies in audio".Strong opinions, like: "tubes...idiotic design like 8W SET", and his other 9 points. Everyone who has even small experience in audio can find totally opposite examples/experience then his "10 lies/truths".Opinions and "knowledge" like that you can find every day on various audio forums from various "experts" and trolls - serious writer/magazine /book/engineer is a something else...

Subject: I certainly would not call him a "complete idiot"
Posted by Mr Vinyl on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 16:42:41 GMT
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He believes that if your going to make a statement then you should be able to prove it with science such as in a double blind test. Right or wrong, he is certainly not an idiot. I think he has a legitimate opinion.

Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by Manualblock on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 16:43:33 GMT
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So you listen to SET's becuase all the wierd curves and response graphs makes the " Music sound more natural to me? " I think you just shot yourself in the foot.

Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.

Posted by Shane on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 17:02:45 GMT
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Sorry--this may be OT. I don't know about SET's sounding more natural to me, but they tend to be more pleasing to listen to for the short listening sessions I get. I just don't understand the whole exact reproduction, clinical, technical disagreements that occur. If I don't like the way a system sounds, no matter how well it reproduces, then it's no good for me. Just me, someone else may find it perfect. I don't care if that means horrible curves, the worst measurements in the world, ugly as sin, and terrible response--if I like it then that's good enough for me. No one is gonna be listening to my system 99.9% of the time except me anyway and I'm not out to impress anyone else.

Subject: Allright, then - "incomplete idiot"
Posted by Damir on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 17:29:24 GMT
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You are right, complete idiot can`t write at all...And incomplete idiot writes about his incomplete experiences and with his incomplete technical knowledge in a absolute, lie/truth way, like he demonstrated in this stupid article.

Subject: Maybe some posts here should be MODERATED
Posted by akhilesh on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 19:24:27 GMT
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Like the one above. It's beginning to look more like the asylum. I thought this was a forum where all views would be tolerated. I think the moderator of this forum (whoever he is) needs to step in and make some decisions. I am not sure if bashing industry folk and calling them idiots is what we want to be doing. -akhilesh

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Subject: I find it hurtful & insulting that if a certain magazine/product is recommended here
Posted by akhilesh on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 19:31:29 GMT
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by anyone, that it is called names by others. I would request the moderator to think about changing/deleting these 2 posts that have stooped to name calling. This is what keeps this from being an asylum. And ensure people can post their ideas here without fear of ridicule. Just my 2

cents. Rest is up to the MODERATOR of this forum (whoever he is). -akhilesh

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Subject: Yeah, it's name calling
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 21:13:09 GMT
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I agree with you that there's some Aczel-bashing going on here. And I can see why you would take offense at that, 'cause you really like the magazine and Peter Aczel's writing style and his views.To tell the truth, I guess I'm kind of a cynic too, 'cause I kind of agree with a lot of the rocks Aczel has thrown at the hifi business. I find myself sometimes thinking the same way. Makes me want to be sure to guard from getting too wrapped up in something, which I am prone to do. But enough introspection.I got busy and didn't watch this thread develop. I don't know which of us is moderator here, and I can't look it up 'cause I'm not near the computer with the list. But I think it would probably be a tough call for whoever it is. I don't really know how I feel about it.But likening this thread with the Asylum, now that's really stinky. I guess what I'm trying to say is maybe we could cut Damir some slack. I think he means to say he "strongly disagrees", not really name calling. I shouldn't put words in his mouth, maybe he meant the strongest of insults. ("I shall fart in your general direction", to quote Monte Python) But you've seen his posts, and I think you'll agree that Damir is a moderate personality here.

Subject: Re: Yeah, it's name calling
Posted by akhilesh on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 21:20:33 GMT
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Sounds good Wayne. Thanks for the quick response on this. I do find some of hte posts above (without taking names) rude and uncalled for. But I can live with it. -akhilesh

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Subject: Another consideration
Posted by wunhuanglo on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 21:48:40 GMT
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It seems obvious to me (but, as everybody knows, I'm an idiot) that Damir is an ESL guy - he derserves the benefit of the doubt.

Subject: Something happened in the world while I was asleep

Posted by wunhuanglo on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 21:55:23 GMT
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It seems that today no slight is too insignificant to go unnoticed, unremarked or unavenged.When did everybody's shorts start riding up at the slightest provocation?

Subject: Re: Maybe some posts here should be MODERATED
Posted by Damir on Tue, 22 Aug 2006 21:55:28 GMT
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Well, I just responded with the same words - I just actually finished one "idiotic design such as 8W SET" to quote the author you like sooo much. Also, many other things from that article are just stupid, but of course - you found it brilliant.

Subject: Re: Yeah, it's name calling
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 23 Aug 2006 01:35:05 GMT
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Aczel doesn't post here and in his magazine he's been known to use the same pejoritive language. Should we hold Damir to a higher standard than Aczel? Last I looked Damir was never disengenous in print; but Aczel has been. I say you lay down with dogs you wake up with fleas. He deserves the same treatment he has accorded his readers; insults; lies and mis-representation of fact. Damir had the guts to point that out in the same manner Aczel uses. Maybe we should be wondering at the extreme level of defensiveness surrounding this guy from ART readers; Could there be some agenda we aren't privy to here? What else could explain such vituperative response in defense of him?Damir is an honest long time ART participant; Aczel is niether.

Subject: Because it gets old.
Posted by Shane on Wed, 23 Aug 2006 02:16:40 GMT
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I don't usually speak up in these situations, but I'm gonna say a little piece then shut the hell up cause this is starting to remind me of the BS that goes on at AA.Bashing of anyone gets real old, real quick. I really don't give a flip what this guy's done. Somehow I'm doubting his influence has caused much serious damage in the world. He sure hasn't affected me, cuz I never heard of him till this week. People seem to be way to tied up in "he said, she said" or whatever. If you can hear or think you can hear differences in cables, then good for you. I can tell the difference

between my RS junkers and my Zu's. The first minute was the deciding factor. If I can't hear something right away then it isn't there for me as far as I'm concerned. If something someone else does or says works for you, good deal. If it doesn't, then you agree to disagree and move on. If people have a problem with someone, especially the way they present themselves, then it seems to me that it's better not to respond in the same manner as the person that's getting complained about. Guts has nothing to do with stating an opinion most of the time. I know people that give thier opinion without any regard to what they said at all. To each thier own I guess. Sometimes people are just having a bad day.Let me clarify that I have absolutely nothing against Damir or anyone else that doesn't like Aczel. Damir has always been a moderate person as far as I can tell, and he has always answered my stupid newbie tube questions with a clarity and patience that I am most grateful for, and he has more knowledge about audio than I'll probably ever have. So has Manualblock, and Akhilesh, and Bill, and Wayne, etc.....Everyone has always been helpful to me without exception.Seems like when everyone has said their opinion and maybe explained why they believe what they do, it's time to let it die before the arguments begin. Petty bickering is completely non-productive and life is entirely too short for such nonsense IMHO. My grandma always said to speak your piece, but not if you don't have something decent to say. You can disagree without being rude, mean, or spiteful.Ok, I'm done.

Subject: Re: Another consideration
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 23 Aug 2006 02:30:27 GMT
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I agree, 100%. Damir is a stand-up guy. He explained himself pretty well, I thought. Kinda funny too - The distinction between "complete idiot" and "incomplete idiot". Perhaps "person with foot in mouth disease" might have been more what Damir wanted to say about Aczel. I know I appear that way about half the time, so Damir could rightly say the same thing about me. But I would expect a moderator to delete that, you know.

Subject: Re: Yeah, it's name calling
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 23 Aug 2006 03:11:19 GMT
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We hold ourselves to a higher standard here on ART. Whether people insult each other elsewhere or not, we don't do that here. Ideas can be discussed, scrutinized and even attacked. But people can't be personally insulted or attacked, not even by inference. Not here.

Subject: Re: Because it gets old.
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 23 Aug 2006 03:28:16 GMT

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That is one of the things that drove ART into existance. If you allow personal ad-hominem attacks, then the person being attacked is tempted to respond in kind. Sure, you can be a "bigger person" and take it without striking back, but what if it's your wife or kids being insulted? No point in looking at all the possibilities of errant behavior. It doesn't take much to realize that civility ends where insults begin.As an aside, it always busted me up to see nerds on internet messageboards talking about being "big enough to take an insult" - Like that is some sort of tough guy stance.

Subject: Re: Because it gets old.
Posted by Shane on Wed, 23 Aug 2006 04:14:17 GMT
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That's the reason I post here on ART! I might peruse AA looking for some info about some sort of DIY design or something, but I"ve only posted there 3-4 times over the years, usually just to ask a question that I can later verify the answer to."It doesn't take much to realize that civility ends where insults begin. "----Agreed!

Subject: Re: Because it gets old.
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 23 Aug 2006 11:36:10 GMT
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Thats right; everybody is a tough guy when you can't see them.

Subject: Re: Maybe some posts here should be MODERATED
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 23 Aug 2006 11:43:34 GMT
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You have to remmember this guy used to be more open to new ideas in his first magazine. Because there was so much competition at that time in the magazine industry he did a complete turnaround and became the complete opposite in order to generate controversy. That was one of the gripes people had with him even before he mis-represented his speakers. He behaved like a real polititon.

Subject: Re: Something happened in the world while I was asleep
Posted by Bill Martinelli on Wed, 23 Aug 2006 16:01:09 GMT
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I'd say about the same time laywers starting advertising on billboards, TV and telphone books...

Subject: Re: Ok, here are my thoughts on Peter Aczel and the Audio Critic Mag.
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 25 Aug 2006 19:31:39 GMT
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True True. Especially since there aren't many in this world who are impressed by stereo's anyway. Unless they are in waterfront homes on Marco Island; or in a Lambourghini Countach.