
Subject: Rocky Mountain Audiofest: This visitor's thoughts

Posted by [3moons](#) on Thu, 26 Oct 2006 16:16:23 GMT

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First, I want to thank the Colorado Audio Society for their help with the show.
<http://www.coloaudio.com/CAS/> These shows are always exciting, especially for audio nuts like me. Talk about audio as fine art, as audio jewelry. It was there. If the high-end audio industry has done nothing else, it has created some imaginative, artful eye candy. And much of it sounds good too! One gripe about these shows is the strange need for many exhibitors to play their systems way too loud. If I never have to hear a saxophone or brass instruments played louder than life, in a small hotel room, that will be just fine. Maybe I'm in the minority but I want to be drawn into the music, not blown over in my chair. Thank goodness there were also plenty of rooms playing good music at or close to comfortable listening levels. Human voice, classical, jazz, blues and country was all doing things right from a few well set up systems. Hotel rooms can be so problematic when "tuning" a system. In one or two days! The biggest, baddest JM Labs speakers ever made sounded thick and boomy this year. And it's not the speaker or the electronics, as I've heard this same gear sound "Grand" in the home of one of our very own FM Tuner members here in the Dallas area. So they can sound glorious. There were different problems with the Audio Note room. The room in Denver just sounded wrong. And I went back several times. Very strange as much of the same Audio Note gear sounded quite wonderful at the Great Plains Audiofest for the last two years running. With those Audio Note systems set up in two different rooms, no less.
<http://www.greatplainsaudiofest.com/> Another shock, I thought, was the Harbeth speakers that sounded so fine last year but not this year. I say, I thought, because this time I heard them being driven through class D amps. I didn't hear any of these type amps produce what I consider good music in any of the rooms. Maybe a few generations from now? Maybe never, for my tastes. The McIntosh room with their array speakers weren't bad at all. At least from the first impression. The array type speaker is one of the reasons I went this year. I have several friends with great sounding arrays from companies like GR-Research, Dali and Selah. Those, one and all, have huge, wide and tall (and good) sound. I DO love my small JM Labs and Dynaudio Aries speaker systems. But every time I visit one of these guys, my system comes up, "plays up" short in size, if not in good sonics. As I expected, nothing affordable... of this type... on my retirement income... is out there. I need a paying job! Two small speaker systems that I found quite nice were the ACI speakers in room 1022 and some new home theater speakers called ERA speakers in room 2000. I won't go into tubes versus solid state, as the division didn't seem to jump out at me this year. Good sound came from both. On my FM tuner fetish, I didn't see any on display. Last year was better. There were music servers and the, quickly becoming, famous Slim Devices Squeezebox. I have a Squeezebox in my second system sitting on one of my tuners. Thank you Fred! It has internet music coming from my router/high speed cable and the computer's hard drive. I have compared several hard drive stored formats. Sent from my M-Audio card, digital out and hardwired into my main system DAC. For me, the sound quality measured up like this. EAC WAV files direct from CD as best. With WMA lossless and iTunes lossless about neck and neck second and downhill from there with iTunes and MP3. I bring this up because in the Evergreen Ballroom Salons, room A, there was some HUGE Wilson speakers driven by Halcro amps. The music was from a hard drive in WMA lossless format. The sound was OK but I did get the feeling it was from a "soft" format. Not what I normally hear from a pair of Wilson's on transistor or tube gear. I dare say one of our DIY members could have extracted better sound with a "real" CD in an \$80 Panasonic DVD player as the transport and a nice moderately priced DAC. Just my opinions.

On the final musical note. I enjoyed the music and talking to the people in the Quicksilver, ModWright, GR-Research, Welborne Labs, Atmosphere, Experience Music, Inc., Amber Wave Audio, Zu Audio, Hagerman Technology and Tyler Acoustic rooms. When reading the list, I'm sure my DIY bones must be showing. Love that music! 8:-) jim... If you've somehow missed it, Fred has about 55 photos of some of the more affordable and non-mainstream companies can be seen on the link below. <http://fredt300b.smugmug.com/gallery/2040368> So what's next? For me, it will be the Lone Star Audiofest in Dallas next May. Hope to see you there.
jim...<http://www.lonestaraudiofest.com/>

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Audiofest: This visitor's thoughts
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sat, 28 Oct 2006 16:06:07 GMT
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Thanks for posting your impressions. I can hardly wait for LSAF!

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Audiofest: This visitor's thoughts
Posted by [DRCope](#) on Tue, 31 Oct 2006 15:44:58 GMT
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Sorry to hear you were disappointed in the Audio Note room's sound. This is the first negative feedback I've seen after quite a few positive reviews. Are you talking about the all-Audio Note room 9026 or Audio Federation in the large suite at the end of the hall, which was about half Audio Note? What do you mean by "wrong"?

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Audiofest: This visitor's thoughts
Posted by [3moons](#) on Wed, 01 Nov 2006 12:49:51 GMT
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So sorry. I didn't mean to sound so negative. I am a big fan of Audio Note products, across the whole line. What sounded wrong to my ears was a slight upper midrange harshness I've not previously noticed with Audio Note products listened to in friend's homes or, as said, in Tulsa two years running. I can only assume it was the room or maybe just the music at the times I visited.
jim...

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Audiofest: This visitor's thoughts

Posted by [DRCope](#) on Wed, 01 Nov 2006 13:10:09 GMT

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There was a great deal more information on tap than in either system you heard at RMAF with the M8 pre, Kageki amps, SEC Sig spkrs, all silver cable, mostly Sogon at that. When the volume was high, which people kept asking for, I heard a lot of upper mid-range/lower treble "pinging" off the walls. We also were all digital till Saturday afternoon, with a 5687 dying Saturday night. If you came by Sunday, when we were all vinyl (IO1, S4), and fully retubed with some really tasty tubes courtesy of a loan by Mark Margiotta, the sound improved markedly. I wouldn't say the system was doing anything wrong beforehand; it was just telling some truths that were difficult to absorb.

Subject: Re: Rocky Mountain Audiofest: This visitor's thoughts

Posted by [3moons](#) on Wed, 01 Nov 2006 13:29:21 GMT

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AH SO... I left Denver at 4:30, early Sunday morning. Missed the "tasty tubes" and all. Hope to see/hear things again at the next gathering. Maybe in Dallas next year? jim...

Subject: Audio Note at Lone Star?

Posted by [DRCope](#) on Wed, 01 Nov 2006 13:37:13 GMT

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Yes, as is too often the case, truly soul-satisfying performance was only achieved on the last day, when crowds were thinnest. The vinyl charge, led by the IO1 and the juicy tubes (almost) made me sorry the show was coming to a close. I plan for us to do the Lone Star Shindig, and I'd like Audio Note Kits to take a room as well. You guys can help by writing Brian Smith, major domo of kitdom and inviting, imploring, etc, him to do the show. I think it would be great for the kit biz and the show attendees as well. I'd like to hear some of the new kits myself!

Subject: Re: Audio Note at Lone Star?

Posted by [3moons](#) on Wed, 01 Nov 2006 14:07:09 GMT

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Good luck with that persuading! I'll do my part in the begging. Wayne? Fred? Luther? I've had a lustful eye on those A-N kit speakers ever since the Great Plains A-N rooms. And also that 1.1 DAC for some time now. He REALLY should bring some of those toys to Dallas next year! jim...

Subject: Audionote speaker kit
Posted by [wardsweb](#) on Thu, 02 Nov 2006 01:46:56 GMT
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Here are some kits done in cocobolo that I refinished for a friend. These shown at the Audiokarma Fest06 outside Detroit being pushed with a monster amp from Blue Circle.
