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Subject: 1st-timer w/ 4 Pi Questions (kinda long)  
Posted by [trancemitr](#) on Mon, 14 Jan 2002 20:47:24 GMT  
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Well, I've been reading about PI speakers for about a month now, and I've decided to take the plunge. The first thing is that I'm pretty sure I want to go with the 4 PIs. I really want that last bottom octave without the subwoofer, and I like the thought of having the option to someday try SETs. I'm interested in building a tube amp to go with the PIs. Any ideas on how good these options might sound with the 4 PIs in a 22 x 13ft room: 40 watts from EL-34, 50 watts from KT-88, 3.5 watts (SET) from 2A3. I really don't want to spend any more than \$800 on pre and power. Anyone have any suggestions? Wayne, would you have any specific suggestions for me. I want to feel "immersed" in sound. I want good presence and soundstaging. I want decent clarity, though I don't think I can spring for the "pro" stuff. Is this too much to ask? I mostly listen to rock and jazz, but I also do not want to feel disappointed on the occasions that I might play some bass-heavy electronica. Thanks in advance. From what I've read you seem to be a real class-act. Kevin

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Subject: Re: 1st-timer w/ 4 Pi Questions (kinda long)  
Posted by [gsoneill](#) on Mon, 14 Jan 2002 21:20:16 GMT  
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i'm kinda in a similar situation except that i have already built my set tube pre-amp and amps. i went with the bottlehead foreplay and a pair of paramour mono amps--for the money, i don't think you can find a better deal. i am currently using a set of highly sensitive speakers specifically manufactured for set tube arrangements and really love everything about them except that they are a little light on the lower end--i prefer more bass than they will provide. i don't really want a subwoofer (just cause, no real reason) so i have ended up about where you are--theater fours or thermionic fours. size is kind of an issue so i am leaning toward the theatre fours but i don't really want to take the plunge until i can be sure that that all important bass is present. as for the set tube stuff (2a3's in my case) you won't believe how much "clearer" it sounds than ss stuff. and, i really can't say enough about the bottlehead product---they have a great forum much like this. anyway, good luck with whatever you decide--i am a total newbie that had never touched a soldering iron before so go for it!

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Subject: Go Bottlehead!  
Posted by [Garland](#) on Mon, 14 Jan 2002 21:52:43 GMT  
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Hi Trancemitr, Till E. and I are both playing around with the Theater 4 Pi's and Paramour 2a3's and

Foreplay preamps from Bottlehead. Till's are complete and he's listening but also messing around with other stuff so his definitive review of the combination is forthcoming. His preliminary findings are quite positive. My 4 Pi's and Paramours are under construction but the Foreplay is a killer especially for the \$200 I have in it! The Paramours are also a steal! and I agree with gsoneill that the Bottlehead Forum is a wonderful asset to the DIY hobby. Good Luck with what you end up doing!Garland

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Subject: Re: Go Bottlehead!

Posted by [trancemitr](#) on Mon, 14 Jan 2002 23:48:39 GMT

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Garland, any idea of Till E's impressions of the dynamics with this combo? Bass extension? Any idea how big his listening room is, or if he feels that little bit of power is enough? I was thinking that with the size of my room I'd need the 300Bs, which I can't afford. Maybe I should be asking Till E these questions...

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Subject: Re: 1st-timer w/ 4 Pi Questions (kinda long)

Posted by [trancemitr](#) on Mon, 14 Jan 2002 23:53:38 GMT

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Thanks for the input. I've looked at the Bottlehead stuff a while too. Appears to be a pretty sweet deal. I've got no problem soldering as long as I've got good instructions. The scary part is that I'll be building my first amp, pre, and speakers all at the same time. But who doesn't like a challenge?

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Subject: Re: Go Bottlehead!

Posted by [gsoneill](#) on Tue, 15 Jan 2002 00:28:04 GMT

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believe me, 100db's @ 1watt is incredibly loud...even for the biggest rooms. the 2a3's will be plenty in the correct configuration.

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Subject: "I am not a role model" - C. Barkley  
Posted by [BillEpstein](#) on Tue, 15 Jan 2002 00:28:41 GMT  
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Neither am I. And free advice.... But I will venture that your first instinct is a good one. Pick up an used amp and concentrate building efforts on the 4 Pi's. I highly recommend the Music Reference RM-10, 30 PP EI-84 watts that has the lowest noise of any amp I know. Essential for high efficiency. There's always one available on Audiogon and you can get in and out of one anytime for \$6 to \$650. Then put a \$25 noble or some other volume pot between source and amp. I really love the Foreplay-Paramour combination. The sound in some ways is magical with the Pi's. But then the Pi's by themselves are a whole new world of sound you have to hear for yourself. Even with my solid waste A/V receiver, the you are there quality of the sound and the way ideas like image, reflection points, speed, lean, etc become superfluous, even meaningless. The Bottlehead experience is a path you take; the equipment is somewhat cantankerous and requires that it become a hobby unto itself. Whether there is hum to be rid of or not, you will be drawn into the tweaking which will lead you other places in DIY audio. It's the perfect drug for me. You have to decide if it's for you. Now all I have to do is build the Pro cabinets, finish my experiments with Radio Shack 26ga. magnet wire and install the snubbers in the Foreplay and Paramours. Oh yeah, I have to build new bases for the Paramours too. Then the review. But who cares what I think. Just Do it!

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Subject: Re: 1st-timer w/ 4 Pi Questions (kinda long)  
Posted by [gsoneill](#) on Tue, 15 Jan 2002 00:32:42 GMT  
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the instructions that come with the bottlehead kits are very, very detailed and easy to follow. the paramours were amazingly simple and the foreplay, although quite a bit more challenging, also had very detailed instructions. in addition, i really can't say enough about the forum--quest, voltsecond, and doc. b (and many others) always seem to be able to help.

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Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 15 Jan 2002 02:40:41 GMT  
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...a magical combination!

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Subject: Re: Go Bottlehead!

Posted by [BillEpstein](#) on Tue, 15 Jan 2002 03:05:06 GMT

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Ok. My room is 12X28 and the 2A3 Paramours take the Pi's louder than I can listen. I've tried cutting off the Pi's at 40hz and used a really deep sub and preferred the Pi's alone. It's not just that they go deep and have dynamics you'll never hear on Kestrels or Paradigms or Magnepons, etc but the one thing that really knocks me out is hearing, for the first time after many playings, the tuba distinctly along with the trombones, not just a brass section on the Janacek Sinfonietta. So include low distortion on the bottom, with Eminence Delta among the strengths. Still wondering about the mids. Possibly I'm still captive of the audiophile sickness and part of the reason I need to build the Pro's. This week I will finally add the woofer RC network, AB the Mapleshade and RS magnet wire cables and make the long awaited pronouncement (Garland, how did you ever set me up as some kind of authority, are you kidding, I'm waiting to hear from you!)

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Subject: Blind leading the Blind...

Posted by [Garland](#) on Tue, 15 Jan 2002 17:52:43 GMT

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As my wife the psychotherapist would say, I just assumed you'd have some experiences you'd like to share with the same gear that I planned on having. I was of course hoping to find out your opinions before I was fully committed to building the Pi's. But I do respect your modesty! Over on the Bottlehead forum I've had so much fun talking to the folks there that I occasionally find myself going way overboard on posting my ideas especially in light of the fact that I really don't know much of what I'm talking about!!! I've recently tried to cool it a bit but do love the comraderie even if I only pretend that I am one of the "gang" and not just a "hanger on". One last thing, What is it about the mids? Garland