

AXPONA 2019 Awards & Show Report



Reviewers View AXPONA 2019

Reviewers View AXPONA 2019, we review the highlights of the largest aud...



The Awards and Reports- Terry Eringi

Audio Note UK:

Vincent Belanger, Audio Note, UK Ambassador walked us through one of the

best Audio Note audio show exhibit rooms I've heard to date. The new turntable, the Audio Note TT3, was spinning and the sound in the room was effortless and natural while playing a track from the album "Pure Cello" from Audio Note Music. Loudspeakers were the AN-E/SPeHE's.



Gryphon Audio

Wow! I got slammed, musically that is. The Gryphon room featured the Trident II Loudspeakers driven by the mighty Mephisto stereo amplifier with the new Ethos CD Player/DAC. Cables were Gryphon's own VIP line. I was spellbound by the impact this system had. The system produced extensive image layering but the real take away was the emotion impact this amazing system produced. The dynamic range was simply off the charts! It was if I was at a live Kraftwerk concert!



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Gold Show AXPONA
Best Sound

Gryphon Audio

Certificate of Accomplishment



Peter Breuninger

By:

CEO

April 2019

Title:

Date:

GT Audioworks/Sound Insight:

Bravo to Steve Rabitz of Sound Insight and Greg Takesh, loudspeaker designer, GT Audioworks along with Eric Pheils, North American Distributor for Zanden. We played a track from “Chasing the Dragon” that filled the small hotel exhibit room with deep, rich music along with perfect tonality and tonal quality in both the female vocal and the organ. The GTA 3.1r Planar Magnetic full range loudspeaker along with Sound Insight’s open baffle subwoofers delivered seamlessly integrated bass as the panels pressurized the room. The Zanden tube amplifier Model 8120 drove the loudspeakers effortlessly, something I’ve come to expect from one of the best tube amplifiers being produced today (see AVShowrooms’ video review of the 8120). . With pleasure I report that this year’s exhibit in a small room proved how well the loudspeakers work within a limited space. Included in the room: all cabling from Zanden, Richard Grey isolation transformer and power conditioner, Esoteric K01XS CD Player and the Kronos Sparta turntable.



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GT Audio Works, Sound Insight, Zanden Audio Systems
Richard Gray's Power Co., Kronos Sparta

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High Fidelity Cables:

At the end of the hall, at the Schaumburg Convention Center, Rick Schultz of **High Fidelity Cables** was presenting us with a concert. There was so much energy in this space that it seemed to completely obliterate everything else that was going on at the other exhibits.

Included were the Baffleflex loudspeakers, open baffle with adjustable side panels. The LS has 4, 12" drivers with a ribbon tweeter and is 102 db efficient. Driving these giants was the MA70 amplifier complete with magnetically assisted transistors. The **High Fidelity Cables** magnetic based Pro Series cables and Pro Elite cables along with the Pro Elite power conditioner were part of this wonderful spectacle of a system.

We played Kraftwerk's "Radioactivity" a very appropriate track to show off the huge dynamic range, giving us slam and multiple layering.



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High Fidelity Cables

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LSA/Emerald Physics/Core Power Tech A/V:

This year's AVShowrooms' Video will feature a listening session with the new LSA-20 Statement floorstanding loudspeakers. We then move on to two listening sessions with the LSA 10 Signature Monitors; one session with the room correction on and one with it off. The room correction feature is included in the preamp and DAC, the DSPeaker Anti-Mode 2.0 Dual Core driving the monitors. The floorstanders brought Kate Bush into the room with us, front and center. The LSA-20's threw a huge soundstage with great spatiality and bass. The speakers were driven by the Emerald Physics EP200.2SE hybrid dual mono amplifiers with 200 watts per channel. The DAC/preamp was the new Pure Audio Lotus and power conditioning was the Core Power Technologies Equi=Core 1800.

Especially compelling, and others in the room agreed, was the comparison of the same track on the monitors with the room correction in and the room correction out. With the correction in, noticeably the soundstage expanded, Kate's

voice was very close to what the floorstanders produced (without any room correction), the bass and the separation of instruments was about 85% of what the floorstanders delivered. You don't have to shell out the big bucks to get great sound.





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Best Sound

LSA 20 Statement and LSA 10 Loudspeakers
Emerald Physics, Core Power Tech, Pure Audio Lotus, Underwood HiFi

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Date: **April 2019** _____

Nagra:

The Nagra exhibit room at AXPONA 2019 – easily one of the best sounds at the show. The electronics, of course, were all Nagra including the world-class Nagra HD preamp and Rene Laflamme walks us through the system on the AVShowrooms' video. Along with effortless, delicately revealing sound and brilliant tonality, we were treated to an emotionally involving track from Rene's recording of "Audiophile Analog Collection Vol. 1" titled "Greek Tycoon Bouzouki Music". Several cuts on the album were recorded on the 4S Nagra tape deck. Outstanding! The loudspeakers were the Kharma Elegance S7's and the cabling was by Organic Reference from Denmark.



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Best Sound

NAGRA

Kharma, 2xHD Recordings, Organic Cables

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Next Level HiFi/Borresen 5 Loudspeakers:

Truly, the star of the show was the United States debut of the Borresen 5 flagship loudspeakers. The Next Level HiFi exhibit room was dead quiet with the blackest of black background; the information I've not heard before in the Norwegian vocal cut "Liberty" was astounding. Another track, a jazz instrumental put the musicians in the room with us, you could hear the sax player breathing and connecting with his instrument. Michael Borresen explains in an interview on the AVShowrooms' video, his revolutionary driver design. Driving the Borresen's were the Aavik monoblock Class A 300 watts per channel (Michael talks about these beauties) along with the "Danish Army Knife", the C300 preamplifier with a DSD DAC, PCM DAC and phonostage. Cables were Ansuz.



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Best Sound

Next Level AV
Boressen Acoustics, Aavik Acoustics, Ansuz Acoustics

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CEO

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Odyssey Audio:

This year at AXPONA 2019, the Odyssey Audio exhibit room, with the newly upgraded Magnan Cables, gave the listeners one of the best soundstage experiences at the show comfortably competing with systems 10X the price. The layering, detail, beautifully integrated sound with the magnificent imaging is what keeps so many reviewers from various publications visiting the Odyssey/Magnan Room at the audio shows.

Equipment included the Kismet loudspeakers; Candela preamplifier and the Khartago mono blocks.

The Magnan cables were the Magnan Signature speaker cables and the Magnan signature interconnects, the upgrade (you'll hear about it in the AVShowrooms's video) is about replacing the woven jacketing with cotton cloth. I think this gave the overall sound a deeper texture with more image density. Definitely an improvement. I noticed a more profound emotional connection when playing a Kate Bush track. Next track was the Eagles' "Hotel California". I've

heard this track in the Odyssey Audio room at shows before and nobody denies that the recording is bright. That brightness was toned down without losing any of the punchy, big, but detailed presentation.



Raidho with Audio Skies:

The Raidho TD4.2 loudspeakers pressurized the room to deliver both a musical and accurate sound. I consider the TD4.2 LS to be a hybrid composed of the TD4.1 and the organic signature that Benno Baun Meldgaard, Raidho's chief engineer brings to the new design, a best of both worlds. Benno explains his design philosophy in the AVShowrooms' video along with Michael Vamos, the Raidho Sales Director for the U.S. market. Michael talks about the new ribbon tweeter; higher efficiency (tube friendly), lower distortion and increased resolution. A track from the Kraftwerk album presented a full detailed, dynamic sound with a rich and emotionally stirring midrange that harkens back to the GamuT LS designs by Benno.



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Raidho Acoustics TD 4.2, Gamut, Chord, VPI

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Synergistic Research:

Everything in the system at the Synergistic Research exhibit room was running through the Powercell 12 SE power conditioner and we played the track “Radioactivity” from the Kraftwerk album “The Mix”.

Simply, when the power conditioner was turned on the soundstage opened up, the sound was more layered and images appeared in space around the room. The room included the Magico loudspeakers; Gryphon amplification and the United Home Audio tape deck.



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Best Sound

Synergistic Research

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VAC/Von Schweikert/The Audio Company:

The Flagship Ultra 11's with the Valve Amplification Company's Signature 450 iq's are the must-have uber speakers and amplifiers if you want that live concert sound. When playing the track "Radioactivity" from Kraftwerk on the LP "The Mix", the Ultra 11's threw a huge soundstage with multiple layering, and an almost tactile imaging with earth-shifting dynamics.

Of course, the careful attention to choosing the right associated equipment, such as the Critical Mass racks and stands and MasterBuilt Cables is essential to achieve the end result.

The analogue source was the Tech Das One; The CD player was from Esoteric; the streamer from Aurender. Other associated equipment included a mass array of Esoteric electronics and the VAC Statement phono stage and linestage.



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VAC, Von Schweikert

The Audio Company, Critical Mass, Esoteric, Master Built Cables, Graham, TechDAS

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Well Pleased A/V:

The sound delivered through the new redesign of the Rethm Maarga v2 loudspeakers left this listener absolutely sure she could live with this speaker for the rest of her days. Jacob George, the designer, has made such monumental improvements delivering more warmth in the mids without sacrificing any of the detail, and in fact, bringing the musical experience closer to me with more overall dynamics. Simply, Anne Bisson's "Le vent soufflé encore" from the album Conversations, a track I've heard hundreds of times over the years, delivered new information that was astonishing. Anne's vocal mix in the beginning was profoundly more apparent as was her daughter's at the end of the song. In addition to being in my top three best sounding rooms at AXPONA 2019, the speakers are a value at under 10,000 U.S. dollars (no price increase) and can compete with any speaker five to ten times the price. No exaggeration. A room with this kind of sound reminds me why I do what I do.

Associated equipment in the room, brought to us by Well Pleased A/V's proprietor, Mark Sossa, include the Qualiton A20i SE Amplifier; Aqua Formula xHD D/A, GigaWatt PC-r Power Conditioner, Swisscables Diamond/Reference Plus and the SGR HiFi Racks Symphony Model 5/3. The source was the excellent Innuos Zenith MKIII Music Server.



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