

Croak Audio Exploration Newsletter, April 2009.



Hello all, it has been too long since our last news letter but here it finally is.

New products form Sumiko, Funk, HiFi Tuning and Pete Riggle.....

New From **SUMIKO** is the Palo Santos Presentation



For over thirty-five years, SUMIKO has provided a comprehensive range of phono cartridges to music lovers seeking the finest musical experience at a variety of price points. In fact, the great market success of SUMIKO phono cartridges has hinged on their phenomenal cost-to-performance ratio.

The Palo Santos Presentation is no exception. New design requirements incorporating advances in material technology and construction techniques have resulted in a significantly improved product which delivers a highly refined and resolved, yet musically satisfying sound quality previously unavailable at or even near its price.

Improvements grace virtually every facet of the product to differentiate it from its smaller sibling the Pearwood Celebration II. Most significant is the new generator anchoring system, which has substantially improved rigidity and reduced resonance and background noise to previously unheard of levels. From the new handcrafted Palo Santos (Brazilian Rosewood) body, which is shorter in height to add vision when mounting and aligning this cartridge, to the Long Grain Boron cantilever and new Line Contact stylus, which significantly improves resolution, the Palo Santos Presentation truly deserves the title as Sumiko's flagship offering. Now in stock!

We are proud to announce that we are now distributing the **Pete Riggle Audio Engineering** products. The product that put them on the map is the VTAF (VTA on The Fly) but they now also offer a very good counter weight upgrade for Rega arms.

The Standard VTAF is for Rega RB250, RB300, and RB600 arms, Origin Live OL1 (all versions), Origin Live Silver (all versions), Brit Audio version of RB250, Expressimo version of RB250, Moth Audio version of RB250, Michell Technoarm version of RB250, Incognito version of RB250, Thorens version of RB250, and Other Versions of RB250, RB300, and RB600:



Advantages of VTAF (More than just VTA on The Fly)

- Improved nuance, inner detail, air, sound staging, dynamics, pace and rhythm compared with the original mounting system! This is above and beyond the VTA adjustment benefit!
- Raises performance of modified Rega tone arms to the highest level!
- Smooth and easy adjustment of VTA on the fly!
- Continuously variable VTA adjustment... infinite resolution!
- High resolution: Each full turn of the adjuster wheel results in only .025 inch (0.635mm) height change
- VTA is easy to measure, record, and reset!
- After VTAF installation, the arm can be removed from and restored to the turntable in just moments! Easily remove tone arm for transport, for cartridge maintenance and cleaning, or for cartridge replacement.

Pete Riggle Audio Engineering also offer the CCM (Counterweight for the Common Man), a structural upgrade for Rega tone arms.

The CCM (Counterweight for the Common Man) is mechanically similar and sonically equivalent to the Origin Live OL1 structural upgrade. The CCM structural upgrade differs from the OL1 structural upgrade in available finishes and in price. The beautiful finishes of the CCM match those of the Pete Riggle Engineering and Audio VTAF (pronounced vee-taff, VTA adjustment on the Fly, patent pending). At about half the price of the OL1 structural upgrade, the CCM is a real bargain, in keeping with the wonderful value present in the Rega RB250 arm and the Pete Riggle Engineering and Audio VTAF.

New **From HiFi Tuning** in Germany is their CD/DVD demagnetizer.

Demagnetizing CDs is nothing new and never short of controversy. I have been demagnetizing discs for a few years now and it really does help get the best out of you CDs and DVDs.

The new HiFi Tuning Demagnetiser is unique and superior to other solutions as it uses two frequencies in its demagnetizing process. It is a table top mains powered device.

Our listening tests have shown it to be more effective then the Bedini Clairifier for eg and have already converted some "non believers".

Small audio items like interconnect cables and tubes can also be treated. We have even managed to treat an LP with a little ingenuity (a large roll of packing tape used as a spacer) and there certainly is an improvement there too.



On the way from **The Funk Firm** is their new FXR arm, their version of improving a Rega type arm.



Posted on vinylengine by a visitor to the Bristol show:

" I spent twenty minutes in the Funk room talking to AK and listening to the turntables. He had three Saffires set up, all with Goldring 1042 carts. One had a Naim ARO, one an SME V and the other had the new F dot Cross R arm which is a rewired RB 250 or 300 with their own internally crossbraced spiral wound carbon fibre armtube. It sells for £1,100 which might sound a lot for just a hot rodded Rega but it made the (£2,500) SME V sound pale and anemic and even the ARO (one of my all time favourites) was put in its place..."

We can hardly wait for our sample!!!

Pre Owned Equipment

First up is a High End AV system comprising **Enlightened Audio Design** and **Dali** loudspeakers.

Main Speakers are the **Dali Grand Diva**, these were one series down from Dali's flag ship line and sold for GBP2995.00

The Centre Speaker is the matching **Dali Grand Vocal**, last listed at GBP798.00

The included set of Rear Speakers are the **Dali Grand Coupe**, a fantastic mini monitor in its own right on a very nice set of Reference Jamo stands.

All Dali speakers are finished in a beautiful real wood "Cherry".



Amplification is courtesy of the very classy **EAD Powermaster 500**. This offers 5 Channels of high end gutsy audiophile power that is also sweet and without hardness. (It shares more than just that fly wheel cut front plate with Jeff Rowland, using same output stages and topology.)

Surround Sound Processing, Pre Amp duties and Digital to Analogue Conversion is done by the **EAD Encore High End AV processor**. This unit is a fine pre amplifier, DAC and 5.1 surround decoder in one box. The detail retrieval, natural tone and soundstage this unit pulls of discs will leave the current Japanese processors in the dust. It also features auto set up with its own mic.



All in all a rather phenomenal theatre system for those who value class above over the top whizz bang. This system is very happy running stereo or surround and the ease and beauty with which music is presented in movies is a revelation to most. Obviously music DVDs are awesome.

All the above components are in mint condition and available as a package @ R37 000.00 or @ R31 000.00 without the EAD Encore Processor.

Available individually are:

EAD Powermaster 500 @ R9 000.00

Dali Grand Diva + Grand Vocal Main and Centre Speakers @ R18 000.00

Call/mail us to discuss any individual items of this package you may be interested in.

NAD 3225PE @ R1 100.00



This is a Classic NAD amplifier with a big heart. Basically a 3020 with the Power Envelope circuitry added. There is also a nice phono-stage built in. It has pre-amplifier outputs and power-amplifier inputs for future upgrades and versatility. A simple but great sounding little amplifier that can form the heart of a great starter or second system. Add some nice bookshelf speakers and have a great PC set up! Good condition and all switches and controls just serviced.

Ecosse MS4.45 Bi Wire Speaker Cables, 3 m pair + 1,5 m single for a centre speaker. @ R5 000.00



New this set of cables will cost over R10 000.00, well reviewed and takes the Bi wire concept to the max with dedicated (different) conductors for high and low frequencies.

Bel Canto Phono 1 @ R3 800.00



The Bel Canto Phono 1 phono stage is a versatile stand alone unit. It has 3 Gain settings, 2 for MC and one for MM and has numerous loading options to optimally match your cartridge. Using very classy parts from Burr Brown and Analog Devices as well as top quality caps and resistors in the RIAA sections. By placing the inputs and outputs on opposite sides of the enclosure they have managed to get low noise results with the PSU transformer built in. This certainly cuts down on clutter. A lovely phono stage with a mellow tone.

This Bel Canto phono stage is in mint condition, boxed with all packaging material.

Tweak for the week: Beware of the Big Bad Switch Mode Power Supply

This time not as much a tweak as it is a bit of house keeping. A lot of modern equipment uses Switch Mode Power Supplies. There are many advantages to this type of power supply. They avoid the large transformers used in linear power supplies and as such can be more compact, more cost effective for a given output current and do not have a lot of electromagnetic radiation. Furthermore they can be designed to work on anything between say 80V and 240V AC making them universally usable in different locations with different mains voltages. They are by now the most common powersupply type used in chargers for phones and cameras and some other examples of equipment that typically use them are PCs, Laptops, Video Cassette recorders, Televisions and DVD Players.

There are a number of companies that actually advocate the use of these Switch Mode Power Supplies in audio equipment.

Linn have been successful in implementing them on their amplifiers and so have Chord. Most DVD players also run from a Switch Mode Power Supply.

Many Switch Mode Power Supplies however, due to their nature of operating at high frequencies, can generate quite a bit of noise back in to the mains supply.

This part is where they can be bad for audio.

For serious listening you may find quite an improvement in the sound of your Hi-fi equipment when the AC power is not "polluted" by Switch Mode Power Supply units in your house. For dedicated listening time you may wish to unplug/switch off anything in your home (or near your listening room) that has a Switch Mode Power Supply.

Putting a unit into standby generally does not switch off the Switch Mode Power Supply of the device. You would like to switch the unit off with a mechanical switch; on a TV (a big culprit) this means the pushbutton on the front of it. Most PCs and VCRs remain in a standby mode and the only way to really switch the Switch Mode Power Supplies off is to unplug the power cord or to switch your wall outlet off. Please beware: Some VCRs will lose their programmed channels if they are unplugged for too long and most lose the correct time.

This of course does bring up the subject of mains filters, a subject on which opinions are divided and numerous ideas and "philosophies" exist. In my opinion prevention is better than cure and I believe that good simple easy unrestricted current flow is what well designed audio equipment requires. The options and possibilities of filtering the mains in your home for better audio can be the subject of another article.

If someone forwarded you this mailer and you would like to receive it first hand in future, please send me an e mail.

That's all for now folks.

Keep 'Em Spinning



Guillaume Lemaire

Croak Audio Exploration

croak@eject.co.za

www.croak.co.za

083 565 1236