

FEEDBACK

Bulletin of the Sydney Audio Club
Incorporated in New South Wales INC9887653

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Presidents Report

Welcome to the Sydney Audio Club and the historic first edition of the Feedback Bulletin. Of necessity this has been largely produced by the Committee who are keen to have subsequent issues containing more input from our membership. A Club is only as good as the members who are involved in it and from the current level of enthusiasm and positive feedback the future looks very bright.

The plan is to have many features and reports that will be traditional throughout the issues. Reports on the last meeting, the next meeting, music playlists, SIG reports, and series of features such as the Positive and Negative Feedback, Member Profile, Recommended Recordings, Marooned in Space, Recommended by, On the Shelf, the stats will create a newsletter that will reflect the personalities of our membership.

It is most appropriate to thank and acknowledge Phil Brown from HiFi Junction for demonstrating the equipment for our inaugural meeting. Thanks also to Len Wallis for his generous donation of the \$200 prize, to Tony Cheung from Audio Utopia for donating CDs and Joe Ridiger from Audio Connection for his donation of LPs. Over \$300 was raised to help defray our startup costs. Thanks to the Committee and members who helped transport the gear from Bondi and back again. Special thanks to Chris Lavina who donated his time to take some most memorable photos of this historic occasion.

I would like you to join me in appreciation and thanks to the Committee for all the hard work and planning required behind the scenes in the development and implementation of the necessary ideals and framework. I am confident that they have built a strong foundation. I would also like to thank you as friends for the friendly and enthusiastic atmosphere generated at our first meeting. In the words of Snoopy the dog from Peanuts "There is no heavier burden than a great potential" so now it is over to you into the future to make sure this club shines.



All Photos by Chris Lavina

Logo to go

Are you artistic? Can you draw? The Sydney Audio Club is looking for a logo.

Please submit designs to PO Box 8 Epping 1710 or bring to the next meeting.

The logo should be simply visually appealing especially when it is shrunk down to fit onto the membership cards to be issued.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2	SIG.Net	10	Feed Forward
3	First Meeting	11	Music Playlist
5	Balmaln Sinfonia	14	Your Club Needs You
7	Marooned in Space	15	From the Shelf
8	Talking Heads Review	15	Next Meeting Preview
9	Do Yourself a Favour		

SIG.net

By John Vandyke

A regular column dedicated to the activities of Special Interest Groups in the Sydney Audio Club.

Getting SIGgy with it ...

With the success of the inaugural meeting of the Sydney Audio Club still fresh in our minds, your Committee is keen to build on the diversity of our 35 plus new members by establishing a thriving community of Special Interest Groups.

As the name implies, a Special Interest Group (SIG for short) is a group of Sydney Audio Club Members who get together to share an interest in some aspect of our hobby. From the responses to our little survey of members' interests (on the back of the membership application form), we are indeed a diverse bunch, who are enthusiastic about a broad range of musical genres and hi fi subjects. Some of the most common interests (scoring more than 10 ticks) are:

- Classical Music
- Rock/Pop
- Country/Folk
- Jazz
- World Music
- High End Hi Fi
- Classic/Vintage Hi Fi
- Analogue/Vinyl
- Do It Yourself Hi Fi

SIG's can take a number of different forms. In common, each SIG has a convenor who will ensure that the SIG meets regularly and reports its activities to the membership. The convenor does not necessarily usually host all of the SIG meetings, nor does he or she write up those meetings for the Newsletter. But the convenor does have an important role in ensuring that the SIG meets regularly (at least quarterly, but monthly would be great).

SIG's can operate in a number of different ways. Some SIG's work on a "by invitation" basis, where the members of the SIG are often a small group who choose to meet because that have a very particular viewpoint or interest and want to share this with kindred spirits. Other SIG's can be open to all comers, although because SIG meetings most often happen in member's homes, numbers will often be limited.

SIG meetings can be themed, or free form. We would like the SIG's to ultimately make a contribution to the music that is presented at the monthly meetings,

recommending particular tracks for inclusion in the musical programme. SIG's may also want to arrange their own special social outings, and perhaps invite other Club members to participate in these. It's up to the SIG members to determine how they want to operate, and the Club at large would be very interested to hear about the approach taken by various SIG's – and what works for them.

Apart from the fellowship of like-minded Club members, there are other very good reasons to become part of a formal SIG. Scheduled SIG meetings are covered by the Club's insurance policy, and SIG meetings are covered by the Club's objectives, values and principles, which can help to maintain the right "mood" for SIG gatherings. The committee will help convenors of approved SIG's to make contact with other Club members with similar interests.

So please consider becoming a convenor of a SIG, and sharing your enthusiasm with other members of the Club. If you would like to nominate as a convenor, or would like more information, or to discuss SIG related issues, please contact me via the Club's email address: sydneyaudioclub@optusnet.com.au. You can also nominate whether you would like to join any of the abovementioned SIG's, when they are established. We will of course keep you informed of the various SIG's as they are set up.

SIGnificant developments ...

On that note, the Sydney Audio Club Committee has agreed to the establishment of a Rock, Pop and Electronic Music SIG, which yours truly will convene. Our brief will be broad, covering music from the 50's right up to the present.

The first meeting will have a focus on the music of the 70's, with a working title of "Prog, Pop, Punk and Pap – all the excesses of the 1970's". We will set a date for the first meeting of the SIG once we have identified a quorum of members who would like to take part. Future meetings might focus on particular periods, countries or artists and their influence on popular music, or maybe just new releases. I'd like some suggestions on future focus areas for meetings of the new SIG.

If you are interested in the Rock, Pop and Electronic Music SIG, drop me a line at the Club's email address, sydneyaudioclub@optusnet.com.au.

Our First Meeting ...

The inaugural meeting of the Sydney Audio Club took place on the 1st July 2007 at Dence Park community hall. Phil Brown of HiFi Junction kindly provided the HiFi equipment for the afternoon's entertainment. I would like to thank Phil, Keith Morris, Eddie Lee, Andre Desjardins and Ian Reid for their help in lugging the equipment from the shop at Bondi Junction and also for its safe return after the meeting.

The equipment provided consisted of :

- Kharma Ceramique 3.2fe Speakers
- Boulder 850 mono amplifiers
- Boulder 810 preamplifier
- Metronome CD4 signature CD player
- Finite Elemente Pagode Signature Rack
- FM Acoustics and Transparent Cabling



John McEvoy presented the music that was used to audition the system.

Phil introduced the system outlining the components and their performance and then invited us to enjoy listening to the system.

Now the room is quite large and the speakers have a 5 or 6 inch bass mid unit so head banging levels would never be achieved despite the substantial power

available from the Boulder power amps, so with this in mind how was the sound.



Personally I found the system very articulate with great incisiveness and tonal accuracy, some might say a bit bright and bass shy. I would disagree with bass shy, as the bass that was present was fast and dynamic if lacking in extension for the lower octave, which is to be expected. I checked the port and quite a lot of air was being moved and the bass drive unit was excusing quite markedly when bass notes were played. When the music did not demand bass power and volume then the bass performance was excellent.

The mids especially on vocals were very natural with great expression and one could become absorbed by the singing of the vocalist. The audience commented favourably on the mid range performance of the system. The treble brought forth a wide variety of comment from far too bright or thin and others stated

the treble extension into the upper octave was excellent with wonderful dynamics and control. I personally prefer a system to have a very open and extended treble region as this provides for the harmonics of the instruments to be accurately reproduced. I do not favour speakers that have an early treble roll off except for electrostatics which are a phenomenon in high frequency reproduction.



The sense of timing of the system was very good with an easy ability to follow the rhythms of the various pieces of music played. The reproduction of micro detail of the music was very good and this added to the sense of dynamics as the quietest instruments could be heard beneath the louder instruments this indicates that the system has great resolution and accuracy in the reproduction of the musical performance, this adds greatly to the illusion of the system being able to reproduce a musical event.

Talking to members after the event it was generally agreed that the system had been successful and was enjoyed by very many. Positive comments were on the speed and dynamics of the system and its accuracy and musicality. Negative comments I believe relate to the cost of the speakers and the lack of deep and prodigious bass which some expected for the cost of the speakers. I responded that the speakers are designed for a much smaller room where their performance in the bass would be much better reproduced.

Speaking to Phil he stated that in a smaller room the bass performance is superb for the size of bass drive unit having great accuracy and articulation while lacking the lower extremes of bass performance that a larger speaker would reproduce. So we come down to reasonable size of cabinet and earth crushing bass being mutually exclusive, especially if accuracy is required from the lower extremes of bass. A grand piano goes down to 20 odd hz and a church organ down to 16hz and certain electronic music has infra

bass. So for most musical styles below 40/50hz is not essential, even though it sometimes is desirable.

I have spoken most about the presentation of the music in relation to the speakers but the CD player and amps performance are reproduced by the speakers and as I have commented favourably on the systems performance then I believe taken as a whole the system achieved its objective of providing an enjoyable and entertaining afternoon's music, which is what we desire to achieve when we invest in our music reproduction systems. Remember we are trying to create the illusion of a musical performance in our home, so did this system do this for you.

Again I would like to say thank you to Phil for his kindness in loaning us such a valuable system and for his time on a Sunday which for him is normally a day of rest from the demands of the HiFi buying/auditioning public (us - in other words). I would also like to thank John McEvoy for his musical selection (less classical PLEEEAASE next time) as choosing a couple of hours of music from his small and miserable collection of thousands of CDs requires a lot of discrimination and planning.

Congratulations to Lachlan Benson who won the \$200 Gift Voucher kindly donated by Len Wallis, and to Audio Connection and Audio Utopia for donating prizes.

So here is looking forward to August, and I hope to see you all again for another enjoyable afternoon.

David Cooper

Secretary



Balmain Sinfonia

“To share enjoyment and knowledge of music and its reproduction amongst the membership and with the broader community in a variety of venues including private homes, professional establishments and live performances.”

This is one of our Objects of Association as we believe it is important to listen to live music to fine tune our aural perception so that we can appreciate what to listen for in our own home fine music reproduction system. This is the fidelity in HiFi.

Otherwise we just may as well end up listening to “the stereo”.

Balmain Sinfonia is Orchestra-in-Residence at Macquarie University.

Their aim is to bring high quality orchestral music to the community at very affordable prices. Many gifted players, amateurs and professionals, give freely of their time to achieve this aim.

Programs are usually of the more popular mainstream repertoire in order to attract new concert-goers. Young people, in particular, are encouraged to join us.

History

In the latter part of 1991, Gary Stavrou approached some fifty amateur musicians with a view to creating a quality symphony orchestra, conducted by him, that would perform in the inner western suburbs of Sydney.

An incorporated association was created as the infrastructure of the orchestra. Gary Stavrou invited a group of seven people to act as a steering committee to form such an organisation. Balmain Sinfonia Inc. was the result, and it lent its name to the orchestra which would be called the Balmain Sinfonia.

Charmian Gadd, who was at the time Head of the String Department at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, was invited to become patron.

The first concert of Balmain Sinfonia was held on April 5, 1992 at the Recreation Hall of Rozelle Hospital.

The Association

The Balmain Sinfonia Inc is an incorporated association registered with the Office of Fair Trading. The stated objective of the Association is: “To provide the means whereby amateur musicians may come together for the rehearsal and public performance of orchestral music”.

The Association is basically a group of “friends of the orchestra”, who, through their elected Management Committee, provide support to the Orchestra in the many functions associated with putting on concerts.

The Management Committee

The Management Committee consists of up to nine members of Balmain Sinfonia Inc. elected at each Annual General Meeting to carry out the objects and functions of the Association, for the coming year. It is not a requirement that orchestral players be on the Management Committee, but it is not precluded.

The Director of Music

The Director of Music is appointed by the Management Committee, but may be removed from the position only by the members at a General Meeting of the Association. This arrangement lends a degree of stability to the tenure of the Director of Music in contrast to the potential yearly change in the composition of the Management Committee. He or she is normally also the Conductor of the Orchestra.

It is the prerogative of the Director of Music to choose the repertoire, soloists and orchestral players for each concert.

The Conductor

The Conductor of Balmain Sinfonia is Gary Stavrou. Gary was born in Cairo (Egypt) in 1941 to Greek Armenian parents. The family migrated to Australia in 1948 and lived predominantly in Sydney. After several years of experience in musical comedy, Gary wanted to conduct something more challenging. He took the plunge.

The Orchestra

It is composed of some seventy musicians, gifted amateurs and professionals from all over Sydney, who give freely of their time in order to bring fine orchestral music to the community at affordable prices. The Orchestra performs four concerts per year, normally in March/April, June, September and

November/December, conducted by the Director of Music, Gary Stavrou.

Compared to most amateur orchestras, there are certain significant differences in the running of this orchestra:

1. There are no permanent places held by orchestral players.
2. Players are not required to commit themselves beyond the current concert.
3. For each concert, the orchestra is reconstituted by the Director of Music, primarily from players who have indicated their availability, supplemented if necessary by others.
4. The personnel for each concert and their positions within the orchestra are determined by the Director of Music.

Concerto Competition

Every two years, Balmain Sinfonia conducts a Concerto Competition for young talented string players aged 23 years or younger. The winner receives the Richard Goldner Award, a cash prize of \$2000, and has the opportunity to perform the concerto with the Orchestra.

Competitors must display outstanding musicianship in the performance, from memory, of a complete concerto (or similar) from the standard published repertoire. Up to 24 candidates are selected from the entrants.

Balmain Sinfonia and Sydney Audio Club

Balmain Sinfonia is a high quality amateur orchestra whose conductor, Gary Stavrou, is a member of Sydney Audio Club (SAC.)

The orchestra performs four times each year at Macquarie University, with the next concert being held on Sunday September 16th. at 2:30pm.

All members of SAC are admitted at the concession price of \$15. Simply show your SAC membership card at the box office.

The program on Sunday 16th will have much variety:

- Offenbach's Orpheus Overture... the famous can-can theme.
- Shumann's Cello Concerto... with Patrick Murphy (of the Grainger Quartet) as soloist.
- Weber's Invitation to the Dance... a swirling waltz.

- Smetana's Moldau... a tone poem describing a river's course through the countryside.
- Katchaturian's Masquerade Suite... an orchestral tour-de-force of 5 short pieces.

Balmain Sinfonia produces a printed newsletter for its audience and other interested parties.

If you would like to be on Balmain Sinfonia's mailing list please contact Gary giving him your name and street mailing address.

To Contact Balmain Sinfonia

Address: P.O. Box 230, Balmain, NSW 2041

Telephone: (02) 9810 5080

Email: info@balmainsinfonia.com



Gary Stavrou (conductor) and Phil Brown (Hi Fi Junction)

All Photos by Chris Lavina

Marooned in Space

Scenario: You are marooned in space and the onboard computer has just told you that the oxygen will run out in about one hour's time. With unlimited choice in music, what would you listen to, especially the last five minutes...

First installment from Chris Couldrey:

The 'bad news' seems to be that here I am marooned in space; with just about one hour of oxygen left!

The 'good news' is that before I left to come on this trip, I managed to pack my Rega turntable and a handful of treasured vinyl LP records to listen to, just in case.

Let's share the music together ...

First up, I thought it would be fitting to start off with a track from a favourite LP titled "**Pops In Space**" with **John Williams conducting the Boston Pops Orchestra**.

The track is "**Star Wars – Main Theme.**"

Few people would be better equipped to present this outstanding piece of music, than the composer himself. And this recording on an excellent Netherlands **Philips** pressing (**9500 921**) never ceases to impress. From the triumphant opening brass fanfare leading into the famous driving strings main theme.

It's time to relax a little in the short time we have left and so I've chosen that silken saxophonist; **Stan Getz**. The LP is "**What the World Needs Now**" and is of course a set of the best tunes to come from that duo; Hal David and Burt Bacharach.

Have a listen to "**The Look of Love**", the slow swaying theme from the film "Casino Royale." On centre stage is Stan teamed with bass, piano and guitar. They're playing this outstanding arrangement by none other than Claus Ogerman. The recording quality on the **Verve** label (**V6-8752**) is second to none.

It was somewhat of a dilemma choosing which **Frank Sinatra** LP to bring along; so I thought if the need arises to relax a little, which it has, Frank; with the music of the Brazilian Master; **Antonio Carlos Jobim**, would be hard to beat.

The title of the LP is just that, "**Francis Albert Sinatra & Antonio Carlos Jobim**" and the track; "**The Girl from Ipanema.**" By sheer coincidence this arrangement is also by Claus Ogerman.

It's a wonderful combination, Sinatra; at his peak with orchestra conducted by Claus together with Jobim accompanying Sinatra on both guitar and vocals. It's a fine **Reprise** label pressing (**R1 73798**). So very relaxing.

If I had a problem choosing which Frank Sinatra LP to bring along, it was doubly hard choosing a **Henry Mancini** record. I have many favourite artists and genres of music, but Mancini has always been high on my list and the more of his LP's I collect, the harder it becomes to choose a track or two.

The LP I've brought with me is "**In The Pink**"; featuring Henry Mancini's magic touch with **James Galway**. The track is "**Crazy World**" from the show "Victor Victoria."

The mix of Mancini's unique arrangements characterized by trombone highlights together with the man nicknamed 'the man with the golden flute' makes for memorable listening. This is a quality **RCA** recording (**SFL1 0117**).

I see my oxygen has just about expired, which begs the question "Is That All There Is to That?"

And who better equipped to ask that question in song form than "Fever-ish" **Peggy Lee**? Our earlier artist, Frank Sinatra described Miss Lee this way "*Her wonderful talent should be studied by all vocalists; her regal presence is pure elegance and charm.*"

Peggy Lee is undoubtedly one of the outstanding female vocalists of the past 60 years. Peggy is however less well known for her numerous song writing contributions.

This LP: "**Is That All There Is?**" became one of Peggy's many million sellers. Just listen to the voice, you'll quickly understand why. The recording is on **Capitol** (**ST 386**).

I do hope you've enjoyed sharing my music this past hour.

The oxygen is running out

Time to go now

Chris

CD Review – Talking Heads - “Brick”



Box set of all the studio albums, remastered on Dual-Disc by Jerry Harrison and Rhino Records
Rhino Records #74722 – also available as separate Dual-Disc packages per album.

OK – an admission up front – I own every one of the studio albums in either vinyl or CD format (or both), including some of the previous compilations. So I guess that makes me an unabashed fan of this band. But I feel that I have a responsibility to those who are not so familiar with Talking Heads’ oeuvres to try to put this release into some context, for those who might not have the same perspective on this seminal rock/funk/new wave band as I do.

Firstly, some history. Talking Heads came to prominence in the mid-late 1970’s in New York City. Only Jerry Harrison (keyboards, vocals, second guitar) had been part of a name band previously (he worked with Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers during their early “rock band” phase). David Byrne, the singer, guitarist, songwriter and front man of the band, met Tina Weymouth and Chris Frantz (bass and drums) at art school in the early 70’s.

Talking Heads musical output spans a number of different styles, from quirky pop/new wave (77) through funk and polyrhythmic world music (More Songs About Buildings and Food, Fear of Music, Remain in Light, Speaking in Tongues, Naked), back to simple songs and country inspired melodic pop tunes (Little Creatures and True Stories). The most complex (and perhaps the most musically inventive) work comes from the three albums on which they collaborated with Brian Eno as producer and musical contributor, however the nerdy sensibilities of the art student are never far from the surface, particularly in Byrne’s lyrics.

The Brick box set covers all of this territory, and throws in some previously unreleased alternative takes and unfinished tracks (most of the latter could probably have remained unreleased without too much adverse impact on the value of this collection). What makes this set stand apart from previous compilations,

apart from its completeness and the inclusion of video clips of the major hits), is the fact that Jerry Harrison remixed all of the albums for multi-channel audio as part of the project. To do this he went back to the original multi-channel master tapes in each case, and re-imagined the mixes in surround sound format, as well as in stereo.

If you were a music student wanting to pull apart these performances and understand their constituent parts, then the multi-channel mixes on the DVD side of these dual-discs would be of undoubted value. As an exercise in creating a musically satisfying whole, I have never been convinced by surround sound mixes that put you somewhere in the centre of the performers, who real about you in dizzying abandon. As they go, these surround mixes are more subtle than most, but for me they add novelty value only.

What makes this set stand apart is the stunning work that Harrison has done on the new stereo mixes on the CD sides. The clarity of instrumental separation, the lack of edge, the rhythmic definition (extremely important in the more complex works, particularly from Remain in Light and Speaking in Tongues), and the rendering of layered vocals and Eno’s noodling provide a new window onto what the band was trying to achieve. Finally, we have CD releases of these great albums that are the musical equals (and in some cases, superiors) of the original vinyl.

In particular, Fear of Music, which in its original and subsequent releases has been well nigh on unlistenable, has had dynamics and a modicum of space breathed into it for the first time. But all of the albums have benefited from the new attention to their sonics, with the result that I now believe that this set represents the definitive collection of Talking Heads mighty output over their 12 years together.

A couple of caveats: these are the mixes that the keyboard player always wished had been done. Consequently you get a lot more of Jerry Harrison, and the rhythm section, but consequently a little less of David Byrne. Mostly the balance is fine, but on one or two tracks I missed the brash up-front jangle of Byrne’s guitar just a little, and his voice seemed to have been tamed just a little from the sometimes uncomfortably prominent warble of the original mixes.

The other issue relates to compatibility of these double sided discs with standard red book CD players. I have had one experience only where the discs would not play on a (quite high end) CD player. They have worked fine in other machines, but I suggest if you buy the set, make sure that your record store will return it if it does not play in your chosen CD player.

A very worthwhile collection, then. If you would like a complete set of Talking Heads studio output, I can recommend this set highly (compatibility issues aside). If you are already a fan, this box will add to your enjoyment of one of the most important, influential and inventive bands of the late 20th Century. Highly Recommended.

John Vandyke

Do Yourself a Favour By Henry Meldrum

Ludwig van Beethoven Concertos for Piano and Orchestra No.1 in C major, Op.15 and No.3 in C minor, Op.37, Mikhail Pletnev piano, with Christian Gansch conducting the Russian National Orchestra DGG 477 6415.

Mikhail Pletnev, last meeting's featured pianist, has recently released the first disc in his complete cycle of the Beethoven Piano Concertos and Symphonies with the Russian National Orchestra with himself at the piano.

This disc contains Piano Concerto No.1 of 1797-8, actually the second to be composed, and Piano Concerto No.3 completed in 1803. The performances are edited from the complete cycle recorded live by DGG at the Beethovenfest in Bonn in September 2006. These concertos may not be as familiar as No.4 or No. 5 (The Emperor), but if these latter two pinnacle concertos had never been written, then the earlier works in themselves would stand high in the art form. If you are already familiar with this music then stop and listen again. These are performances that rethink and present these works afresh as if you were listening to them for the first time. No straightforward cut and dried classical renditions here, but a highly masterful idiosyncratic romantic performance that completely changes the perspective of Beethoven.

The technique is second to none, with smooth runs that impress, with an astonishing dynamic range well captured by the engineers, and a tonal palette helped by the Blüthner piano that Pletnev insisted on. Every note has been considered, not only by itself but in its relationship to the others, especially in the dynamics within the chords, and then placed onto the keyboard. The slow movements especially take your breath away. I wonder what Beethoven would have thought of this playing.

The recording acoustic is full and detailed with splendid playing from the Russian National Orchestra giving a sensitive support to match the outstanding pianism. It was recorded in Beethovenhalle in Bonn

and produced by Rainer Maillard with the recording and balance engineering team of Jürgen Bulgrin and Bastian Schick.

There are some more "classical" performances (Kovacevich and Gilels) of this wonderful music, but so far everyone I have played this disc to has gone out and bought it. Do yourself a favour. Highly recommended.

The Very Best of Peter Allen The Boy From Down Under A&M Records B0001834-02.

For easy listening, this CD is hard to beat.

Australian born Peter Allen died in 1992 but his songs have become even more famous and familiar following the stage show *The Boy from Oz* starring Hugh Jackman and the Qantas ad featuring *I Still Call Australia Home*. If you have ever been overseas for a while and feeling a tad wistful for the smell of gum trees, that song is guaranteed to really get you going.

It is amazing to me that Australians who won't sing a note at home can suddenly sing well together when they are off shore. Maybe beer helps. But I digress. There are many songs in our subconscious memory that sound vaguely familiar and then we suddenly realise it was also written by Peter Allen. As a songwriter he is worth exploring. Sometimes "Very Best of.." compilations miss the mark occasionally but this one lives up to its name. Songs written and performed from 1971 through to 1985 are included with all the standards *I Go to Rio*, *The More I See You*, *Tenterfield Saddler*, and *Everything Old is New Again* which was written in collaboration with Carole Bayer Sager.

Some of my favourite songs on this disc are from this amazing songwriting duo. Listen to *She Loves to Hear the Music*, *Quiet Please There's a Lady on Stage*, *Don't Wish Too Hard*, and *I'd Rather Leave While I'm in Love* and appreciate tuneful songs that are beautifully crafted and sung. The various backing bands on the twenty tracks are classy, well arranged and with the instrumental details well captured in a soundstage that will really demonstrate your fine system. To be savoured on a balmy afternoon with a glass or three of red. Be warned though. This music will grow on you and when it is familiar like an old friend it will happily pop into your head and make you sing along. Do yourself a favour.

The US import pressing of the 96k/24-bit remastering is quite stunning as an audiophile demonstration disc. Avoid inferior substitutes. Highly recommended.

Feed Forward

A monthly column highlighting new trends in music and high quality sound reproduction. The opinions expressed in this column are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the policies or view of the Committee of the Sydney Audio Club.

This month's column – Connecting the Dots

In an election year, we are regularly being bombarded with the results of surveys and opinion polls of dubious value. Not wanting to buck that trend, I am starting this column with a small opinion survey. Don't worry, the results won't be published on the front page of the Tele – this is just between you and me. Raise your hand if you agree with the following statement:

1. – All forms of lossy compression of audio signals have a negative impact on the achievement of high quality audio reproduction.

OK – I can see a lot of hands in the air. Some of you took a few seconds longer to raise your hands than others but, as I said, your secret is safe with me.

Now try this slightly amended version. Again, raise your hands in complete anonymity if you agree:

2. – All forms of lossy compression of audio signals have a negative impact on the achievement of musical enjoyment.

Right – so a lot of you raised your hands to both questions – you are in good company there. I suspect that just a few agreed with the first but not necessarily the second. If anyone raised their hands to the second but not the first, the world needs more rugged individualists like you!

It is my purpose in Feed Forward this month to give you something else to think about when you consider your response to both of these questions. I am not going to argue that a compressed MP3 version of your favourite CD is going to sound better than the original uncompressed CD, but I am going to ask you to think about the issues of compressed audio in a different way.

First, an experiment. For those of you with a cupboard stashed with the guilty pleasure of black vinyl discs, get one out and hold it up next to your latest CD acquisition. Apart from the difference in colour and texture, the most obvious difference between these formats is the size. CD's manage to fit longer recordings in stereo onto a single sided disc one third the diameter of the corresponding analogue equivalent.

How is this? Is it just the 100 years of technical development that have allowed this to take place?

Of course, technical developments (materials, manufacturing etc) have played a part. But the major difference between these two formats, the main reason for the convenient small single sided format of the CD, is not just technology.

CD is a lossy compressed recording format.

Before the howls of indignation have subsided, let me remind you that digital recording uses a sampling technique, that essentially throws away all of the audio information between the samples. This technology relies on a very powerful set of attributes exhibited by our brains, that enable us to fill in the gaps between these samples and recreate (more or less) the subjective experience of an analog audio signal.

Some have said that this may be one of the reasons that CD sound is experienced by some as being more fatiguing over longer listening sessions than pure analogue – because our brains have to do more work connecting the dots when listening to digital sampled sound recordings.

Of course, many would argue that CD offers numerous attributes that are far superior to pure analogue media, such as lower distortion and noise floors, and of course convenience and longevity. Whilst even these attributes are hotly debated, it is clear that many of our membership will prefer CD to analogue recording for a number of very valid reasons.

The old debate about digital vs analogue sound is not what I want to focus on here. In stead, it is my purpose to challenge the presumptions on which some of our judgments are based. In particular, I want to encourage us to consider the issue of compressed digital audio in a different way.

I travel to work on public transport most days. There is rarely a time when I cannot hear the squeaky leakage of music from a set of earbuds less than securely fastened in some fellow commuters ears.

In my experience, there are more people listening to music now than ever before, on a daily basis. Whilst I do not always share their enthusiasm for some genres, I am delighted that listening to music is now considered to be a desirable way to pass idle time. Despite the inroads made by other media into our daily lives (TV, video, the internet), musical interest is flourishing, and for people like us who share this passion, this can only be a good thing.

The challenge for audiophiles is to turn this interest in music into a passion for high quality sound.

Despite the fact that most of this commuter music is recorded using lossy compression (even more lossy than CD), it is likely that, for most of these listeners, this is the first time that they have heard anything even remotely close to full bandwidth sound reproduction.

Coupled with the absence of room effects (and their almost universally deleterious effect on sound reproduction) when using headphones, I do not find it surprising when portable music enthusiasts laugh off the average audiophile's dismissal of compressed audio as a high quality format for the enjoyment of music.

Clearly, the sound emanating from an iPod or MP3 player will not match up to the experience available from a high end audio system reproducing a quality recording. However, my home system is not available to me on the train, and when I am traveling away from home over long periods, my CD collection is not usually in my briefcase.

So, time for a confession – I am one of those people who straps on the headphones on long commuter trips, and listens to even more compressed audio formats than when I am at home. This is not detracting from my musical pleasure, but adding to it significantly, as I explore lots of new music that I have downloaded from the web (legally – I pay for all of my downloads as a matter of principle).

The audiophile hobby has taken a beating in recent years. There have been fewer people interested in high quality sound, and consequently fewer products, retailers and manufacturers to choose from. As a consequence, the ranks of true audiophiles have been thinning out – look at the average age of attendees at our club meeting if you need any further evidence of this.

But some retailers are telling me that this is starting to turn around, with renewed interest from younger punters in vinyl, and stereo (as opposed to multi channel). I believe that this change goes hand in hand with the renewed interest in listening to music as a pastime.

These new enthusiasts need to be encouraged to experience the advantages of high quality sound in furthering their enthusiasm for recorded music. And we are in a very good position to help them with this experience.

So the next time you have an encounter with an iPod owner who extols the virtues of their chosen portable music player, try a different approach. Instead of poo-pooing the quality of portable music, try encouraging them to take it one step further. My standard line is "Yeah, that sounds good, but wait until you hear what a really top notch sound system can do with that music".

These are some of the people that we want to come along to Sydney Audio Club meetings – those with a passion for music, but little experience of what is possible in quality sound reproduction. Amongst them is the future not just of our Club, but also of our hobby.

John Vandyke



Music Playlist Meeting 1st July 2007

As promised, here are the details of the music played at the meeting on 1st July. My challenge was to have at least one person come up to me after the meeting to say "I really loved that and want to go out and buy that for my collection at home." Delighted to report that three people were inspired.

Included in the details of the list are not only the serial numbers but the country where the CD was manufactured as this can significantly affect the sound quality when played back on an audiophile system. Also noted are the recording details including producer and sound engineer. I was switched on to looking for these details years ago by Ceto Sandoval when he was buying some LPs from my collection.

If there was a choice between two different copies of the same work that he had not heard, he would go for the producer or engineer that he liked as they would consistently produce superb recordings. Over time you may notice that the same legendary names keep cropping up here over and again.

Richard Strauss “Also Sprach Zarathustra” also known as 2001 music. Seiji Ozawa conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra. DDD. PHILIPS 400 072-2. West German pressing. Recording details not listed but probably 1982. This was one of the earliest digital recordings from the days when we had all the discs available and would avidly wait to see what would be released next month. Still demonstration quality.

Giovanni Gabrieli ‘Canzona [13] à 12’ from “A Venetian Coronation”. Paul McCreesh with the Gabrieli Consort & Players. Recorded in Brinkburn Priory, Northumberland, July 1989. Producer: Nicholas Parker. Balance Engineer Tim Handley. DDD. VIRGIN 0777 7590062 0 400 0 German pressing. A wonderfully atmospheric soundstage test sponsored by Technics.

Aaron Copland “Fanfare for the Common Man” Aaron Copland conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. Recorded at Walthamstow, London, 1968. Producers: Paul Myers & Richard Killough. Engineers: Raymond Moore, Hellmuth Kolbe & Robert Gooch. Digital remix produced by Howard Scott. Remix engineer: Martin Greenblatt. ADD. SONY SM3K 46559. Austrian pressing. Three CD anthology of Copland conducting his music.

Leonard Bernstein ‘Dance at the Gym’ from “West Side Story” Johnny Green conducting the Sountrack Orchestra. Recorded in Hollywood, California, August 1960. Digital remix produced by Didier Deutsch 1992. 20-bit remix engineer: Tim Tiedemann. 35-mm mag track transfer engineers Bill Ivie, Mark Betts ADD. SONY SK 48211. US pressing. Demonstration sound.

Bugs Bunny

James Newton Howard ‘Flying’ from “Peter Pan Soundtrack” Pete Anthony conducting Hollywood Studio Symphony. Recorded in Sony Picture Studios 2003 Producers: James Newton Howard & Jim Weidman. Engineers: Shawn Murphy, Pat Sullivan-Fourstar. DDD. VARESE SARABANDE 302 066 534 2 US pressing. Wide dynamic range, crystal clear internal detail, impressive.

Ludwig van Beethoven “Piano sonata No.21 Op.53 Waldstein”. Mikhail Pletnev. Recorded in Abbey Road Studios, London, 1988. Producer: Andrew Keener. Balance Engineer Mike Clements. DDD. VIRGIN 0946 363280 2 7 Netherlands pressing. Performances to marvel at in a wonderful soundstage.

George Gershwin ‘Fascinating Rhythm’ from “The Songbooks” Ella Fitzgerald vocal with orchestra arranged and conducted by Nelson Riddle.

Recorded in Los Angeles, 1963. Producer: Norman Granz. Engineer: Val Valentin. Digital remix produced by Jim Fishel & Ed Levine. Remix engineer: Dennis Drake, Polygram Studios 1984. AAD. Verve 823 445-2 West German pressing. Yet another legendary production/engineering team delivering a demonstration acoustic.

Benjamin Britten ‘Kyrie’ from “Requiem” Connor Burrowes, Boys Air Choir. Recorded in Townhouse Studios, London, 1997. Producer: Ryobi Oba. Engineer Steve Orchard. DDD. JUSTIN TIME JTR 8480-2 Canadian pressing. Available locally from Didgeridoo <http://www.didgerecords.com/>.

Franz Schubert ‘An die Musik D547’ from the disc “Schumann: Dichterliebe” Fritz Wunderlich tenor, Hubert Giesen piano. Recorded in Akademie der Wissenschaften, Munich, 1966. Producer: Hans Ritter. Engineer: Heinz Wildhagen. Original-Image Bit-Processing remix 1997. ADD. DGG 449 747-2. West German pressing. Legendary tenor test voice – perfect introduction to lieder.

Peter Allen ‘Everything Old is New Again’ from “The Very Best of Peter Allen The Boy From Down Under” Peter Allen piano. 1974. Producer: Joel Dorn. 96k/24-bit remastering by Erick Labson Hollywood 2004 ADD. A&M B0001834-02. US pressing. Warning – do not get the local version.

Lou Reed ‘Walk on the Wild Side’ from “Transformer” recorded August 1972. Producer David Bowie & Mick Ronson. 24 Karat Gold reissue by Paul Williams. RCA 66600-2. US pressing.

U2 ‘With or Without You’ from the album “The Joshua Tree” recorded Windmill Lane Studios Dublin 1987. Producer Daniel Lanois & Brian Eno. 24-bit remastering. Island Records CD U26842 298-2. German pressing.

Franz Schubert ‘Ave Maria’ from “Christmas Songs” Leontyne Price, Herbert von Karajan conducting Wiener Philharmoniker. Recorded in the Sofiensaal, Vienna, June 1961. Producer: John Culshaw. Engineer: Gordon Parry. ADD remastered 1987. Decca 421 103-2 West German pressing. This legendary production/engineering team left a legacy of desert island discs. Especially noteworthy here is the phrasing ‘mit Gemütlichkeit’ or ‘unhurried friendliness’ that only the Viennese orchestras can do to perfection.

Banks/Collins/Rutherford ‘Invisible Touch’ from “A Hot Night in Paris with the Phil Collins Big Band” recorded live in Paris 1999. Producer Don Murray & Daryl Stuermer. Live recording engineer Mauricio Guerrero. Mixed by Don Murray in Capitol Studios LA. WEA (Warner) 3984272212. Australian pressing.

Elmer Bernstein ‘The Magnificent Seven’ from “Epics” Erich Kunzel conducting Cincinnati Pops Orchestra recorded in Music Hall Cincinnati Ohio 1999. Producer: Robert Woods. Engineer: Michael Bishop. Direct Stream Digital sampling at 2.8224 MHz. Telarc CD-80600. US pressing.

George Gershwin ‘Adagio’ from “Piano Concerto in F” two piano version Katia & Marielle Labeque recorded in Paris 1980. No other details available. Philips 400 022-2 West German pressing.

Gidon Kremer ‘Double Concerto for Swing Trio’ from “Lockenhaus Encore! Musical Jokes” Live recording at the Lockenhaus Festival 1990. DDD Philips 432 252-2. West German pressing.

Tito Puente ‘Oye Como Va’ from “Abraxis” by the Carlos Santana Band. Recorded at Wally Heider Recording Studios, San Francisco 1970. Producers: Fred Catero & Santana. Engineers: Dave Brown, John Fiore. 24-bit remastering producer: Bob Irwin. Remastering Vic Anesini, Sony Music Studios, New York. 1998. Columbia 489543 9. US pressing. Still trying to track down the legendary Japanese 24-bit remaster pressing.

Nigel Westlake ‘Penguin Circus’ from “Antarctica the Film Music” Michael Askill, Ian Cleworth and percussion ensemble. Recorded Rhinoceros Studios Sydney 1992. Producer: Nigel Westlake. Engineer: Craig Preston. Tall Poppies TP012. Australian pressing.

Tapper/Brodsky ‘Red Roses for a Blue Lady’ from “Bert Kaempfert & His Orchestra – The Silver Collection” recorded 1966. No other details available. Polydor 823 702-2. West German pressing.

‘Handle With Care’ from “The Travelling Wilburys” recorded Los Angeles 1988. Producers: “Otis & Nelson Wilbury”. Engineer: Richard Dodd. Travelling Wilburys are: Roy Orbison, Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Tom Petty, and Jeff Lynne. Wilbury Records 925 796-2 West German pressing.

Peter Tchaikovsky ‘Allegro con fuoco’ from “Piano Concerto No.1 in B flat minor, op.23” Mikhail Pletnev piano. Vladimir Fedoseyev conducting The

Philharmonia. Recorded in Walthamstow Assembly Hall, London, 1990. Producer: Andrew Keener. Balance Engineer Mike Hatch. DDD. Virgin Classics 4 CD box set 7243 5 62358 2 EU pressing. Containing all the piano concertos and an amazing performance of the Sixth Symphony.



Ludwig van Beethoven ‘Quartet Mir ist so Wunderbar’ from “Fidelio”. Christa Ludwig, Ingeborg Hallstein, Gerhard Unger, Gottlob Frick, with Otto Klemperer conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. Recorded in Kingsway Hall, London 1962. Producer: Walter Legge. Balance Engineer: Douglas Larter. Digitally remastered with EMIs ART process by Allan Ramsay 2000. Great Recordings of the Century Series: EMI 5 67364 2. A truly great performance from all involved. Won the “Goosebump Award” for the most popular track from the members’ feedback forms.

Pete Townshend ‘I’m Free’ from “Tommy” sung by Roger Daltrey with Douglas Measham conducting the London Symphony Orchestra and Chambre Choir. Recorded at Olympic Studios, London 1972. Producer: Lou Reizner. Engineer: Keith Grant. Ode Records D 38940. US pressing.

Wendy Matthews ‘The Day You Went Away’ from “Lily” sung by Wendy Matthews. Recorded in Rhinoceros Studios, Sydney 1992. Producer: T Bone Burnett. Engineer: Joe Schiff. rooArt 4509905472 (Warner). Australian pressing.

Lennon/McCartney ‘Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band’ and ‘All You Need is Love’ from the Beatles “Love”. Producer: George Martin. Soundtrack specially remixed by George Martin for Cirque du Soleil 2006. EMI Parlophone/Apple 0946 3 81598 2 7. EU pressing.

Twenty-seven tracks in all – gee Dave only eleven of them “classical” – well within our demographic of the members interests. As predicted, some tracks scored well on the ‘best track’ and ‘worst track’ from the

members' feedback forms. I hope everyone heard at least one track that they thought was really good. Until next time.

John McEvoy



Phil Brown receives his Certificate of Appreciation

Your Club Needs You

An organisation like Sydney Audio Club is only as strong as its membership. Your Committee enjoys organizing the club meetings, managing the club's affairs, building the membership and generally spending a lot of our spare time trying to make the experience rewarding for the members. But we could do with some help.

If you have some spare time, and are willing to help out, we are particularly looking to fill two important roles: those of **Newsletter Editor**, and **Social Coordinator**. Membership of the Committee which meets once a month is also a part of these positions.

We would also appreciate hearing from any of our members who have the skill and time to develop and maintain our website as the **Webmaster**. This is almost considered a necessity as a focal point for communication in these times of fast moving electrons. If you have the creative urge please drop a line to the address below.

Perry White on a smaller scale ...

Perhaps not the Daily Planet (although on occasions a strong relationship with Superman wouldn't go astray – some of those amps are heavy!), your august newsletter, Feedback, provides an important service to the membership, keeping you all informed of events, providing an outlet for your creative writing talents, and generally adding to your enjoyment of the Club.

We intend to produce a newsletter monthly, consisting mainly of contributions from the membership and the Committee. A number of regular columns and features are already in place, and more contributions are welcome.

To pull this together, a **newsletter editor** is essential. The editor would not necessarily need to write the articles, but would:

- coordinate the article/column writers
- ensure that the copy comes in on time
- review the copy and make sure it makes sense
- cut and paste the final articles (and any pictures) into a standard format in MS Word

To do this job, you would need to have modest MS Word skills, be persistent and creative in getting writers to produce their stuff on time, and be tolerant of the Committee Members when we complain about how much we have to do.

The Newsletter will be between 10 and 20 pages each month. Any volunteers, please drop a line to the club's email address sydneyaudioclub@optusnet.com.au.

The Life of the Party ...

There are lots of ways to share the joy of fine music, great sound and the convivial company of like-minded people. Club meetings and SIG meetings provide opportunities to do just that, but your Committee believes that the Sydney Audio Club can offer even more.

Whether it be sharing the experience of live music, or working with industry organisations, vendors or other audio or music societies to arrange or promote events for members, or simply getting together to break bread and enjoy each other's company, the potential for expanding the positive experience of Club membership is enormous.

If you are the kind of person who enjoys seeking out opportunities for social interaction and the appreciation of music and fine sound (not to mention fine food and fine wine), then you should consider becoming our **Social Activities Coordinator**. We need someone to:

- canvas the members and friends of the Club for suggestions on potential social activities
- develop a range of potential social events that might be added to the club's events calendar
- work with the Committee to prioritise and schedule events of interest to members
- promote and coordinate scheduled activities at meetings and through the newsletter.

This can be a very enjoyable role, so please drop us a line to the Club's email address sydneyaudioclub@optusnet.com.au if you are interested in helping out.

From the Shelf

Members For Sale column. Items will be listed here for two months unless sold prior.

Promithius Transformer Volume Control (TVC) - a passive preamplifier based on multi-tapped transformers rather than the more usual potentiometer approach. The TVC has the advantage of offering better matching between source component and power amplifier impedances, and can therefore drive longer interconnects to the power amps. This unit includes three inputs, two single ended and one balanced, and two outputs, one single ended and one balanced. The volume adjustment has 22 positions offering approximately 2db steps. Condition is very good, bearing in mind that this unit was hand built in China (including the knobs) and does not have the fit and finish of a mass produced component. Price - \$400. Phone John on 0411 267702.

Quad 34 Preamplifier in good condition. All switches, filters and indicator lights work. Has built in MM phono stage and three line level inputs, plus the ubiquitous Quad filter and "tilt" tone control. A small nick in the volume control knob, but otherwise great for its age. Supplied with a selection of DIN leads and adapters. Price - \$300. Matching Quad 405 amplifier also available if required - Price \$450. Both units are, as far as I am aware, unmodified. Phone John on 0411 267702

Musical Fidelity X-10D valve buffer. This unit goes between your CD Player and preamp-amp, or between your preamp and power amp, and provides very high input impedance and low output impedance, plus the magic of a valve line stage, based on the 6922 double triode. Built into the classic X-series cast aluminium case, this unit will beef up the sound of some older CD players without robbing them of detail. Price - \$300. Phone John 0411 267702.

Digital Password 16 bit non oversampling DAC. These units, hand built in Taiwan, revive what some consider to be the classic 16 bit non-oversampling sound of many famous CD Players of the late 80's and early 90's. This device is in very good condition and is based on the 1543 DAC chip. The sound is well balanced tonally, and the presentation is in an attractive small smoked brown perspex box. Price - \$350. Phone John 0411 267702

August Meeting Preview

The Altec 601 Duplex was unveiled to the world some sixty-six years ago to answer the call for a high quality point source monitoring driver for recording and broadcast studios. I doubted it occurred to the people at the time that this speaker is still hotly pursued by many sound purist of today as the ant's pants of loudspeakers.

It has been speculated by many that the concept and design of this unique driver was the work of George Carrington, then a very capable engineer at the Altec, and not by the legendary James B Lansing.

But it matters not who was responsible for its birth, the fact remains that due to the ability to deliver accurate sound in proper phase that this driver is regarded by many as the greatest point source driver even today.

The speaker was named "601 Duplex" by its developer and the series certainly has undergone many design modifications since it was introduced in 1941, they were updated to 601A,B,C,602,A,B,C then to 604 in 1944. Its colourful carrier continues with 604B,604C,604D,604E,604F,604G,H,K,L. The impedance of these drivers also varies from 8 ohms to 20 ohms depends the model.

Field magnet was used in the first series then Alnico magnet from the B series onwards. The magnet then changed to ferrite dust magnets in the H series. The loading horn for the tweeter also underwent some changes from Multi cell horn to the plastic Mantaray horn.

The efficiency of these drivers varies from model to model but typically around the 100 plus mark. The driver is consisted of a 15 inches bass unit and a 2.25-inch compressor tweeter mounted behind the magnet assembly with the high frequencies travel through the exponential horn shape cut-out on the centre pole piece.

The crossover frequency is once again varied from 1500Hz ,1700 Hz ,2000Hz or 3000Hz .

I have heard quite a few pairs of 604 in the past but never did they impressed me as much as the 604G owned by our would be member Alan Li. This pair of 604s is boxed in their original factory made enclosures of no less than 9 cubic feet.

If you attended our inaugural meeting last month you'd have noticed the room is of the larger side and it was really taxing on the system being demonstrated by Hi-Fi Junction. It would therefore be interesting to see, or

rather hear how these pair of gems will perform in our **August 5 meeting**.

The line up for the meeting will be of follows:

- Source: Revox Pro CD player with upgraded DAC chip.
- Amplifier: Consonance 300B by Opera, using new stock WE300B.
- Speakers: Altec 604G in original enclosures.
- Cable: Wireworld interconnects and speaker cable.
-

President John and Guest presenter, Maestro Gary Stavrou, will present the finest music of their choice, which no doubt will be a very entertaining and enjoyable afternoon.

Now why would you to miss this great opportunity to hear one of the great speakers of yesteryear?

So please cancel, or make creative excuses if need to from your prior made commitments and come to Dence Park to share this magic moment with us on Sunday August 5.

Music of course starts at 2PM but you are welcome to come in early for a chat and join in to set up the room from 1 PM onwards.

Last Meeting Vital Statistics

The first meeting of the Sydney Audio Club was attended by 45 people. 23 people filled in feedback forms with an average of 4 on overall enjoyment of the meeting and the system. The music rated 4 also, but with one rating it as 1 (comment: not to my taste). Opera (Fidelio) scored highest best music, and also featured on the worst music, the same with Phil Collins Big Band. Some asked for more jazz, others said it was just right - playing short tracks that are not too much to put up with if you really do not enjoy that type of music. Overall very positive and in keeping with the expected very diverse tastes of our members. Hopefully there will be something really good for every on to listen to.

Sydney Audio Club Corporate Supporters

Audio Connection

455 -461 Parramatta Road Leichhardt NSW 2040
Phone 9518 3000 ask for Joe Ridiger
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Pymble HiFi

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Contributions for each issue of "Feedback" should reach the Editor (P O Box 8, Epping, NSW 1710) **no later than the 10th of the month** on a disk in MS Word for Windows format or by email attachment (preferably in MS Word for Windows format) to:

sydneyaudioclub@optusnet.com.au