

Hifi Pig

EXTRA

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**SPECIAL
PUBLICATION**

NORTH WEST AUDIO SHOW 2016



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WELCOME

The North West Audio Show has been running annually for the last couple of years and is proving to be a great hit with music lovers and audiophiles who come from far and wide to attend the event. 2016 was a great year with increased numbers of visitors and even more great exhibitors and Hifi Pig is extremely proud to be associated as Exclusive Media Partner for the show.

Of course this year organiser Kris wanted to try running the show over two venues and from the feedback we've got from visitors and exhibitors the feelings as to how well this went were mixed. Some people really loved the two venue layout and the coaches to ferry folk to and fro, whilst other felt that it split the show a little too much. Kris has of course listened to both sides of the discussion and has opted to hold the 2017 edition of the show at the Cranage Hall site only but over two days instead of just the one. This means that the North West Audio Show for 2017 will now take place on Saturday and Sunday (24th and 25th) June. We hope you will join us for what promises to be an exceptional weekend of hifi, audio, music, records and the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones.

One of the highlights for me at this year's show was the opportunity to chat with so many people we have met in the virtual world and share a laugh and perhaps a beer or two in the real world. There are some great people out there in hifi-land in the UK and whilst there are always going to be those that bemoan the industry and talk it down at every opportunity, the camaraderie and goodwill shown at The North West Audio Show demonstrates that not only is the hobby alive and well but it is thriving!

See you Next year!

Stuart Smith



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North West Highlights

By Ian Ringstead

It doesn't seem a year since the last show, and it is now in its third year. The success of the show had meant that this year it was being staged at two hotels, Cranage Hall again and the new venue Wychwood Park near Crewe. Cranage was busy as usual because it is a popular venue and near to the famous Jodrell Bank Observatory. Wychwood Park was new to me but a very nice modern hotel being part of the De Vere group of hotels.

On arrival I was pleased to see that Cranage Hall was bustling with keen enthusiasts and their wives/partners and a lot of families too, which is great. I also got a chance to catch up with old friends, new contributors to the magazine and make new contacts. As I like to talk a lot, networking meant I couldn't see every room in detail so I concentrated on my favourite brands and what caught my attention.

NU NU Distribution had TAD on demonstration again and I can't help but drool over the build quality and work that has gone into this brand, although it's prices aren't for the faint hearted. Quadral from Germany were sounding good as well and an old acquaintance was Oracle. I had the pleasure of selling one of their illustrious turntables to a customer of mine in the 80's. On show was the newer Paris turntable looking and sounding good.

Entotem were again showing off their very successful AV unit the Plato and are about to launch the new class A amp version. Also they announced their archiving service where they will for a fee archive your music collection digitally if you don't want to spend the long process of doing this yourself. A neat idea I think, and I reckon could be popular with folk who don't have the time or inclination to archive themselves.

Doug Brady a long established dealer was demonstrating some big brands, notably Mark Levinson with their new 585 integrated amp and big Magneplanar 3.7 loudspeakers. I've heard the smaller Maggies and been very impressed, and my wife liked the uncomplicated clean lines of the design. You'd need a big room for these monsters so investigate the smaller models if

Oracle Paris Turntable In the NuNu room



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Ripping Vinyl the Entotem way

Hifi Pig

NORTH WEST AUDIO SHOW 2016



TAD in NuNu



Maggies

A debut for these Graham Audio speakers



More from brianandtrevors including in the background their BooPlinth for the LP12

3 Square Audio Translator



Cranage Hall - 2016



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Thanks for visiting.
See You in 2017!

you like what they do. Maggies as they are affectionately called offer great value for money and well worth trying out.

Brian and Trevors room was full of interesting brands from the likes of Linn, MF, Graham Audio, PS Audio, Rel and their Booplinth for inveterate Linn owners keen to upgrade their LP12.

3 Square Audio were certainly busy and happily demonstrating their new floorstander the Translator

3 Square Audio were certainly busy and happily demonstrating their new floorstander the Translator which I recently reviewed and liked so much. They also had new speaker and equipment stands on show, made from laminated birch ply that looked very smart. They deserve to do well.

Divine Audio were certainly making a statement with their room sporting a pair of bright orange EgglestonWorks speakers being fed by Rogue Audio valve electronics and the critically acclaimed Analogue Works turntable. Cables were from Anti-Cables and the cartridge was from Soundsmith, so a strong American force was on show.

Malvern Audio Research were demonstrating some hORNS FP15 speakers that sounded really good and I have seen before at shows. Ming Da UK were also demonstrating their valve



Divine Audio



Stuart of 3 Square Audio is clearly delighted with listeners comments



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Moving air in the Midland Audio Xchange room, the Magico loudspeakers



amps of which they do a wide variety and models to suit most budgets. Midland Audio X-Change had a large room showing off to great effect some of Absolute Sounds' portfolio of rather tasty products. A pair of Magico S-7's were sounding fab at the far end of the large and long room with a superb deep sound stage being portrayed that hung in the room. Constellation amps were being used along with Audio Research, ReQuest Audio, Transparent cables, Emm Labs and Metronome. If you need to ask the price you probably can't afford it, but superb kit all the same and one can dream.

Next door was one of my favourite all time brands Mark Levinson who were showcasing both the 585 integrated and a pre amp with the sublime No.53 mono blocks which have taken over from the legendary No. 33H mono blocks. The speakers being used were from JBL another classic American brand that knows a thing or two about sound. The S4700 with a 15" bass driver were superb and although not small sound sublime even at low levels as well as high. Can I take this system home please?

Flamingo Audio from Birmingham were demonstrating Tsakirdis valve amps with Zellaton Legacy loudspeakers from Germany, a brand I had seen and heard in Munich recently. They sounded great and I would like to try them at home. I listened on headphones to the new Tsakirdis Theseus amp which has just been released and is another very interesting versatile amp I'd like to try out which at £1480 seems great value.

Upstairs at Cranage, Kralk Audio were drawing a lot of attention demonstrating the superb BC-30 with the PAW stands and valve amps from Yaquin of China along with their CD player and the Classic Turntable Company providing the vinyl source. Many people commented how fab the BC-30's sounded, so as one of only two people to have reviewed them and absolutely loving them, it boosted my confidence in my hearing and taste. Well done Alan. Kralk Audio have more products in development so keep an eye on their website and Facebook pages.

As time was getting on we had to travel to Wychwood Park near Crewe to finish the show off. Although a much more modern hotel, Wychwood was smaller and there were fewer exhibitors there. In the limited time I had here I concentrated

Mark Levinson and JBL



THE TRANSLATOR

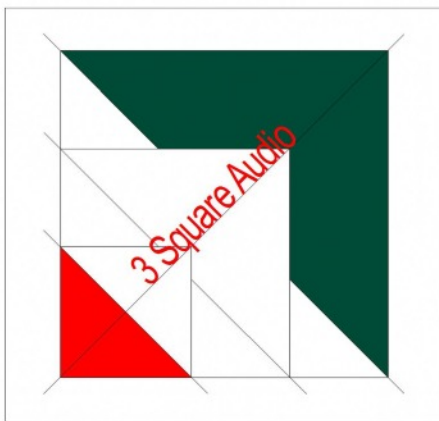
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Upstairs at
Cranage, Kralk
Audio were
drawing a lot of
attention
demonstrating
the superb BC-
30



on the Ophidian Audio room where Gareth James the designer and owner was showing his new P series range, a more upmarket series from the popular M series I liked so much and reviewed last year. The Prophet P1 and P2 are a stand mount and floorstanding design aimed at the more discerning listener with even better build quality and drive units in them. The P2 floorstander in particular sounded really nice, so wait for a review later in the year.

Apologies to all the other companies I couldn't get around to see and chat to but time ran out very quickly.

I managed to hear Scott Wainwright playing live near the end of the show, a very talented musician from Barnsley. If you get a chance to see him, please make the effort. Follow Scott on Facebook where you'll get updates on where he will be playing. I love to hear live music and is one of the reasons I love hifi so I can recreate some of the magic in my own living room.

So all in all a very good show that seemed well attended. With increasing exhibitors I'd like to see the show being over a weekend, as one day is difficult to get around all you want to see. Also, if one hotel could be used again to better effect people would be under less pressure to see everything. I appreciate having enough suitable rooms is not always easy, but one venue would make it easier for everyone in my opinion.



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A Newbie's View of the North West Audio Show... Or A Kid In A Sweet Shop

By Ken Stokes

I recently attended my first ever audio fair, The North West Audio Show, held at Cranage Hall in Holmes Chapel and additional venue, Wychwood Park near Crewe. It seems because I have never been to any kind of audio show before, this has earned me the dubious reward of being asked to write up my impressions as an audio show newbie for Hifi Pig. I consider this an honour. I am aware there are several other write ups of this event so I will try not to repeat comments made by others. Well, apart that is from perhaps gushing a little bit about one or two of the truly awesome systems present and moving substantial quality air.

I would have to say that my first thought, other than the excitement, after booking a room for this event around 5 months ago, was the reluctant realisation that I was opening a can of the proverbial that might leave me feeling my system was seriously lacking. A concern for me, the idea that perhaps I had not spent my money as wisely as I hoped! We all know where that idea leads I'm sure. Also, possibly an even bigger concern, that I might have to re negotiate hifi allocated budgets and spends with my wife after several years of 'well this will be the last upgrade...would this result in yet another upgrade itch?

Perhaps I should at least start by giving an impression of why I was going to an audio show in the first place after 60 years of avoiding them. Two years ago, after ten years of no box swapping, I decided to upgrade my amplifier and CD player (yes I know, fatal). A small windfall on the cash front gave me a brief window of opportunity before the wife could think of good reason to say no. I duly did my research, upgraded from my 10 year old NAD integrated and equally ageing Arcam CD spinner to a Roksan M2 integrated and matching M2 CD spinner. Of course the upgrade itch had set in.

It wasn't long before I started to think that my ten year old Monitor Audio Silver 6's were maybe not up to delivering what my new boxes could offer. I

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Thanks for a great show, see you next year!

North West Audio Show
2016

Cranage and Wychwood Halls

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can hear all the old hifi enthusiasts laughing in some arcane ethereal hifi netherworld while I type this piece, obviously the audio junkie had reared and as cheerfully as I could muster the subject it was broached with full (IDF) Interior Design Factor charm offensive to placate the aforementioned significant other. Her brow creased instantly of course, because she had spotted the signs and she of course knows better! Anyhoo, as so oft said in the Simpsons by Homer's neighbour, I pressed on. This audio upgrade game is not for the faint hearted.

This time my upgrade route took a very much more in depth and measured approach. I had learned a few things since buying the Roksan boxes. This was thanks to joining several audio/hifi groups on Facebook, I had gained some real insight about how to assess and progress. When I bought the Roksan I had bought to a large extent on magazine reviews, a listen in a shop demo and frankly a good deal. By now for speakers I had a notion that more was at stake and room acoustics, cosmetics and matching with those Roksan boxes...I spent around 6 months home with demos, cable changes and even experimenting with room treatment.

I really felt I had learned a great deal. I eventually chose a pair of Vienna

Acoustics Beethoven Baby Grand SE's. Once chosen following home demo with a 2nd hand pair I had decided that I wanted a new pair, frankly the 2nd hand ones were less than perfect cosmetically. With no UK distribution this proved a little more taxing than the average purchase, but after chatting with a nice chap in a hifi shop we came up with a plan. However, that is another story! I eventually received my new speakers, new speaker cable and new balanced XLRs. I felt like a proper hifi enthusiast. I had learned lots and now a fully fledged member of several Facebook hifi groups. Of course I was going to a hifi fair! Be crazy not to ..

So back to Carnage, Sorry I mean Cranage

My involvement with the Facebook groups and reading the online Hifi Pig articles plus my upgrades had really whetted my appetite. I wanted to know if I could make any other tweaks to improve things. I told myself I might 'skirt round the edges' and maybe look at further mains cable upgrades...honest, that was it. OK yeah I'm lying again. I was considering an upgrade for my ageing Mini Disc player that I was using as a DAC for my laptop so maybe a stand alone DAC? Maybe a uni player such as the Oppo and upgrade my bluray as well?

I told myself I
might 'skirt
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nest, that was
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The anticipation for Cranage really started to mount knowing that Oppo were to have a stand, that Schiit UK would have a stand and of course there would be lots of other kit to marvel at, right? Well I wasn't wrong.

Once I'd sorted basic housekeeping and stuffed my bag in my room I was eager to see if I could get a sneaky preview of any rooms while they were being set up. I arrived the Saturday afternoon the day before the main event. Of course this proved disappointing because I soon learned that exhibitors couldn't start setting up 'til much later, in the evening in fact. Anyway, I figured have a beer, explore the place a little. I must say Cranage is a lovely venue, two bars and nice grounds. I won't elaborate on this as I know others have, but suffice to say it is a good venue. Lots of decent size rooms and nice grounds etc.

That evening I met up with my fellow Facebook audio conspirator David Robson and we headed for the bar for a coffee. Soon to be thwarted in our sober intentions by Hifi Pig stalwarts Stuart and Linette Smith and a few other serious hifi associated drinking buddies. We had a very enjoyable evening. I also started to realise that my research had only started to scratch the surface and frankly much of the discussions was techno babble to me, but I would have to say that all were

Sound Kaos were showcasing their new Open Baffles (left)



I won't elaborate on this as I know others have, but suffice to say it is a good venue. Lots of decent size rooms and nice grounds



Constellation amps feeding the Magicos



Mark Levinson

Zellaton speakers firing diagonally across the room in Flamingo Audio's room



very willing to explain when asked. We even had a sneaky preview in a couple of rooms, not fair really because the exhibitors had not set up properly, but more than enough to whet my appetite. I knew there was going to be some very serious kit being used!

North West Audio Show commences!

The following day the audio onslaught commenced following a fulsome English breakfast. Food was good. After breakfast David and I decided to get a little fresh air before the show was to actually commence at 10a.m. We didn't make it to the front door, well not for several hours. It was like being in audio heaven. A real hifi enthusiasts sweet shop, even though officially open battle had commenced in several rooms and I guess I at least was like a rabbit being stared at by a cobra...

Frankly much of the kit was way, way above my budget, but to be honest that really didn't matter. I knew with some of the more exotic and pricey kit that if you need to ask, as the saying goes... It was though absolutely fascinating to see what is possible, what no expense spared really can buy. Kit ranged from things that looked wacky, to kit that really didn't look so different to what I have. Speakers approaching 10ft high and cables as thick as anacondas that looked to have sections in the middle with a digesting animal stuck in place.

However, there were also real world (well for me on my limited budget) kit as well as the exotic. One thing I realised quickly, just because it looked exotic and was probably excruciatingly expensive it may not mean it would be to everyone's taste. I heard both, kit I was totally drooling over in a completely unashamed manner and kit that, even though a bit pricey was not for me.

I found the Magico room breathtaking. I know I will likely never be able to afford that kit, but boy was it good! I also loved the Mark Levinson room, Divine Audio and the Egglestone Works speakers, the Zellaton Legacy loudspeakers, Kralk Audio and Alan Clark's Kralk BC1 speakers (although I know he was disappointed to be let down by a component supplier and consequently unable to bring a pair of his freshly minted Elite speakers, a real leg up), the Swiss Soundkaos room and their new open baffle Libération was also very interesting.

mark

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I could literally wax lyrical about how good the good was for pages and pages more, I saw stacks of kit that I really would love to own and also visited the specific rooms I wanted to regarding my own personal upgrade ideas. I could have spent days at that show. Literally I think I probably missed around a third of the rooms at Cranage and because it was so late in the day I saw what was on offer at Wychwood in a very hurried manner. I didn't get there 'til almost 4 in the afternoon and I needed to get back to Yorkshire for around 7 in the evening. To be honest I should have booked a room at Cranage for another night. I missed the live performance by Scott Wainwright at Wychwood because I had to leave before his performance started. I understand his gig was very much enjoyed by those who did attend.

One room I did manage to visit at Wychwood was Colin Durrige of IQ Speakers. I really wanted to check out the IPL speakers and his new NORD Hypex NCore D class amplifiers. He was clearly in a room a bit too big for his kit, but he freely admitted he had booked late. Despite this I was still impressed. I know that Class D amplification has been dismissed for years by many audio junkies...I mean aficionados and audio enthusiasts..oops. Anyway, as I say I was impressed with both IPL speakers and the build service Colin offers and those Nord amp packages which surprise surprise are actually within my potential upgrade budget. I was also very impressed with the electrostatic speakers and D Class amps being demoed in the HI FI Hanger room at Wychwood. A special bonus, I had never heard electrostatic speakers before and I was very impressed.

So was it worth it? You bet. I loved every minute of the show and will definitely be going to the next. Yes there is stacks to see and listen to and I defy anyone interested in audio bliss to not find something of interest. There were talks, presentations, manufacturers who you could ask direct questions of and more quality sounds at every level than you could shake a stick at! I loved it, checked out some great kit, assessed potential upgrades, but more than that...it was a pleasure to meet people from the Facebook audio groups I have been involved with and share a few shandies with them.

Oh and those upgrades? Did my kit measure up? I guess to be fair I think

my set up did measure up, least within my spend. I realised that I have spent reasonably wisely. I also realised that there maybe some 'tweaks' I could make and I might have to navigate a few negotiations with the Mrs....

It might require caution, it may even get dangerous, but my wife likes a quality bit of audio as well and guess when those Nord D Class amps arrive with an Oppo 105d for home demo we will cross the well worn bridge of acceptance then!

I loved every minute of the show and will definitely be going to the next



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Dean Brissett Presents His Top Ten Albums

By Dean Brissett

Incredibly knowledgeable Dean Brissett was invited to present his Top Ten records of all time at this year's North West Audio Show. The result was a highly entertaining presentation that included some really great snippets from some truly fabulous records, presented in a passionate and highly entertaining way.

At every show we visit we give the Hifi Pig Loves You award to the room or exhibitor we think captured the spirit of the show and entertained us the most. This year we chose not to give the award to an exhibitor but rather to Dean for his remarkable passion and knowledge that was clearly on show at this presentation.

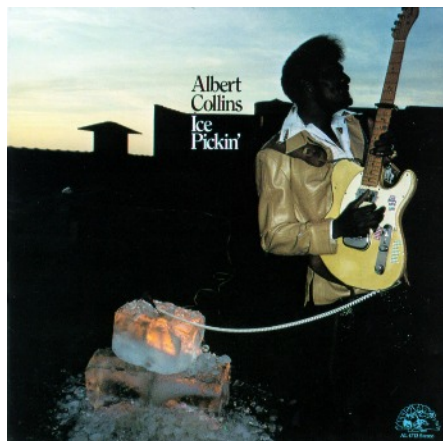
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NORTH WEST AUDIO SHOW 2016

I was asked by Kris, the organiser of the North West Audio Show, to present a talk about my 10 favourite records. I choose to do albums but soon found that this wasn't easy. I always ended up with too many albums.

So here are 10 albums that I find great and enjoyable.

Albert Collins - Ice Pickin'



It's not often that you go to a room at a Hi-Fi show and hear a track, that you don't own, that puts a smile on your and makes you laugh out loud. The Roksan room in the 80s did this. Thank you Touraj!

This album highlights the cold icy sound of Albert's Telecaster. He strokes the stage like gunslinger playing that style that's his own. A good array of tunes from funny to downright sad. A joy to listen to. A man top of his game.

Track played - Conversation with Collins

Specials - Specials



A great album from the late 70s, that mixed elements of two types of music I found interesting, punk and ska. The Specials provided one those "Eureka" moments when I first heard the single Gangsters. The following album was

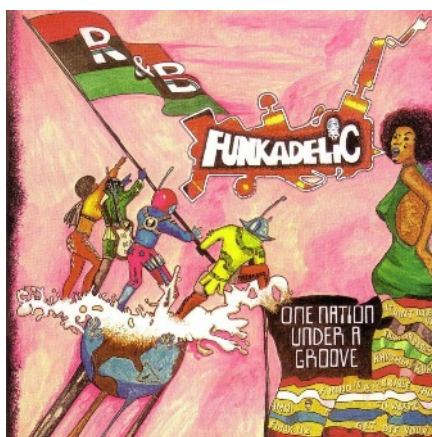
Incredible knowledge and enthusiasm gained Dean Brissett the Hifi Pig Loves You award



choc full of catchy tunes and social comment, they were the right band for that era in the UK. The music still holds strong today.

Track played - Message To You Rudy

Funkadelic - One Nation Under a Groove



Rock, soul, funk, it's all there! Grooves galore! The tenth studio album by one of wackest groups going. This features

them hitting "bullseye" in the musical dartboard. The album is worth buying for the killer title track which was massive on the dancefloor in my youth. The album was such a future shock that the band imploded a few years later.

"So low you can't get under it. So high you can't get over it."

Track played - One Nation Under a Groove

Talking Heads - Remain in Light



Hifi Pig

NORTH WEST AUDIO SHOW 2016

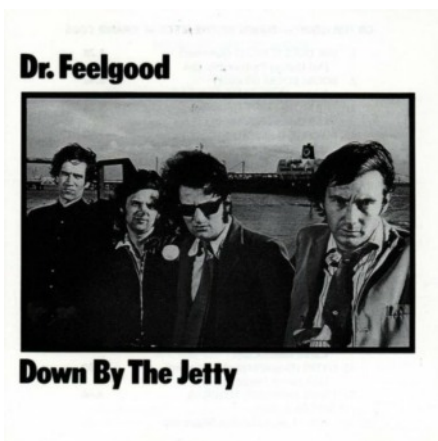
A fine band that was a big part of the US New Wave scene. Talking Heads were a band that had an ear for different influences. This showed with the run of albums from their debut.

Dipping a few toes into the wonderful worlds of funk, dance, afrobeat and new wave they put together an album of toe tapping musical delight. Quality from start to finish, a great flowing album.

Track Played - Once in a Lifetime

Dr Feelgood - Down By The Jetty

This band was musically tight as tight thing on tight day. This debut album of Rhythm & blues, showed a British edge to the music. It also showed that they were the top of their game. The songs were mostly written by Wilko Johnson. His tough choppy style guitar playing merged well with a dynamite rhythm section to produce music that influenced the likes of the Ramones, Blondie and Paul Weller. Enjoy!



Track Played – Roxette

Curtis Mayfield – Superfly



An awesome talent who had a great run of albums in the the early to mid 70s. Curtis hit the spot in the 60s with the group the Impressions. His knack of killer grooves, sweet soul vocal and social comment meant he was an ideal

candidate for writing a "Blaxploitation" soundtrack. The resultant album, Superfly, was a monster which grabs you from the start to the end. It takes you on a journey of early 70s American realism. It opens your eye as well as your ears. High standards from Curtis

Track Played - Freddie's Dead

Grace Jones - Living My Life



An iconoclastic artists who has cut her own furrow in life. A stylish performer backed by the Compass Point Allstars, she produced distinctive grooves that make you want to move. All the ingredients in the right proportion have come together. Yes sir!

Track played - Nipple to the Bottle

AC/DC – Powerage

A bit of a wide card choice from the funk soul brother. This puts smile on my face with it's rock 'n' roll groove. If I want to rock out, and why not, here's the album to do it to.



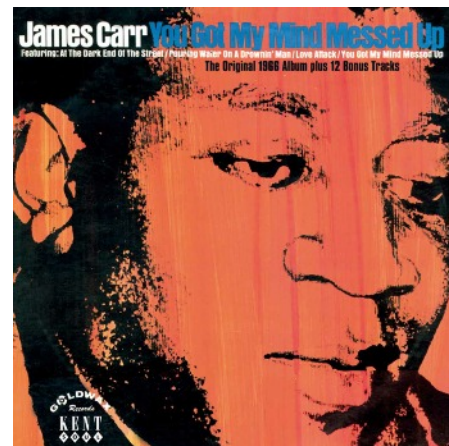
Track played - Rock 'n' Roll Damnation

James Carr - You Got My Mind Messed Up

Many moons ago, when I was getting more and more into soul music, I wanted

to know who was the greatest soul singer. Was it Otis? Was it Aretha? A name that was chucked into the hat was James Carr.

Who was James Carr? Well he's an awesome soul singer from the school of hard knocks and the university of life. He didn't get the breaks like many others but his small output hit double top in the soul stakes. He had the vocals and the tunes that states soul in an unforced way. You believe in what he's singing. You feel his pain. Every home should have a copy and I've got more than one.



Track Played - Pouring Water On a Drowning Man

My favourite album is:



Skatalites - Foundation Ska

I blame my parents for the love of ska. The Skatalites were the cornerstones of Jamaican music. They played with some the island's biggest stars. Quality ska is hard to play hence the high level musicianship throughout the band. Ska music then slowed down and the bass came more to the fore front. Rocksteady was created. From that came reggae. The Skatalites influence,flowed through these style changes. IA most joyful experience.

Track played - Christine Keeler

Questing For Musical Nirvana

By Dave Robson

This was my second visit to the North West Audio Show. I cut my teeth on last year's show and it was my very first. This year I had arranged to meet a couple of other show "virgins" from a Hifi group I'm a member of on Facebook. I was also lucky enough to have the weekend off and had decided to stay over the previous night to the show to make the most of an early start and get into the atmosphere from the get go. This turned out a good move as I had the chance to meet some of the Hifi Pig team, Stuart, Linette, Ian and Lionel among others. I was also lucky enough to chat to some of the contributors and exhibitors of the show who were all very passionate and informative about what they do, and so willing to share knowledge to help you on your quest for musical nirvana.

Colin from IQ Speakers (IPL Speakers) enlightened me about power cables and their associated fuses for instance. Now most accept having better cables and connectors brings about benefits, those who like to have the shortest for the path of electricity with the least number of hurdles or connections from A to B may be interested in the fact Shuko style plugs don't have fuses, thus eliminating one (two if you count both ends of the fuse) connection. Now some reading this may know this as a basic fact of hifi system building, well not this chappie!!! 30+ years in the hobby and simple information like that had escaped me. Simple conversations like this one can push your choices and the performance envelope of your home systems forward at very little cost as it creates options for you to try.

I know at times some of us in the past have bought from high street chains, I myself read the big magazines of the day and bought a bit blindly, several expensive mistakes later and my lesson was well learned! One of the first

“proper” Hifi shops I visited some 25yrs ago as a Hifi newbie was Acton Gate Audio in Wrexham. I bought my first pair of floorstanding speakers from them in 1991/2. Mission 753's. They went head to head with a pair of B&W (unsure of model) of a similar price. I was glad to see Acton Gate still going strong and showing at Wychwood Hall. I had only visited the shop 3 times, once to demo the speaker, and twice after to drop off and pick up again after my puppy ate the middle from my new speakers (grrrr lesson learned) and Acton Gate repairing them! Anyway, I was taken aback when walking into the room when the guys from the shop recognised me and remembered the story. It had been 25 years! This sort of level of detail and customer service to me is what makes our hobby a great one to be part of. Quite humbling really.

Having only ever been to 3 Hifi shows, the other being a smaller dealer only show at Chester, it's great to hear the differences that each room brings, some are quite subtle, some are quite extreme. At last years show I was taken aback by the sound of the Magnapan .7 Magneplanar speakers, set up in a smaller room of a similar size to a standard average sized living room 13x13ft they sounded beautiful, succulent and rhythmical, I was really looking forward to hearing their big brothers the 3.7i's. The room these were set up in this year was huge, probably 40x60ft to the point that there was a second system set up at the rear facing them. I was so looking forward to this setup, but I really don't think that either the speakers, amps, cables were to blame at all but the interactions with the room. Talking to some of the exhibitors most have had to use some sort of room treatments to soak up or deflect sounds. This black art of tuning a room can bring about great results if you're struggling to just hit that sweet spot. Some acoustic foam glued to a bit of MDF or a small square foam tile placed behind a rear ported speaker can soak up a little boominess, then be slid out of the way under some furniture when not in a serious listening mood.

Some nice surprises for me at Cranage and Wychwood Hall, The EgglestonWorks room sounded very nice, (Isabel Signature speakers I think!). MCRU showing what you can get from reasonably priced Quadral speakers. The futuristic open baffle SoundKaos speakers had quite a few enthralled

Quadral in the MCRU room proving you don't need to spend a fortune to get great results



More of the Kralk Audio
BC30 speakers



Award winning high end components from Music First Audio

Pre amplifiers, MC step up transformers
and now Phono Amplifiers

Components that just **Put Music First**



*For a home demonstration visit:
www.mfaudio.co.uk*

myself included, a very different design of speaker than I have previously encountered, really lovely sound.

I liked the little Retro 50 system, a one box retro styled amplifier, MM/MC Phono amp, streamer with usb connections for memory sticks and laptops, comes with its own speakers and clothed in bamboo wood outer with brushed alloy frontage. Looks cool and sounded really good in the small room; great solution for a bedroom, study or other smallish room, add a turntable and become an instant hipster!

The IQ speaker room was a joy, the IPL speakers can be bought as a build it yourself project or ready assembled. IQ also had both Abrahamsen and Nord amps and Abrahamsen CD player on show, both offering great value for money. The nord power amplifiers were my first encounter with D Class amps. From what I can gather D Class amplification has, with careful component choices, become a serious contender in the market. Hearing the nord, (which can be easily upgraded) has definitely whet my appetite for a further demonstration.

Alan Clark at the Kralk Audio room upstairs at Cranage Hall was a constantly busy room. His Black Cat BC-30 speakers, defying their size to fill the room with energetic tunes, via the beautiful CTC turntable. I was hoping to hear Alan's Elite speakers at the show but he was let down by a supplier last minute and was unable to bring a finished pair. If the BC-30's are anything to go by the Elites are worth the wait to hear them next year hopefully!

I did manage to get my fix of a planar speaker, The Hifi Hanger's demonstration of Eminent Technology's LFT-8b push-pull hybrid speaker, coupled to yet another D Class type of Amplification in the guise of a pair of Atsah monoblock amps. This combination yet again hitting the spot that the Magnapan .7 did the year before. When the planar speakers sing they really do connect to my heart. I'm really torn as to whether I go on a bit of a hifi journey at the moment!

Summing up my visit to the North West Audio Show and why I think everybody should take in a few shows, is that by going to the show, not only do you see and hear what may always be financially



A view of the back of the Sound Kaos Libération speakers



Ifi's Retro 50 system - compact and bijou

Hifi Pig

NORTH WEST AUDIO SHOW 2016

out of your reach but it also gives you fantastic options or information which you may never have thought of to further your own listening experiences. The sounds you hear are attainable in your own home, careful selection and asking questions and listening to the free (always available) advice is a major advantage. Taking along your own music to hear and compare what you know well is also a good play. Most exhibitors are happy to oblige and let you indulge yourself when they can.

Now Mr Barclay Card, have you met my new Class D friends...



Dave takes a break from the action



EgglestonWorks being very orange



Nord and Abrahamsen



The Analogue Works turntable is deceptively simple

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Simon Says Make A Date For 2017

By Simon Hill

The North West Audio Show at Cranage Hall in Holmes Chapel is the show I had been eagerly waiting for since my first visit last year. Well this year proved to be even better than last years show and has left me waiting in great anticipation until next year's.

On arrival you are greeted by the grand hotel in fantastic manicured gardens. Once inside some of the rooms were occupied by the same folk as last year, which was a good thing as I instantly felt at home and knew my way around. A look at the map showed me that there was a lot more to take in than last year. I pin pointed a few that I was very keen to go and hear and set about my journey around the show.

The first room I made a beeline for was Kralk Audio owned by Alan Clarke. Having an interest in making my own speakers Alan was someone that I had chatted to before on crossovers and components.

Alan had his BC 30 black cats on display and they punch way above their size!. The clarity and detail is fantastic these really are great speakers for their price! It was good listening to people who were impressed and hearing their thoughts. If you were at the show I'm sure you will agree, if you weren't but want to hear these speakers check out Alan's site you won't be disappointed by the sound or quality of his craftsmanship. He really does have a good eye for detail. At 90db and a recommended 10 to 80 watts power at 8ohm these are an easy load and sound great with valves.

Another room I was interested in was Soundkaos's room. Last year I was very impressed by the set up they had. This year we were treated to the Liberation

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Cranage Hall entrance

a speaker I had been looking forward to hearing. Like many I was interested in the open baffle design and the use of bronze mesh for the front and rear cover. Open baffles are becoming increasingly popular and I know of a lot of speaker builders who are interested in the sound they can bring to the table.

The Liberation with two bespoke 8-inch Enviée widebanders with a Raal ribbon super tweeter and a massive 15" woofer really do big orchestral music very well indeed. With the open baffle design not being coloured by the speaker cabinet, as there isn't one only a front baffle and a frame the sound they produce is wonderful and clean. You really can hear audience members in the background on live performances and are ever so lifelike in their approach to sound reproduction.

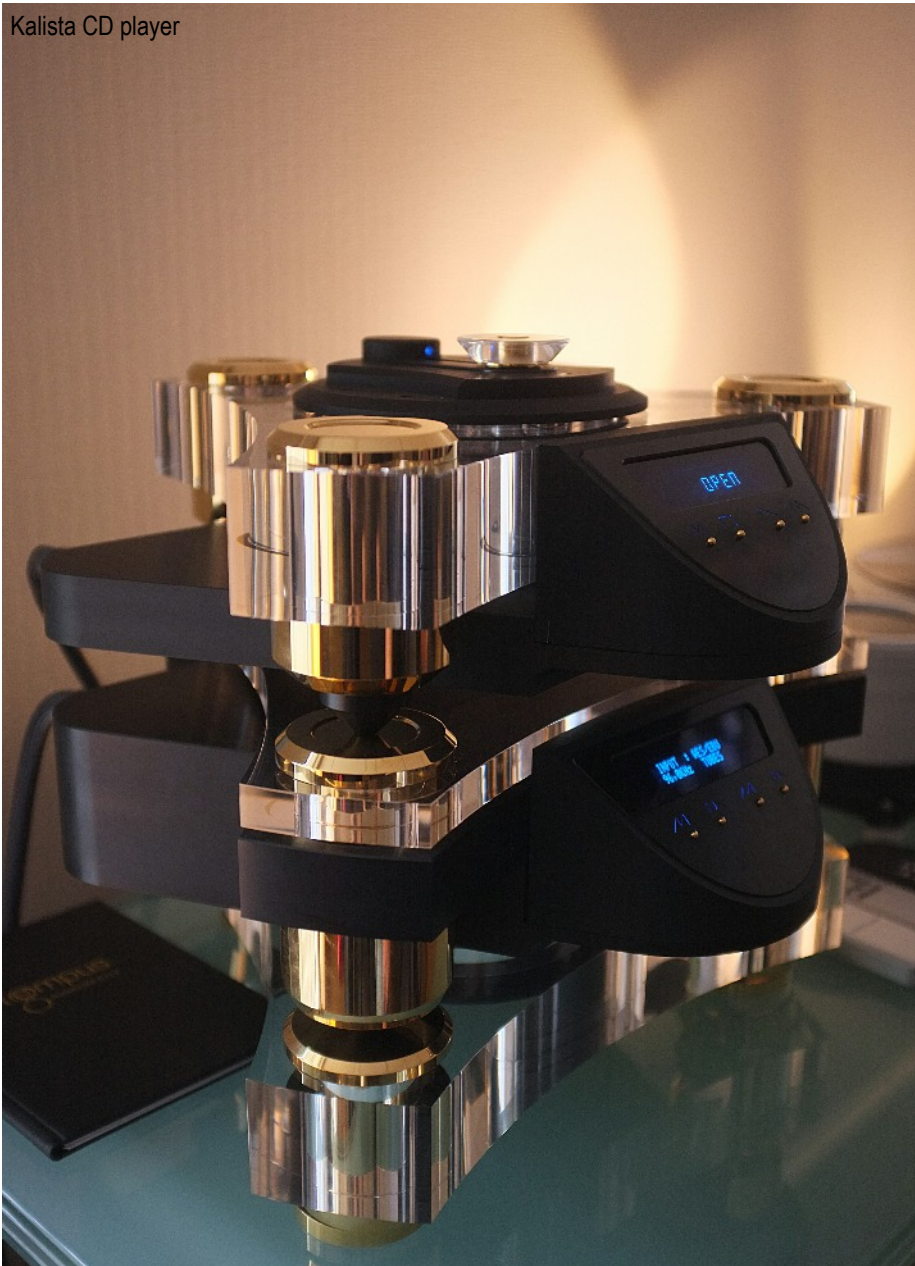
I sat listening for quite some time, long enough for Martin to put on the Wave 40's a beautiful maple and Alpine spruce clam shell construction. The baffle having a ripple effect Moulded front which is then shellacked They really do look wonderful as the light catches the ripple effect.

They consist of a widebanger and ribbon tweeter and using an external crossover with Mundorf components which crossover at 6.8kHz. 55Hz to 22kHz at 8ohm recommended power of 15 to



Grandnote electronics and Sound
Kaos speakers

Kalista CD player



left me waiting in great anticipation until next year's.

round a few rooms and chatting about our thoughts on some of the systems on show.

Among these were the Wright room with Flamingo audio, Tsakirdis, JK acoustics, Beyond Frontiers audio and the fantastically clean and detailed sounding Zellation speakers. Now being into electronic music I could see that these would be great speakers for listening to detailed crisp tracks like Apparat's Multifunktionsebene. The way these speakers are made with painstaking attention to detail both in cabinet design and very high end components including high temperature coils. You really need to look these up as the list of quality and detail is seriously over engineered in a good way.

For me this produces a very fine speaker and if I had the money I would be considering these.

Another room that stood out was Midland audio's room. Firstly the thing that grabs you upon entering the room was the huge sound that was coming from the Magico S5 m11.

They seriously moved air in the room and you could feel the music in your diaphragm! Like the big bass bins from the early 90's sound systems that toured the rave scene.

If the big sound wasn't your thing you couldn't help but be impressed with the components being used, including the thing that really caught my eye was the Kalista CD transport with its separate Elektra power supply.

One seriously beautiful player both in looks and sound!.

The one room that for me was a shock, a good shock was the Franklin room. I had read good things about Eclipse speakers and was shocked at their effortless ease of delivering music in a beautiful flow that filled the room. They were being powered by CAD Computer Audio Design. And for me personally I liked the sound of this room.

With so many rooms and systems to see my day quickly came to an end and I left happy. Even though I didn't see everything there I had a great day.

The North West Audio show is the show to go to for 2017 so keep a look out for dates and put it on your calendar.



Eclipse, CAD and Quadraspire

With so many rooms and systems to see my day quickly came to an end and I left happy. Even though I didn't see everything there I had a great day. The North West Audio show is the show to go to for 2017 so keep a look out for

dates and put it on your calendar. The North West Audio Show at Cranage Hall in Holmes Chapel is the show I had been eagerly waiting for since my first visit last year. Well this year proved to be even better than last years show and has

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Birds Eye View

By Linette smith

The North West Audio Show, or Cranage as most of us call it, has achieved a hell of a lot in a short time. From being a newcomer on the scene, just three shows ago, Cranage is now firmly on the audiophile show calendar and is seen as THE show to attend in the North of the UK.

What is it that this show does so right? Firstly the location. We at Hifi Pig have said it right from the off, Cranage Hall is a very nice hotel, it has the right mix of corporate and luxury, the staff are efficient and it is easy to get to by road, rail or plane. They are accustomed to hosting large weddings and conferences so a Hifi Show has never daunted them. Kris from The North West Audio Show really found a gem of a place for a show here.

This year there was the addition of Wychwood Park, which is in the same hotel group as Cranage but just a couple of junctions down the motorway. Kris rather bravely decided to try the show over the two venues with coaches to ferry people between the two venues every hour. This was quite a bold move but hats off to Kris for trying it, it did work but I felt that Wychwood had just too much of a corporate feel to it and in future the show would be best based solely at Cranage, which has become it's spiritual home. With the Cheshire summer weather always a little unpredictable, getting the crowds under one roof would be best. Even better, as the show is now getting even bigger, a two day event would suit both exhibitors and visitors I think. And we're pleased to announce exclusively that the show will indeed be over two days in 2017; the 24th and 25th of June...that's Saturday and Sunday!

Just as the Bristol show is a UK industry hub, Cranage is becoming a place for Northern Audiophiles to meet up and socialise (and the odd southerner too). I've met some really nice people at this show, and lots return every year. This year there was a great representation from the UK Audiophile Facebook group, which is rapidly become the place for UK based audio and hifi discussion. The people really make this show, from the hardcore audiophiles to people out with their families for a relaxing browse of what's available hifi and music wise. With it being a big hotel, plenty of guests who may be very into music but not ever experienced a hifi show, get the chance to join in and

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More of the £13000 Tech Das Air Force III turntable



Mark Levinson



Mr Speakers



Schiit Audio on the Electromod stand

maybe catch the bug. What else makes Cranage great? It's FREE. This a big thing for visitors and when you don't have to pay for either entry or parking it becomes a really great day out for the family, and of course when you do get a little tired here is always refreshment to be had in the bar.

So, once you have the location and the people, you need exhibitors. There is an excellent balance at Cranage, plenty of affordable gear, lots of well known brands but also some new names that people may not have had the chance to hear before, plus a generous sprinkling of some high end gear to give people that aspirational feeling and Munich style magic. We came away convinced that a TechDAS Air Force III turntable was actually a sensible buy after a chat with the guys in the Midland Audio Xchange room, well come on, it does look like a real bargain at £13 000 compared to Airforce I. With their big Magico speakers sounding wonderful, it was a room that we were drawn back to a few times, as were many people. The Midland Audio Exchange guys probably deserve a medal for perseverance anyway after their van and epic amount of gear all got stuck in the mud on the grass outside of the room on set up day and had to be towed out by a tractor...you don't get that at Munich!

The other room behind the bar area, Karma AV, was also cracking with JBL and Mark Levinson gear, though I did feel sorry for the guys who had to lug it all in and out again!

Hifi Pig

NORTH WEST AUDIO SHOW 2016



Lampizator and hORNS looking and sounding great in the G Point Audio room



Doug Brady

I do like how the show flows at Cranage, the walk through the entrance and the lounges giving you ample opportunity to take in plenty of great head-fi gear from the likes of ifi and Electromod who had lots of Schitt and Mr Speakers kit on hand.

The Appleton room off the lounge has firmly become the G-point Audio room now with the stunning hORNS speakers and Lampizator gear making an impression on everyone that walked in; if stately homes had crazy listening rooms then this would be it.

The central corridor had plenty going on, with the big rooms off it housing NuNu Distribution and their fine array of gear including Quadral, Brodmann, Belles and TAD and the Entotem crew to name but a few.

Also Doug Brady with Devialet and Melco had a great room as did Malvern Audio who were featuring more hORNS speakers and of course Ming Da.

The corridor itself was very lively with Townsend and their very convincing seismic platform demo along with Supra cables, who are celebrating 40 years in business this year.



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You could grab a hot drink and peruse the excellent selection at Diverse Vinyl (which I had to keep steering Mr Hifi Pig away from!) Record sales always seem to be good at Cranage, we made purchases both from MCRU, who had an excellent selection and yet more at the stand over in Wychwood when we made it over there, perhaps a Record Fair alongside the hifi show could be on the cards for next year?

Other rooms that caught my interest downstairs included (but not exclusively as there were so many great rooms there were too many to write about) Brian and Trevors who seem to always get things sounding just right (with some REL subs brought in assist with their room this year, these worked a treat).

The Egglestone works bright orange speakers in Divine Audio caught my eye and ears as did Puresound who were featuring Heco.

The MarkAudio Sota room impressed with their diminutive speakers too.

Scooting back to the front there was of course BD Audio in their wood paneled room again and then upstairs I particularly enjoyed the Kralk room (like many of my co- writers) and perhaps my two favourite sounds of the show, Sound Kaos, I loved their Liberation speakers again which now have a different finish to the copper of Munich, and the CAD room featuring Eclipse loudspeakers, again proving that you don't have to be huge to make a great sound.

We did get over to Wychwood quite late on in the afternoon and it was great to find everyone in fine spirits over there too. There were some companies exhibiting at both venues like Music First, who had a very chilled out room, and G-Point. I recall a lot of great sounding KEF and Arcam and Project gear over at Wychwood too, but needing to jump on the coach back to Cranage, it was all a bit of a whirlwind visit.

All in all a truly enjoyable show, topped off by wine and Indian food with the lovely people from Townsend Audio on Sunday night. A great show to fill your boots with hifi, meet up with friends old and new and generally have a very good time.

See you next year!

MarkAudio Sota's very interesting tripod mounted loudspeakers



Affordable valves from Mezz audio



Hifi Pig

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Last year's Hifi Pig Loves You award winner BD Audio again sounded very nice indeed



Supertweeters from Townshend Audio



Townshend Audio isolation platforms



Celebrating forty years of cable making, Supra had a cable for all occasions



Malvern Audio



Final Roundup For 2016

By Stuart smith

The North West Audio Show is a hike for us and the round journey, not including ferries, was an exhausting 1002 miles, but it's a show that we love to attend and are very proud to be exclusive media partners with. This year the show was over two venues and, if truth be known, I was a little unsure of how this would pan out; the second venue, Whychwood Park was a good twenty minutes drive away from the main venue of Cranage Hall and I was a little apprehensive as to whether folk would make the journey. However, I needn't have feared as Kris, the organiser of the show had put on hourly shuttle coaches between the venues to ensure no one need miss out on any of the exhibitors.

A big well done and thanks should go to Kris who works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that the event is the success it has become and also to the many exhibitors who go to make the North West Audio Show the triumph it is...and long may it continue!

As you walked into the marvellous surroundings of Cranage Hall the first room you happened across was G-point Audio who always exhibit interesting gear. The hORNS Universum loudspeaker seen elsewhere in this magazine in a lovely red and black finish was specially made for the show and certainly created a solid sonic and visual foundation for the rest of the system on show.

You're then into a gorgeous lounge area where Mark at Electromod had some great headfi gear on dem' from Schiit, Mr Speakers and others. And then more headfi in the guise of Oppo, Vincent and team ifi and Audioquest.

Supra cables were the first people in the corridor and are celebrating their 40th anniversary this year. They had a wide range of cables on display and for people to buy.

Also in the corridor were the wonderful people from Townshend Audio who had not only their Seismic platforms and podiums on show (Hifi Pig review imminent) but also their supertweeters which, having heard them in action they add a good deal of "air" to proceedings...why I have no idea, though I'm sure Max will only be too happy to shed light n this if you ask him!

Hifi Pig

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Sound Damped Steel had a nice display of their laminated steel platter mats and Iso Feet. The dem' was pretty conclusive with a coin being tapped on a normal sheet of steel making it ring whilst tapping on the SDS product gave nothing but a dull thud. Hifi Pig review of these is imminent and I'm personally keen to give them a try in the near future.

Wire On Wire were drawing a good deal of attention to themselves with their new Experience 680 tuneable cable. It's an interesting concept whereby users can change the geometry of the cables make up on the fly.

The guys at Diverse Vinyl were doing a roaring trade and once again managed to relieve me of a few pounds as I bought yet another copy of Hawkwind's Space Ritual album.

And so into the first of the rooms proper; this being Malvern Audio Research, who also had Mark and Jan from Vinyl Passion/The Missing Link demoing in their room. The big Ming Da Cantabile-Grande amps are a sight to behold and massive and seemed to work very well with the hORNS SEOS FP loudspeakers. Vinyl Passion's VP 12 turntable sounded rather splendid too.

NuNu Distribution put a lot of effort into the North West Audio Show and bring along some great kit for folk to listen to. The TAD gear in one room sounded better than I've heard before...even better than the TAD room at Munich High-End and so credit to Tony and Anne. But NuNu also had a more real world system on the go in the form of an Oracle Paris turntable, Sonetteer electronics and the Quadral speakers that really pack a great punch in the bangs for bucks department.

Doug Brady are a retailers in Warrington who've been around for years and they always put on a good show at North West Audio Show. The turntable they had playing here was a Funk Firm Little Super Deck (I think) along with a Devialet amp and ProJect Stream Box DS.

The guys at Entotem were up next with their Plato and new Class A amplifier.

Audio Counsel had a full Audio Note UK rig up and running which sounded rather sweet and I know there are a lot of fans of this brands products.



More Schiit



High End Cable, despite their name, don't just sell high end audio cables and at this years show had a lovely main rig made up of Norma Audio Electronics,

Raidho loudspeakers, Bel Canto and rather splendid looking cables of course. However, the thing that caught my attention the most in this room was the



AudioQuest cans

little desk top system. I spend a lot of time tied to my desk and as such need a good system for listening to tunes in this setting. The little Audience 1 +1 loudspeaker system took up very little desk space and sounded much bigger than their diminutive proportions would suggest.

3 Square Audio had their Translator loudspeaker on dem. I sat with a good while with Robert Kelly of German Physik fame in this room and we both commented on how unforced and natural sounding the speakers were. Our man Ian Ringstead reviewed them recently for Hifi Pig and thoroughly enjoyed them too. Proof I suppose that you don't have to spend a King's ransom to achieve great results in the audio world.

Brian and Trevors always put on a great show and their room is always busy and invariably quite loud...just the way we like it. The Graham Audio Votu speakers and the sub they were using really shifted the air in the room and there seemed to be a lot of smiling faces in the room. Needless to say their Booplinth for the Linn LP 12 was on show and they say that they are getting great feedback from people who have bought it. Also in evidence in Brian and Trevors was Linn electronics and a humungous Musical Fidelity preamplifier, a Melco unit, Entreq grounding and power solutions and PS Audio Power Plant.

Yannis Poutous at Flamingo Audio is a lovely guy and he certainly knows a thing or two about how to put a great sounding system together. He had the Zellaton speakers firing diagonally across the room which seemed to work very well indeed. Yes this system was high end in price but Flamingo also do the Tsakiridis Devices valve gear that appears to offer really excellent value for money.

LW Audio brought the huge Horning Hybrid loudspeakers to the North West show along with some rather tasty looking valve amplifiers and three box preamplifier from Audio Music. I'm also pretty sure I spotted an EAR 912 in evidence being used as a phonostage.

The Gekko Cables room at Cranage was being manned by my mate Grant and he was doing a great job of showing of the company's wares through Music First's Baby Classic preamplifier and phonostage. Amps in use were a pair of



Seismic isolation bars and pods from
Townshend

classic Quad IIs feeding a pair of (I believe) Snell Ks.

And so up a flight of stairs where I found Puresound sounding rather pleasant indeed. The M845 monobloc amplifiers were handling the Heco speakers very nicely indeed. The STST Motus II turntable was also in action in this system and being fed through an Aurorasound Vida phonostage. This proved to be one of my personal favourite sounds of the show being unforced, relaxed and smooth.

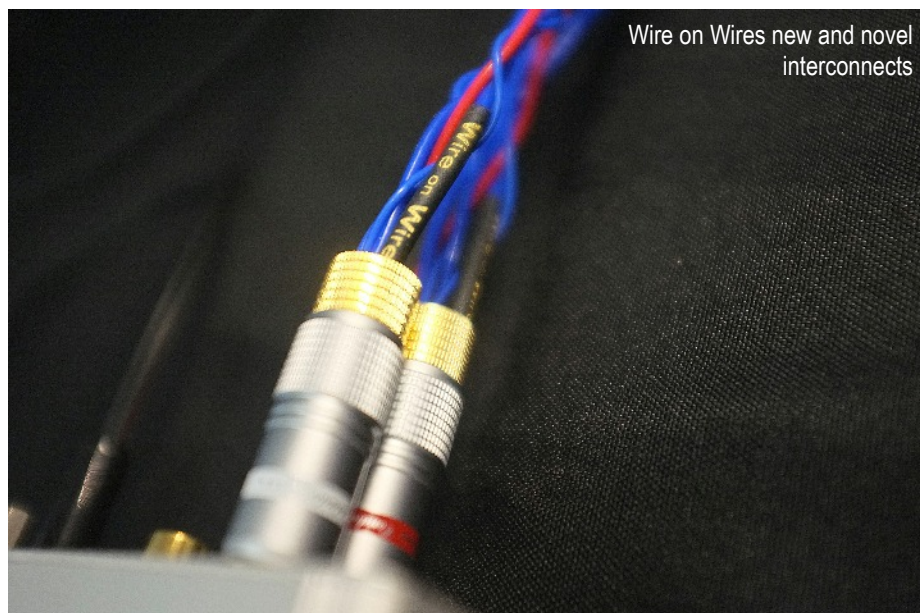
Peak Hifi were up next. They're based in Hoylandswaine in South Yorkshire not far from where I grew up and they seem to be doing very nicely thank you. Amp in use was the Sugden SPA – 4 and the same company's LA4 pre and PA4 phonostage. Their own turntable was being used when I was in the room and speakers were by PMC. Again, a nice room making very nice sounds.

Stonegate Acoustics had a very interesting system playing that consisted of Sugden electronics playing into a pair of LS3/5a loudspeakers from Falcon. I'm fairly familiar with the 5A sound and have always found it to be a bit lacking in the lower registers...naturally as it's a mini monitor. However, the clever chaps here have added a dedicated bass unit/stand which fleshes the sound out very nicely. You still get that great 5A sound on spoken word as the guys in the room demonstrated but on more demanding musical source there is just a whole lot more than you would expect. I'd pretty much suggest that if you are looking at 5As, or have them already, then you should look into this bass module and get an audition of it.

Simon Shilton is the chap behind SJS Electroacoustics and whilst this is not a new company the current line up is pretty new. The system had Arcadia preamplifiers, the Arcadia Model 3 phonostage and some lovely looking tube amps from the company. The whole lot looked incredibly well put together and sounded not too shabby at all!

My fellow contributors have all commented on the Kralk Audio room and I too found it a great pleasure to hear this system. Likewise the SoundKaos room has proved to be hugely popular with the rest of the team.

The Eclipse and Computer Audio Design room sounded pretty amazing too and the system looked very nice and contemporary too. There is something



Wire on Wires new and novel interconnects



Ming Da, hORNS and Vinyl Passion



The Vinyl Passion vinyl spinner

about the CAD gear that just seems to make anything they are partnered with sing...it was the same at Munich for the last couple of years. Scott who runs

CAD is an exceptionally knowledgeable person and it was great to be able to sit and have a natter with him and his partner. All the electronics in this room were

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TAD in the NuNu room



Quadral, Oracle and Sonneteer



A closer look at the Doug Brady set up



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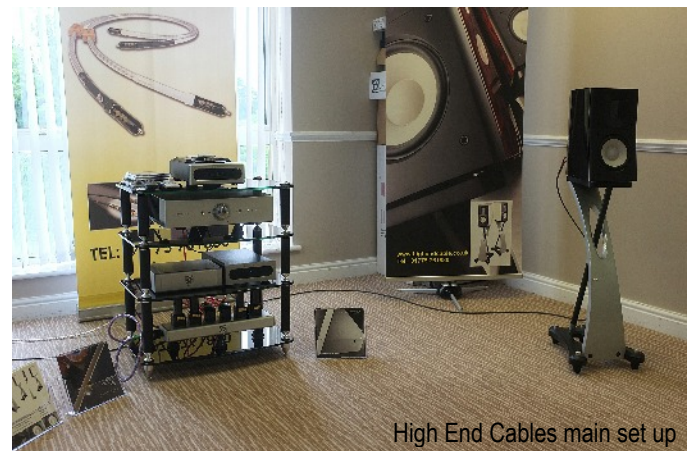
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3 Square Audio speakers and their outboard crossovers



Audio Counsel and their Audio Note UK rig



High End Cables main set up



The One, a lovely little desk top system

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Brianandtrevor, a closer look

Tsakiridis valve amp



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sat on a rather splendid looking rack from the guys at Quadraspire...expect a review of this in the near future on Hifi Pig.

Last year Jack of BD Audio had the Tune Audio Animas in this rather lovely and well proportioned room and it won the Hifi Pig Loves You award. This year he chose the Primes from the same company and the Rokna Wavedream DAC and Wavedream NET server, along with an amp from Italian manufacturer Grandinote. Once again Jack managed to pull off a room that sounded great, looked great and there were certainly a good few folk making the right noises in there.

Karma AV really did pull out all the stops at this year's North West Audio Show and it sounded pretty good too, but then how could it not given the gear they had brought to the party. Mark Levinson electronics and JBL loudspeakers are a pairing we've heard lots of times in the past, with both brands coming out of the Harman stable, and they rarely fail to delight.

Midland Audio Xchange were another company that brought along a whole load of exotica for the show, so much so they got their van stuck in the mud there was so much weight in it. The sound in the room through the Magico speakers and Constellation electronics was really high end but the star of the show in this room was the Tech Das turntable. This turntable borrows a lot of the technology from the uber Tech Das Airforce 1 but comes in at a much more manageable £13 000. Ok, so that's still an expensive way to spin your black discs but if you have the money and are looking for a statement turntable then you really should get this on your short list. I love the photograph with the Hifi Pig Loves You beer mats we had made especially for the show. The Metronome CD player with its two power supplies was also rather impressive. The guys in the room were super friendly and not at all "you can't afford that, son!" and gladly allowed us to bring a young couple we met in the bar into the room the night before the show and play them some tunes...needless to say the couple, music lovers but not audiophiles in any way, shape or form, were blown away with the sound in this room.

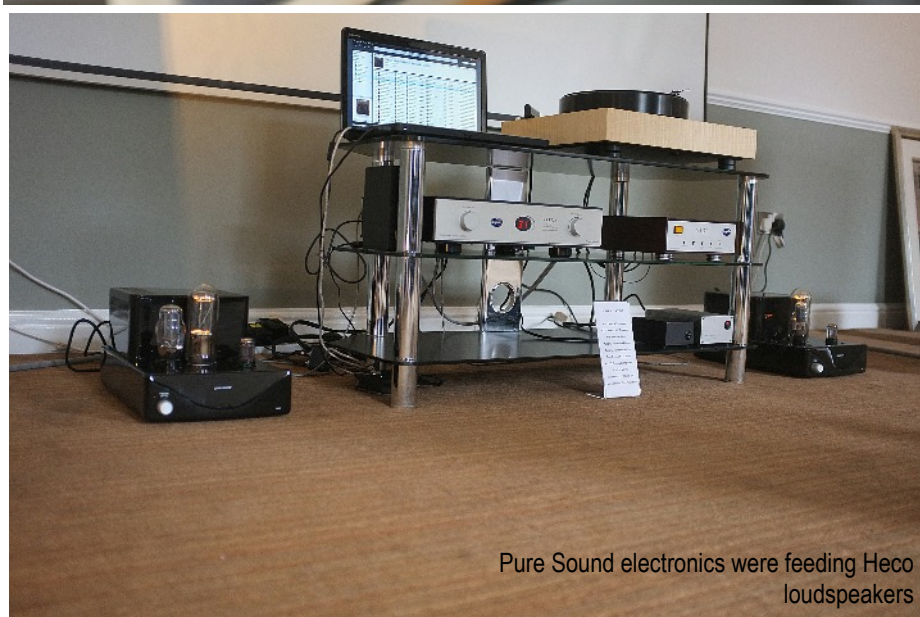
Mains Cables R Us' room was a great sounding room with a main rig made up of Luxman, ClearAudio and Quadral Chromium 8 loudspeakers. Mains conditioning and mains cables were by Isotek.



LW Audio's rig looking rather impressive



Gekko Cables



Pure Sound electronics were feeding Heco loudspeakers

There was a good deal of static displays and gear for sale in the MCRU room from Tellurium Q, Furutech and many more.

Divine Audio had a great set up consisting of Eggleston Works loudspeakers in an absolutely fabulous orange, Rogue

Peak Audio



Audio amps and Analogue Works turntable.

And so we hopped on the coach over to the second venue of Whychwood Park. This venue was a little more corporate in feel than Cranage Hall and had many less rooms for us to enjoy. However, there was a good few people about and I managed to home in on the guys selling records in the foyer like a laser guided missile. A few pounds lighter it was time to take a look around the rooms and the first one we happened across was the Muisic First Audio room manned by the company's owner Jonathan Billington. I make no secret of my love for Music First Audio products and recently bought one of their Baby Reference V2 preamplifiers.

Mark Audio Sota are a company based in Hong Kong that make a great range of fab looking loudspeakers and so it was great to see them at this year's event. The little Tozzi speakers on their tripods really caught our attention and sounded really good too. Expect to hear much more about this company in the coming months including a review on Hifi Pig.

Epic HC, UK Partner of XTZ unveiled their new flagship 3 way speaker at the North West Audio Show, the Divine Alpha. This large loudspeaker is around €6000 a pair and for that price you certainly seem to be getting a whole lot for your money. Fit and finish also looked to be exemplary. The company also had their M2 standmounter from their Master series playing and again, for €2000 you certainly are getting good bang per buck!

Acton Gate Audio had quite a small room at Wychwood Park but that didn't stop them from filling it with a whole array of gear from the likes of Leema Acoustics, Elipson, KEF, Quad, ProJect and more. The new turntable from ProJect, the Classic, was on show and this promises to be a huge seller if the interest it raised when Hifi Pig carried news about its launch is anything to go by.

Emerald Physics was a new name to me and so great to see them at North West Audio Show where they had their KC-11 open baffle loudspeakers on demonstration. The speakers use a2 eight inch coaxial driver with a titanium tweeter sing a waveguide and two ten inch drivers for bass. The company also make a whole lot of other gear including amplifiers, digital processors and DACs.

Stonegate Audio's Falcon LS3/5as with supporting bass module





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Brands stocked: Audio Note, Audion, Pure Sound, Klipsch, Zu, Shahinian, Exposure, Consonance, Well Tempered, Dynavector, Stax, Melko, Edwards Audio, Heco.

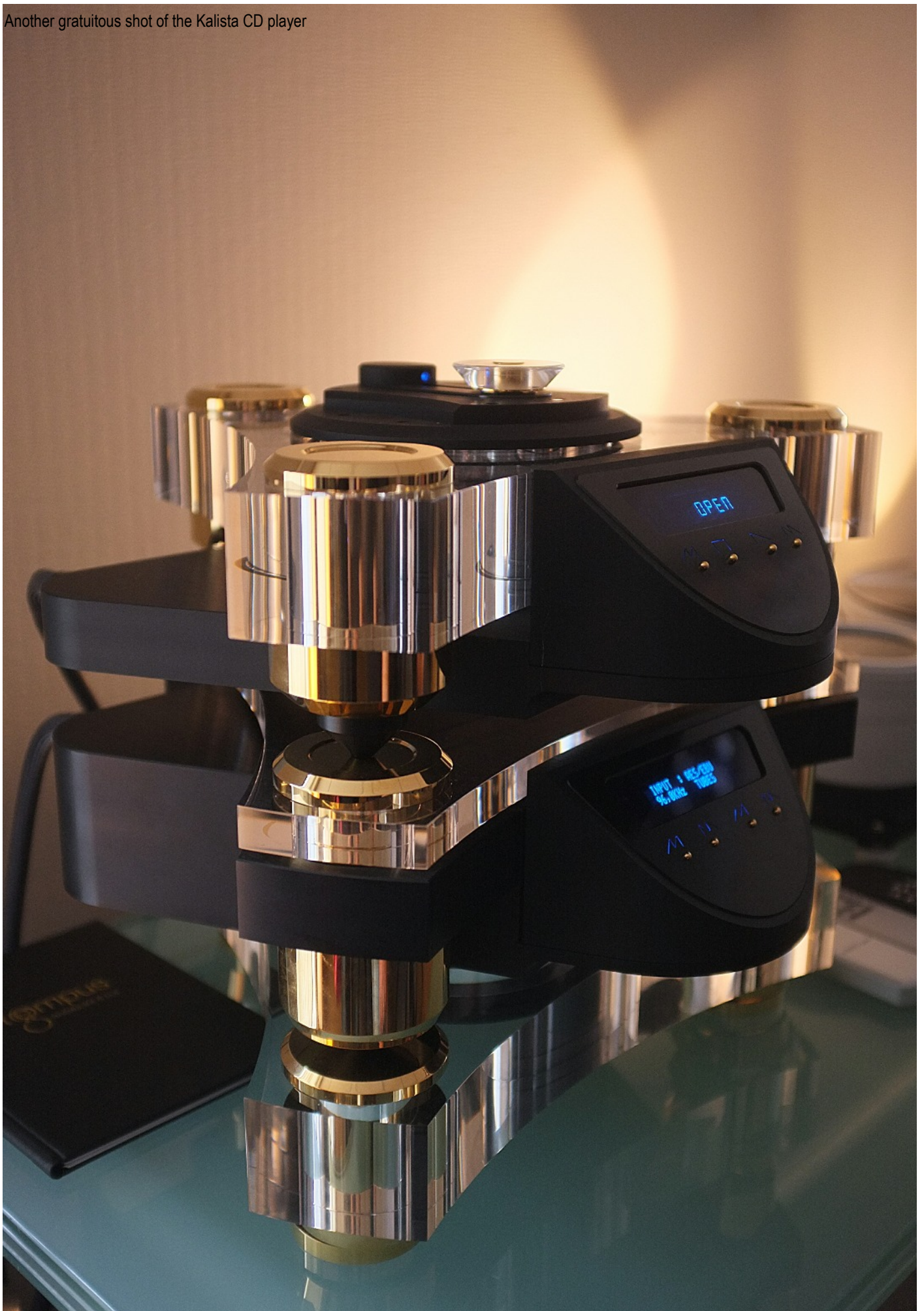
Hifi Pig
NORTH WEST AUDIO SHOW 2016

SJS Audio's Arcadia amplifiers



A closer look at the BD Audio room

Another gratuitous shot of the Kalista CD player





D'Agostino amps in the Midland Audio Exchange room

Auden Distribution had gone to a lot of effort at Whychwood Park to make their room as close to a home environment as possible. Two systems were set up with the first having amps provided by CAAS audio which is a new name to me but that are based in North Yorkshire. Also in this system was the Aria streamer/ripper which is available in a number of configurations, including one with a built in DAC. The second system made use of the Aria Piccolo. Speakers were from Amphion and cables from Audiomica Labs.

Karma AV had a nice little system highlighting Primare electronics including the A34.2 power amplifier that delivers a healthy 150 watts a channel. The preamplifier in use was also Primare and the I32 integrated amplifier was also on show at the top of the rack. Power conditioning came in the form of the Torus Power TOT series box, the most affordable in the company's range.

Ophidian were highlighting a wide range of their loudspeakers in their room but playing were the diminutive Minimos in white. These absolutely tiny speakers gave a surprisingly room filling performance and gained a Hifi Pig Recommended award when we reviewed them.



Clearaudio in the MCRU room

Hifi Pig

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Valve amp by Rogue audio



Jonathan Billington of Music First Audio



MarkAudio Sota



Hifi Pig

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Project Audio Classic turntable in the Acton Gate Audio room



Aria in the Auden Distribution room

CODE are a brand new company from the UK and had on dem their new active three way loudspeaker system. Costing £5495 the speakers use a ScanSpeak Illuminator mid and Volt bass drivers. The off board electronics module contains the DSP module, preamplifier and six channel power amplifier so that all you need add is the source of your choice. Expect a Hifi Pig review shortly.

Hifi Hangar had the Eminent Technology loudspeakers on their room being powered by AcousticImagery Atsah class D amplifiers.

Auden Distribution's typical living room set up



G_Point Audio had taken a second room at Wychwood where they had the lovely little Mezz Audio valve amplifier powering hORNS loudspeakers.

IQ Speakers had a great set up and used very well priced Hypex moduled amplification that were doing a great job of driving the IPL floorstanding loudspeakers. Other electronics included Abrahamsen. Look out for a review of the Hypex amplifiers very soon.

Superfi had three rooms at Whychwood but, by the time we managed to get to them, only one was left open. The relatively compact system consisted of Arcam electronics powering KEF

loudspeakers. Despite the simple and uncomplicated set up, this room sounded very pleasant indeed and is the kind of system most folk will think of when they picture a hifi.

The final room we went into at Whychwood was the ifi room. Here they had their Stereo 50 system on dem and we were pretty impressed by this compact and great looking system. You can play loads of different formats through the vintage looking and tube driven Stereo 50. The Retro Stereo 50 is an all-in-one tube stereo system: from Bluetooth aptx (phone/pad) to High-res digital (computer) to vinyl (turntable). This is the kind of system that will appeal to music lovers looking for a simple and great looking means of playing their tunes.

The 2017
edition of
The North
West Audio
Show will
take place
at Cranage
Hall on the
24th and
25th of June
2017

More Coverage and
photographs here



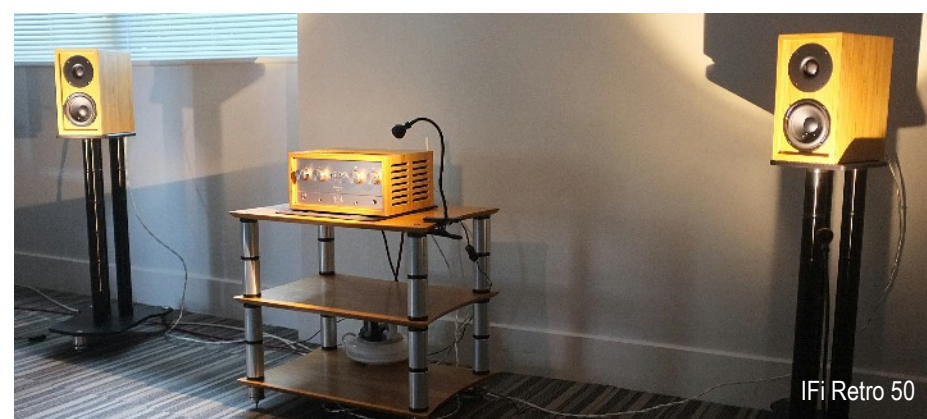
Primare in the Karma AV room



Ophidian



Superfi showing off Arcam and KEF



IFI Retro 50

More Photos From The Show

We took literally hundreds of photographs at this year's North West Audio Show, here are some of the ones that haven't been seen yet

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