



Editor | Paul Messenger

Writers

Colin Anderson
Martin Colloms
Stan Curtis
Greg Drygala
Andrew Everard
Nigel Finn
Kevin Fiske
Chris Frankland
Antony Hamza
Andrew 'Harry' Harrison
Keith Howard
Jason Kennedy
Harvey Lovegrove
Paul Messenger
Julian Musgrave
Rafael Todes

Publisher | Martin Colloms

Design | Philippa Steward

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info@hificritic.com
www.hificritic.com

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In this issue I found Stan's mono versus stereo discussions particularly interesting, so much so that I feel obliged to chip in with some personal observations. Stan's a bit older than me, so has stronger memories of the transition, and I must admit to accepting stereo as automatically and inevitably superior to mono, to the point where I never considered it an issue. I even bought myself a stereo copy of Traffic's *Mr Fantasy*, entirely unaware of its inferiority to the mono version.

I've since come round to appreciate the virtues of mono, although I haven't gone as far as equipping a turntable with a mono cartridge yet. That said, I do recommend diverting the output to a single loudspeaker, if only to ensure proper bass level.

My respect for mono largely came about through a lucky secondhand purchase of the first (eponymous) Buddy Holly album. This is probably totally unavailable, but I did acquire an excellent mono re-issue of Bob Dylan's *Freenheelin'* album at an Audiojumble recently, and feel well able to recommend this to the readership. I bought it simply because 'early Dylan' was a glaring omission from my collection, but unlike so many re-issues this one turns out to be a real honey....

I've been an enthusiastic fan of Vertex AQ going right back to the days of the Penta show, so the fact that it hasn't been more influential since then has been a trifle frustrating. Maybe that will change with the news that the company has recently re-launched itself as Quiescent Technologies – not the snappiest of titles perhaps (but who am I to talk?)

This is rather more than just a name change, so I may have to upgrade my *Moncayo* speaker cables to the modular *Peak* design soon. And although such accessories remain an important part of the product portfolio, expansion into a broad range of hi-fi components is proceeding at a pace.

In the last few years I've reviewed Vertex AQ's DACs with very positive results, and I understand that a costly streamer will shortly become available. The components, covering streamers, DACs, pre-amps and power amps, are planned to have three degrees of Quiescent treatment – Q, T and X-series, a possibility that has got this reviewer quite excited.

When I first came into the hi-fi industry, somewhat more than forty years ago, components were often quite 'iffy' – some were quite good, but plenty of others delivered a much more dubious standard of performance. It was very fertile ground for the budding critic

Not so today. The state of the music replay art has steadily advanced, to the point where hardly any components show significant weaknesses these days, leaving the critic or editor with the much easier question of "which flag?" to answer. Nearly everything gets some kind of flag these days, depending mainly on its price.

Indeed, some of the most interesting items in this issue fall into the accessories category – the CAD USB and the Quiescent Peak cables probably add more to ones' musical enjoyment than any specifically hi-fi component that we've reviewed in the following pages.

Just as we were going to press, we heard that David Wilson (founder of Wilson Audio, born in 1944) had passed away. A full obituary and appreciation will be in our next issue.

Paul Messenger
Editor

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martin@hificritic.com