



Editor-in-Chief Martin Colloms

Senior Contributing Editor
Andrew Everard

Writers

Stan Curtis
Kevin Fiske
Chris Frankland
Jon Honeyball
Keith Howard
Chris Kelly
Andrew Mellor
Mark Prendergast
Ed Selley

Publisher | Marianne Colloms

Design | Philippa Steward

Published by
HIFICRITIC Ltd.

Registered in England No.6054617
Registered Office: Winnington House,
2 Woodberry Grove, London, N12 0DR
info@hificritic.com
www.hificritic.com

Printed in the UK by
Premier Print, London

HIFICRITIC

is a printed publication available
by subscription only.

© HIFICRITIC Ltd 2020. All rights reserved.
Any unauthorised editing, copying, reselling
or distribution of the whole or part of this publication
is prohibited. The views expressed in any articles in
this magazine should be taken as those of the author or
the person quoted unless indicated to the contrary.
While HIFICRITIC endeavours to ensure the accuracy
of the information contained in this publication,
its accuracy cannot be guaranteed
and HIFICRITIC.COM accepts no liability
for any use of, reliance on or the
accuracy of such information.

Completing another (partial) lock down issue, I feel very fortunate that we were able to create and sign off the varied content for this, our 60th issue. Magazine production has been held to our customary if somewhat delayed scheduling, and all at HIFICRITIC hope that our readers are in good shape. Flexible planning and keeping going, if you can, is one way of dealing with these strange times. I would be the first to admit it has helped preserve my peace of mind.

Many thanks are due to our team of home working freelancers. I would also like to thank the audio industry who have put themselves out and generously supplied a host of exceptional products for the HIFICRITIC team to evaluate. My own contributions began with a report on eight interconnect and loudspeaker cables, while a few more turned up in conjunction with another massive audio electronics review.

I was intrigued by the KEF announcement of a new high precision 'Meta' standing wave rear energy termination for a loudspeaker, initially targeted at the high frequency unit of their own concentric Uni-Q driver. I found the technology sufficiently interesting to prompt a story with content reaching back 70 years on this acoustic metamaterial development, initially adopted in the new version of the LS50, the LS50m.

The massive feature review I mentioned embraces a shimmering set of CH Precision, a system of all-analogue electronics from Switzerland. Its many intriguing design aspects proved well worth an extended exploration. Give or take a few thousand, including my own three-box streamer, support frames and loudspeakers, the entire system topped out at over £250,000. We had covered the preceding CH A1 power amplifier in mid-2016 and were suitably impressed. Now this model has grown into the A1.5 with almost twice the power and is here partnered by the P1 reference level phono, the L1 line and the dual output X1 outboard power supply upgrade. The P1 offers two of the increasingly fashionable 'current' input mode for moving coil and low impedance cartridges, plus a conventional 'voltage' mode input of exceptional versatility. And we also interview CH co-founder, Florian Cossy.

Chris Frankland finds sonic reward in the sound of the Totem Skylight loudspeaker from Canada while Andrew Everard, in another of his comprehensive and highly informative comparative analyses, takes on two pairs of a kind, the Denon DCD-A110 SACD/CD player and matching £3199 PMA-A110 integrated amplifier. These are contrasted with the Marantz SACD30n SACD/CD/network player/DAC and matching Model 30 integrated amplifier. The conclusions are surprising.

We interview Audio Note (UK) founder Peter Qvortrup, noting that it is 36 years since he set up his first company, Audio Innovations, while *Stan's Safari* poses the question 'So what is high end hi-fi?'

On the theoretical side our tech guru Keith Howard extemporises on this contentious subject of amplifier feedback correction, and this is timely since the CH A1.5 power amp review in this issue has significant content on this subject. The CH design offers user control of this parameter, including by remote touchpad, during real time listening. Keith also used his headphone measurement expertise to review the Sennheiser HD800S in depth. Jon Honeyball contributes another headphone feature, this time the STAX SR-L700MK2, with matching SRM-D50 energiser.

Ed Selley waxes lyrical about the new Spondor compact, the Classic 4/5 while Chris Kelly explores the larger than life Kudos Titan 505 stand mount loudspeaker.

Our music pages include a searching essay on The Grateful Dead, marking the 50th anniversary of two classic albums by rock guru Mark Prendergast, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of two classic albums, while Andrew Mellor covers classical releases, and Andrew Everard keeps an eye on the DSD jazz scene.

Finally, we mark this, the 60th issue, with a look back at 14 years of HIFICRITIC since its foundation, recalling the magazine's mission statement from founding editor Paul Messenger, which appeared in the first issue.

Martin Colloms
Editor-in-Chief