Jamie Dobson

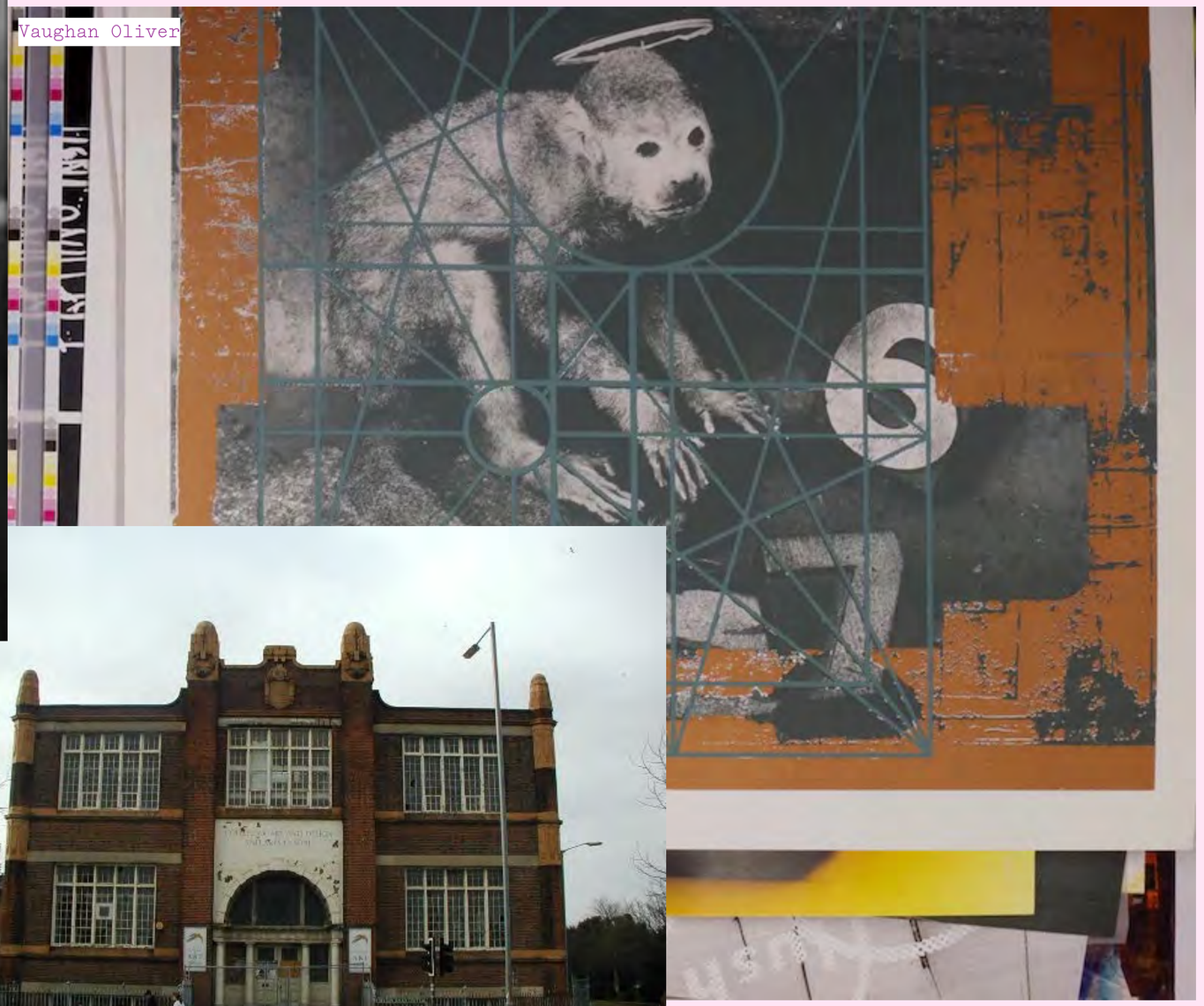
Transparent sound: searching for enlightenment through audiophile listening

Ordinary lives, Everyday People?
Young people, social change and popular cultures, 1930-2000



Thursday’s Children - Royal School for the Deaf, Margate. 1954





Vaughan Oliver

Great Yarmouth School of Art

Intro



Milesahead



‘A great day in Hoxton’



The Brunswick



Tiffany’s

333

Intro

Transparency

“One can and ought to hear exactly what was played.”

Pierre Boulez (composer and conductor)



Hi-Fi & Audiophile TERMINOLOGY Explained!

Steve Huff (HiFi Huff)

YouTuber reviewing camera equipment and Hi-Fi since 2009 (exclusively Hi-Fi since 2020). 144k subscribers.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I26M0j1kNu0



Transparency





James Brown: Live at the Apollo (1962)

No images from the 1962 performance exist, illustration from the T.A.M.I show in 1964.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-EOX2JxCs4

Transparency



Chesky Records Introduction

“Chesky Records achieve the impression of reality with the most advanced technology available. They pay attention to every minute detail - making your listening experience tangible, pleasurable, exciting and realistic.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhsLhkltcRE



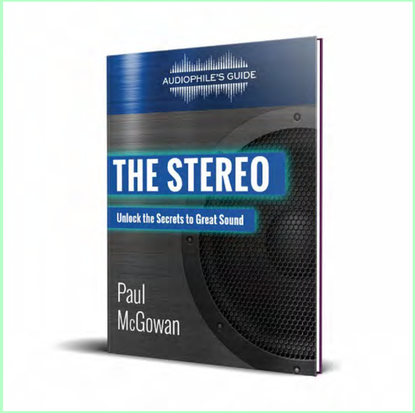
Transparency

An explanation of Audiophile terms

Paul McGowan (PS Audio)

CEO and co-founder of PS Audio, designs and manufacturers high-end audio equipment.
230k YouTube subscribers.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8iiUOVx8HY





Transparency



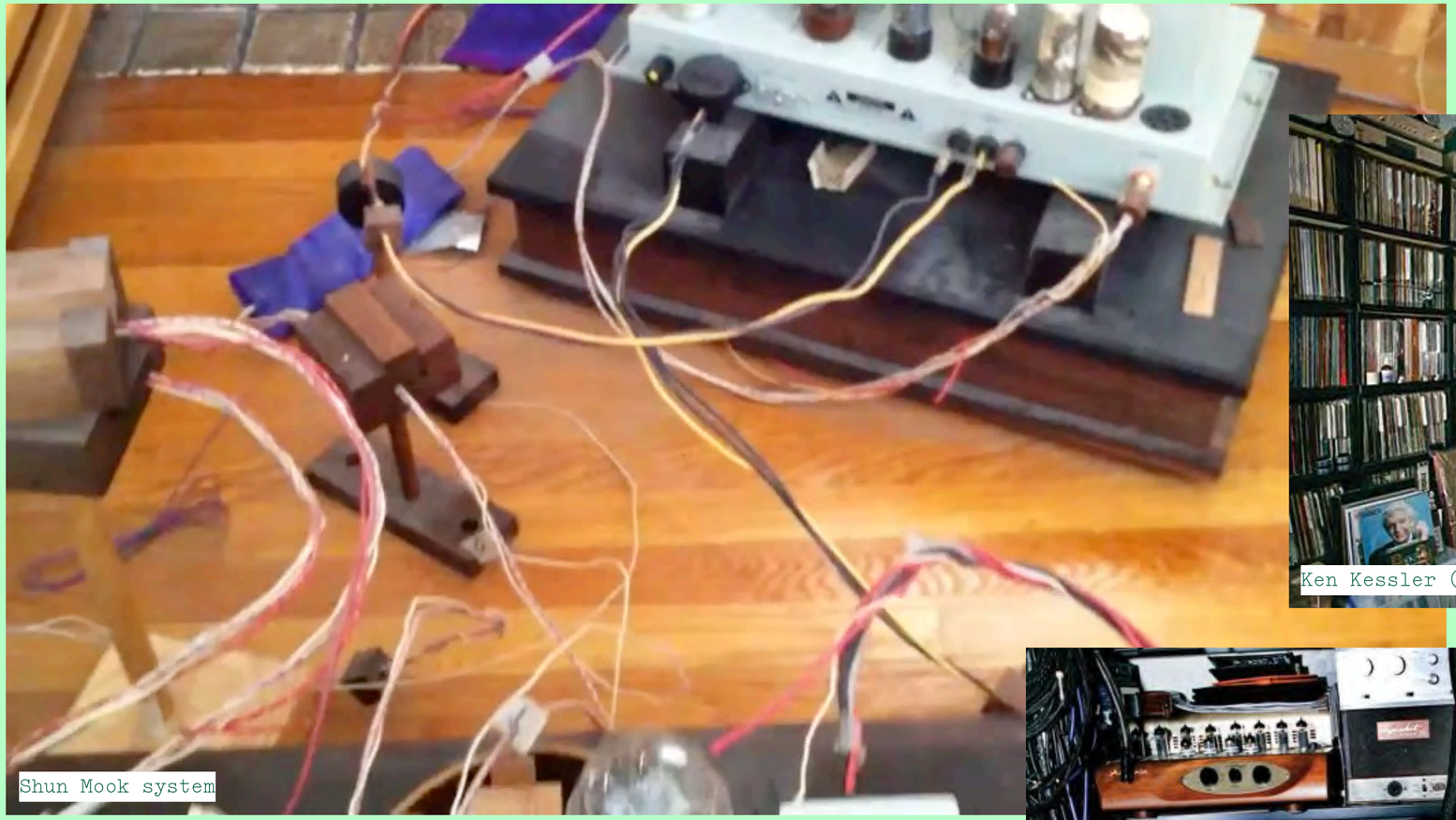
E.A.R. / Hi-Fi News pre-amp







Transparency



Shun Mook system



Ken Kessler (Hi-Fi reviewer)





Transparency

Transcendence

“Whether you believe you can or can’t, you’re right.”

Henry Ford (industrialist)



Thomas Edison and his Phonograph

SPIRIT EXPERIMENTS

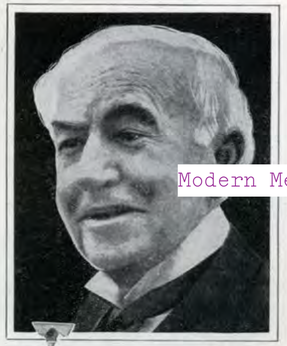
transformed instantly into a feeble electric current. Any object, no matter how thin, transparent or small, would cause a registration on the cell if it cut through the beam.

When the experiment was ready to begin the spiritualists in the group of witnesses were called upon to summon from eternity the etherial form of one or two of its inhabitants, and command the spirit to walk across the beam. Then while the spiritualists went through their rites the scientists watched intently the meter of the electric eye, which would flicker the instant any ghostly form interrupted the light beam.

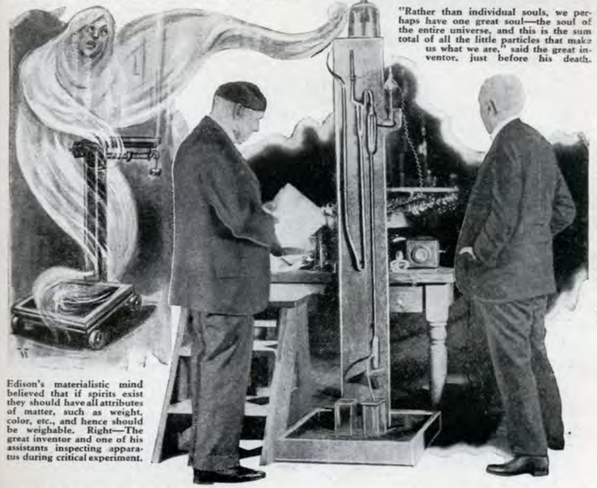
Spirits Remain in Eternity

Tense hours were spent watching the delicate instruments for the slightest indication of a spirit form, but none came. The wind howled around the corners of the laboratory building, the spiritualists exorcised, but the ghosts, if any, remained in their abode in eternity. Narrowed scientific eyes saw the meter's needle remain steady as a rock.

It was because of these negative results that the news of the amazing experiments was never given out to the world. Edison



"Rather than individual souls, we perhaps have one great soul—the soul of the entire universe, and this is the sum total of all the little particles that make us what we are," said the great inventor, just before his death.



Edison's materialistic mind believed that if spirits exist they should have all attributes of matter, such as weight, color, etc., and hence should be weighable. Right—The great inventor and one of his assistants inspecting apparatus during critical experiment.

Modern Mechanics and Inventions, Oct 1933

...d That Spirits Should Have All the Attributes of Matter



Artist's drawing here illustrates the set-up of the ghost trap. Spirit crossing beam from projector would interrupt light, causing hand on the meter to flicker.



...his belief-shattering dis-...ieving world.

...ıtor was a realist and his ...led the stony silence his profound mind expected to find. If spiritual entities existed Edison believed that they should have some of the attributes of ordinary matter. Hence his belief that if spirits existed they could be detected by the electric eye.

It was Edison's belief, even up to the day of his death, that life in man and animal results from the activity of countless myriads of what he called "immortal units," endowed with intelligent direction of life and its processes.

To substantiate his hypothesis, Edison burnt his finger intentionally! (Before the finger was burned, however, the scientist had a Bertillion print made of his digit.) The burn was severe enough to obliterate all the delicate skin lines, yet after the finger had healed, another print showed that the lines and whorls, even though they had been hopelessly destroyed, had returned to their original position.

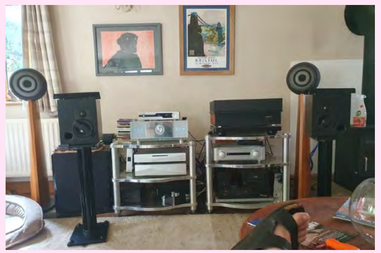
From this experiment, Edison got confirmation of his hypothesis that it is these aforementioned "immortal units" which supervised the regrowth of his finger skin, following out the original design. Man, he believed, is a mosaic of such life units, and it is these entities which determine what we shall be.

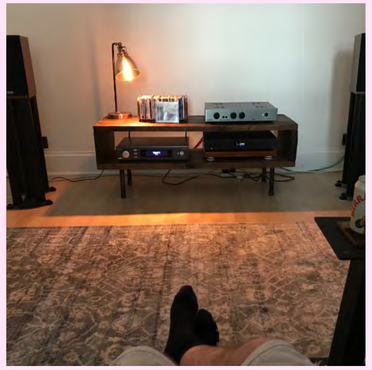
To make his hypothesis clear, Edison was wont to cite the following analogy. Suppose this earth were visited by some extra-terrestrial being whose eyes were so coarse that the smallest thing he could see was the Brooklyn bridge. Naturally he would take the structure as some sort of natural growth.

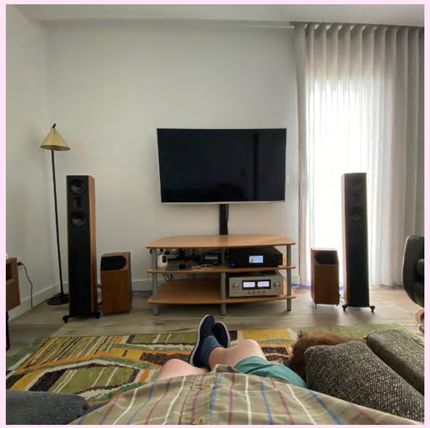
Now suppose this imaginary giant were to destroy the bridge, then, after a couple of years, find it rebuilt. Don't you suppose the giant would assume that some guiding intelligence were behind the reconstruction? That's what Edison believed.

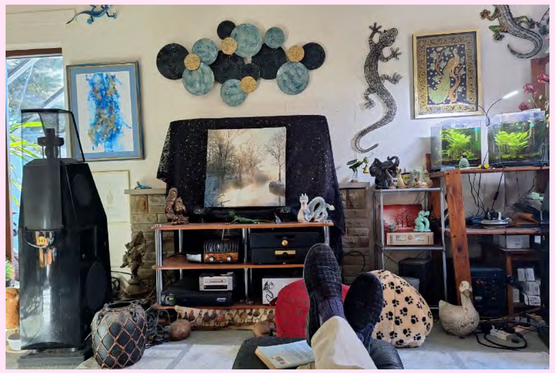
Transcendence



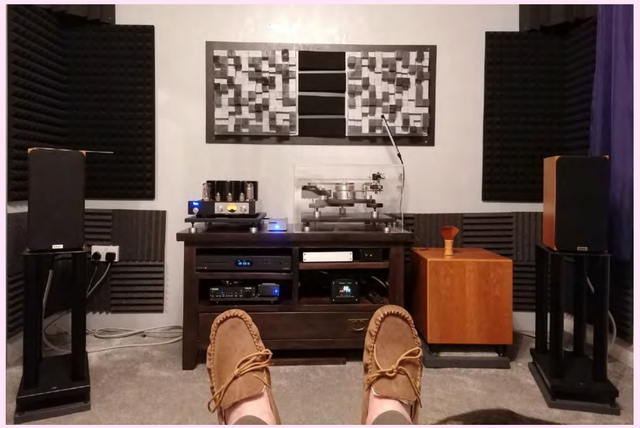


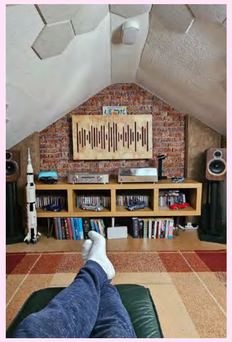






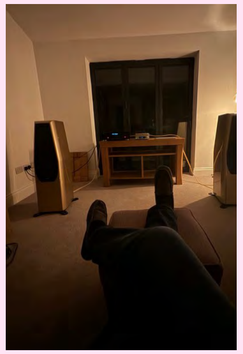














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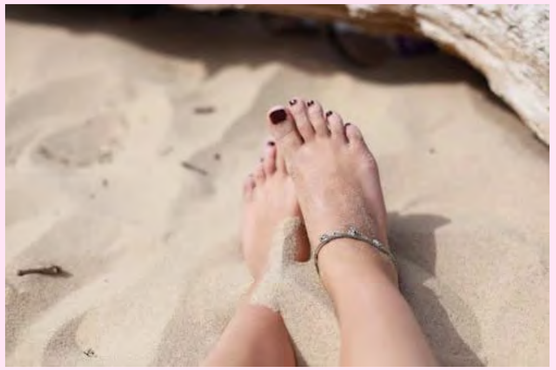




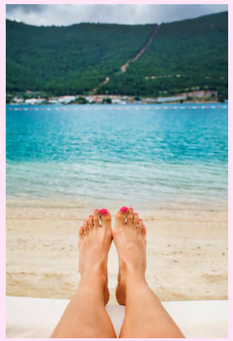






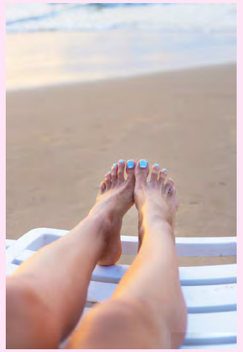








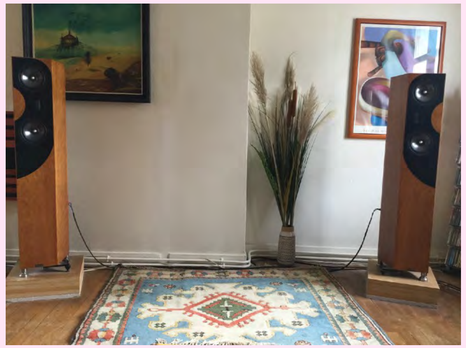






Transcendence













Transcendence



AV Designhaus Derenville VPM 2010-1 - £460,000



Basis Audio Work of Art - £105,000



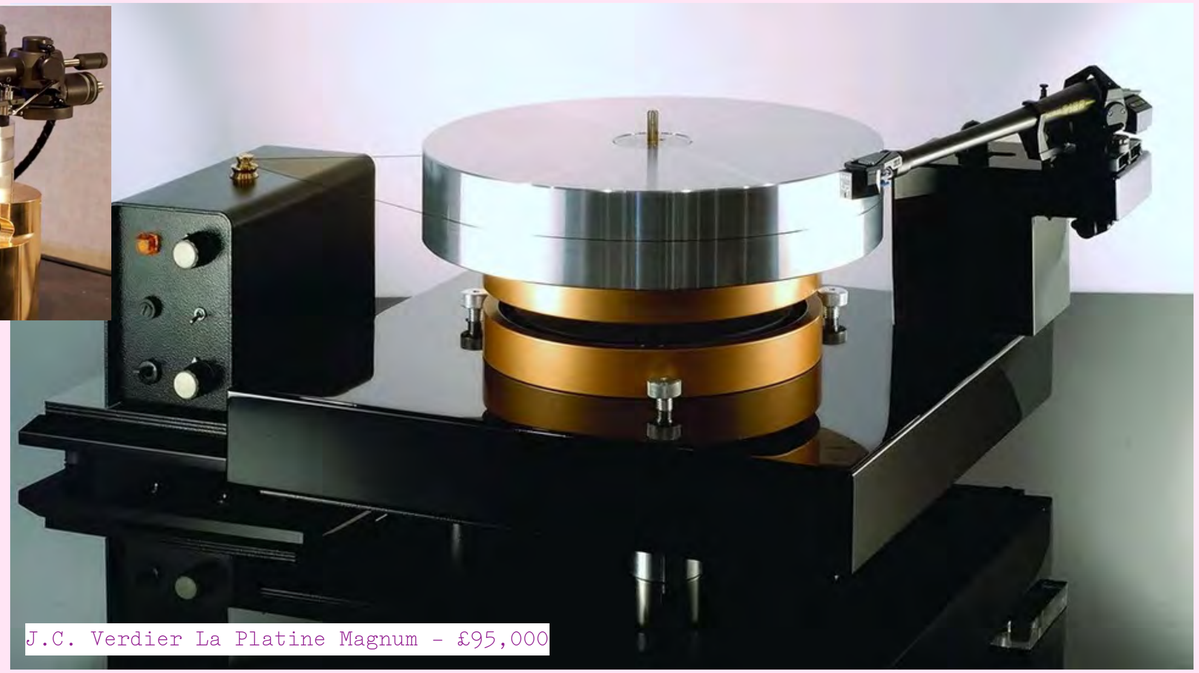
Rossner and Sohn MOTT - up to £105,000



Goldmund Reference II - £165,000



OneDof One Degree - £105,000



J.C. Verdier La Platine Magnum - £95,000

Transcendence



Wall Street Journal:
Japanese Audiophiles Are Going to Extremes

“Japanese audiophiles are spending thousands of dollars on high-end stereo systems. Some are even installing private utility poles for a personal source of electricity, all in a quest for aural perfection.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJJy6VJvSCk

Stereo Sound magazine: 300b valve issue, May 2020

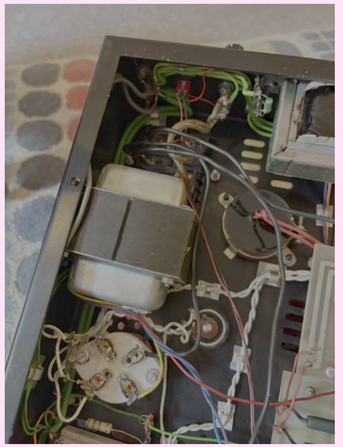


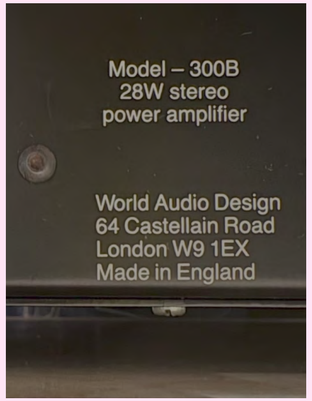
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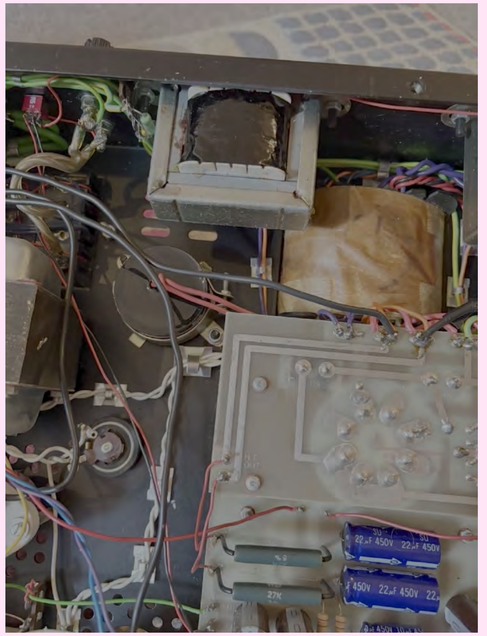


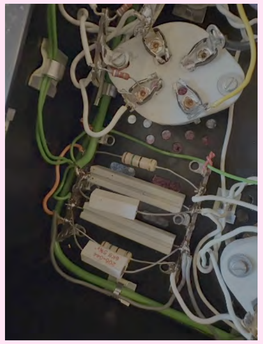
World Audio Designs – 300B valve amplifier



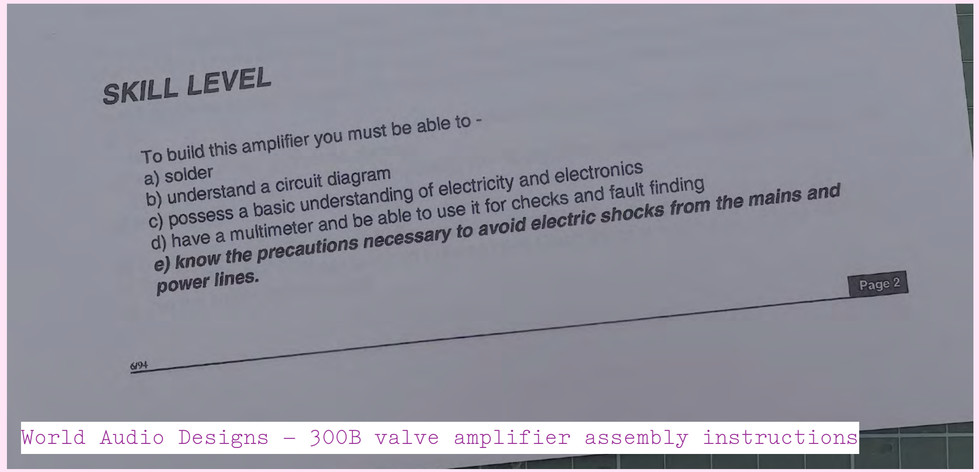




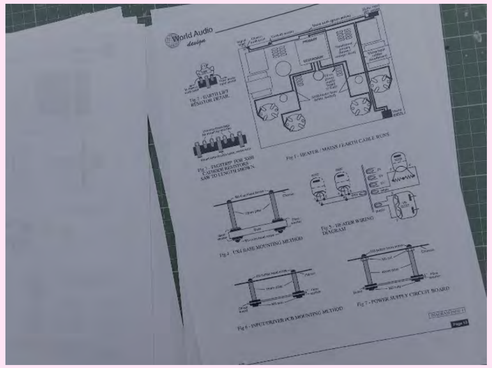




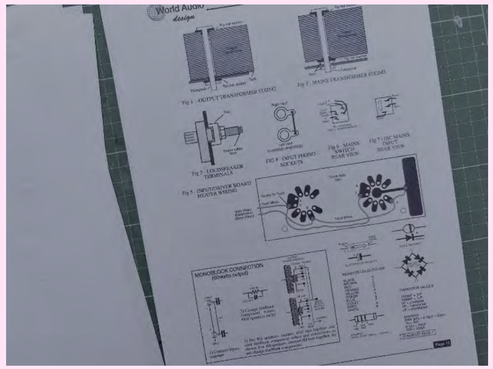
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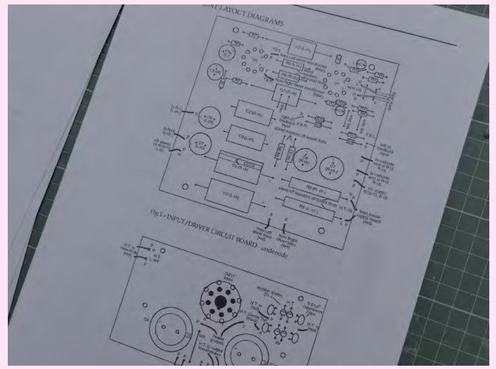


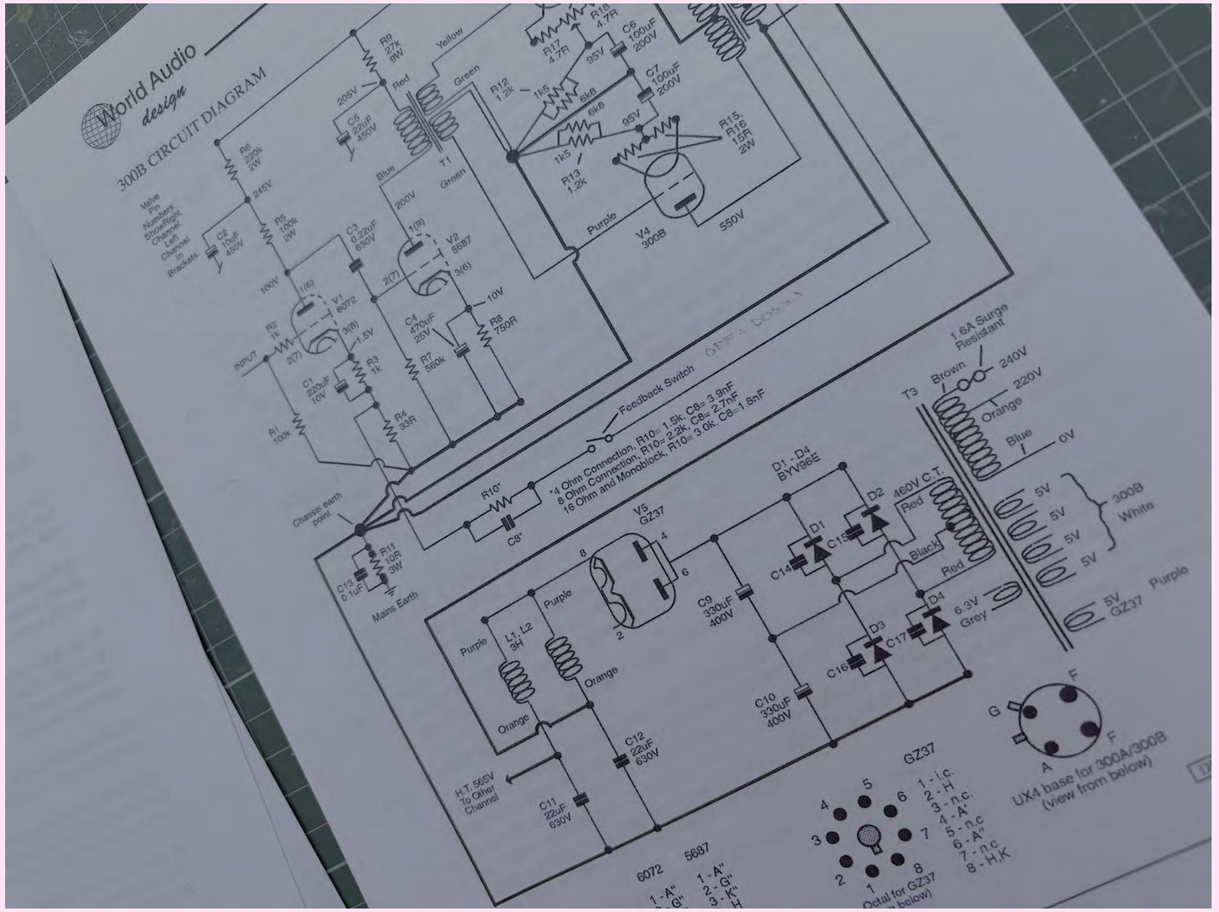
World Audio Designs – 300B valve amplifier assembly instructions











Transcendence



Mordant Sound Reproducers, formerly at 32-34 Rupert Street, Soho, London

A tradition maintained

When loudspeaker developments began to concentrate on quality by the application of carefully studied principles, as against trial and error methods, the name Mordaunt became closely linked with the production of some of the finest speakers made. Since that time the critical listener has had a choice of an ever increasing range of loudspeaker designs by which he has been able to enjoy the benefits of improved techniques in every part of sound reproduction. Today, the name Mordaunt once more stands at the pinnacle of loudspeaker design with the "Arundel". This free-standing cabinet reproducer is amongst today's most sought after speakers and finds favour with those seeking the very finest in Mono and Stereo reproduction.

- *Special Ribbon and Bass Units*
- *Checked response from 30-25,000 c/s.*
- *Special built-in X-over.*
- *36" high × 15" × 12"*

39 gns.

from good dealers

THE MORDAUNT

"Arundel" Reproducer

MORDAUNT SOUND REPRODUCERS
32-34 RUPERT STREET, LONDON, W.1

Transcendence



Presentation by OCD HiFi Guy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50dd9-t7k0Y

Shakti Innovations Hallograph
$1,495 (per pair)

“The Hallograph contours the frequency, amplitude and time coefficients of the first reflections you hear, which produces a stunning increase in realism.”

https://www.shakti-innovations.com/product/hallograph/



Transcendence



The Bristol Hi-Fi Show (2024) at Delta Hotels by Marriot







Transcendence

“Audiophiles don’t use their equipment to listen to your music. Audiophiles use your music to listen to their equipment.”

Alan Parsons (musician and audio engineer)







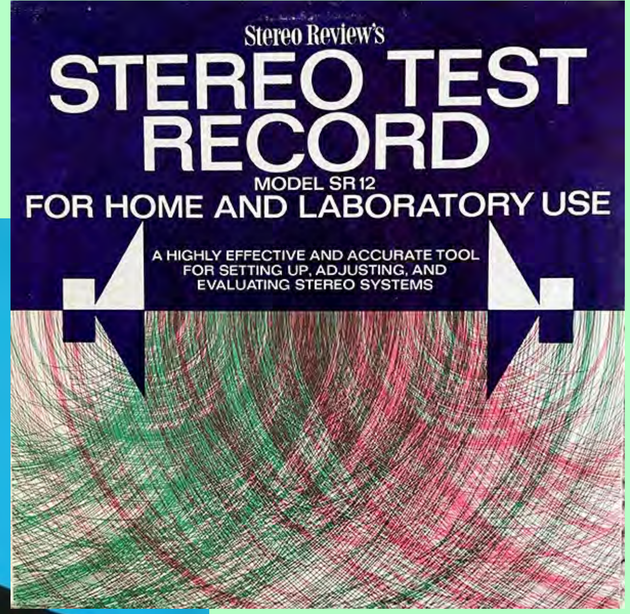
The Bristol Hi-Fi Show (2025) at Delta Hotels by Marriot



Aesthetics



Audiophile test and calibration records





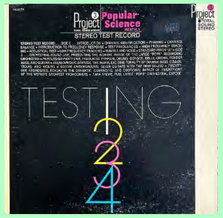
















Aesthetics



HI-FI FETISHISM

A psychologist's view of the lunatic fringe
by J. Zelinger

Illustration by Simon Elmes

MANY OF US are becoming increasingly aware of those audiophiles who show an extraordinary preoccupation with hi-fi equipment for its own sake. Contributors to and readers of *HFN/RR* have expressed irritation with this so-called lunatic fringe, which has been repeatedly criticized for being out of touch with reality.

The symptoms of this preoccupation are well known: an inclination to attach enormous significance to audio equipment's capacity to induce sonic pleasure and an inordinate emphasis on the sensuality of the reproduced sound, with a consequent tendency to relegate the music itself to a secondary position. We can also recognize in this obsessional interest a need to amplify very small differences between audio components out of all proportion to their true value. These audiophiles are prone to convert such differences into preferences, and institute them as rigid ideals.

It is easy enough to dismiss the lunatic fringe, but it is more important to try to understand it. With this purpose in mind I wish to undertake a brief analysis of the psychology of this group of audiophiles.

I know that some readers may feel uneasy with psychology intruding upon the sphere of musical reproduction, but perhaps they can reassure themselves with the thought that psychological knowledge has been partly responsible for bringing some 'sanity' into the controlled subjective assessment of hi-fi equipment. What is more, techniques evolved in the psychological laboratory have been useful in solving a variety of psycho-

For most of us, listening to a chosen disc would involve placing the record on a turntable and making the audio equipment operational. Thereafter we are free to listen—our focus of attention is on the music. Our attention may drawn away from the music by the reproduction of an unexpected pressing defect, which may prove irritating temporarily; but we accommodate to this nuisance and re-establish the original focus of attention.

Another sort of non-musical sound may prove more disturbing. For instance, our attention may be drawn away from the music

and it is these that we judge. We search for differences and try to establish preferences. I am citing these examples in order to underline the common basis of all listeners' responses to musical reproduction. We should recognize that the relationship between our listening to music and our listening to the characteristic sound of audio equipment is not a constant one. It can shift if the circumstances demand it, but it is clear that members of the lunatic fringe have shifted an unusually large proportion of their attention over to the audio equipment.

This shift is not a temporary one. It is long this group of audiophiles hi-fi merely serve the purpose it has also become

need to be conv... this nomenclature. Typ... someone who has endowed object (*eg* a piece of underclothing, heeled shoe) with sexual significance. He she requires the presence of this fetish in order to become sexually aroused, and this is the case regardless of whether a human subject is present. Sexual pleasure is entirely dependent on the fetish.

This form of sexual behaviour, while no doubt extreme, is really a gross amplification of normal responses. We are all capable of investing an inanimate object with sexual significance, but what has happened for the fetishist is that the usual source of sexual pleasure, another human being, is replaced by an object which itself becomes the source of pleasure.

In the case of the hi-fi fetishist the true object of his pleasure, the music, has been displaced. Or to put it another way, this pleasure has become dependent upon the particular characteristics of the audio equipment. This is not to suggest that the hi-fi fetishist likes music less, it is simply that a shift of attention has placed the hi-fi and perceptual priority firmly on the audio equipment. This accounts for the equipment's transformation into a fetish.

We observed that the sexual fetishist endows an inanimate object with powers not normally assigned to it. Thus without any alteration in its real nature that object is aggrandized and exalted. It has magical powers assigned to it which resonate on a level of fantasy in the mind of the fetishist. I think it is possible to explain the hi-fi fetishist's attitude of over-estimation and over-valuation by recourse to the same process of idealization. Look at it this way. A piece of music we love will have the power to move us whether we hear it reproduced via a music-centre or a high quality system; this is the power of art. Indeed, many of us may describe this encounter with the music as magical. But what happens in the case of the hi-fi fetishist who has shifted the psychological priority from the music to the reproducing equipment? Musical pleasure (as with sexual pleasure) becomes dependent on the magical properties of the fetish, the audio equipment. But audio components do not possess any magical properties—they are under the control of the laws of physics.

Like the sexual fetishist, the hi-fi fetishist cannot fully bend to the demands of reality for the simple reason that his relationship to the fetish is active on a level of fantasy. Of course, the hi-fi fetishist is not completely out of touch with reality, otherwise he would need to deny the existence of the laws of physics. Therefore, in order to 'accommodate' his magical thinking to reality he modifies it so that he can still enjoy the pleasure afforded to him by his hi-fi system. We see these modifications appearing in the hi-fi press in the form of mystification. This reconstituted form of magical thinking is transparent to all

But given the right ... speed and dynamics of xyz ... whole gamut of musical emotions ... reproduced.

Speed . . . is very difficult to ... The speed of a system has ... overall perspective with w... ceived and the level of ex... generate . . .

The transformation of s... ing to the xyz was min... improvements in bass ... imagery and general l... resolution was of suc... make confirmatory A... redundant and poin... arm] more emotion... expression was ob... easier to get into ...

My conclusion a... was more capab... things like the ... displayed by m...

At this stage ... better understa... special relatio... Yet we need ... appreciate fu... of the fetish ...

Let us tu... again in or... have obse... functioni... natural r... cannot ... another ... fetish, ... fetish ... confi... inad... sub... do... th... otherwis...

Before ... this featu... fetishism ... exampl... meet w... familia... some... test ... audi... fina... se... fu... d...

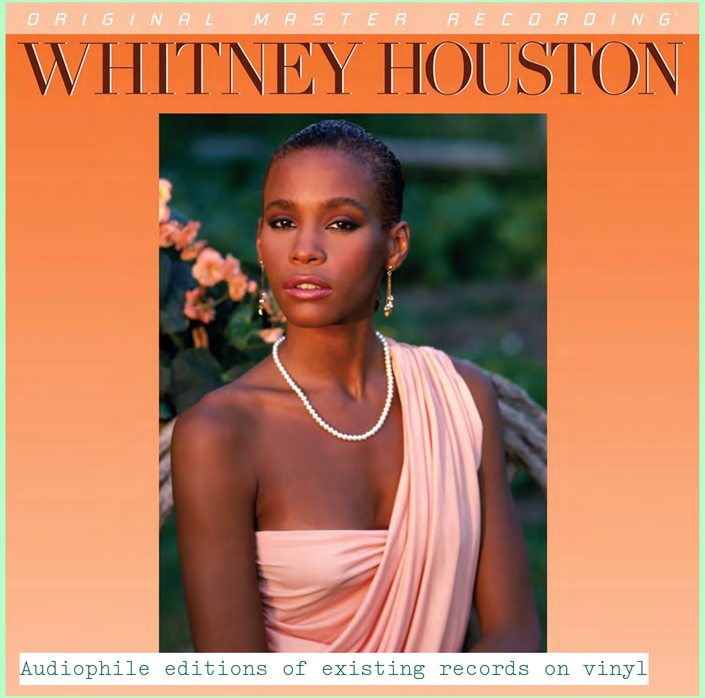
Aesthetics



Hi-Fi News & Record Review, October 1981







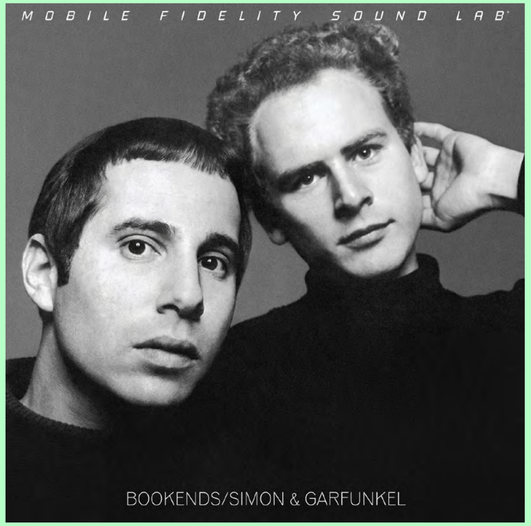
Audiophile editions of existing records on vinyl







Audiophile compilations on reel-to-reel and SACD

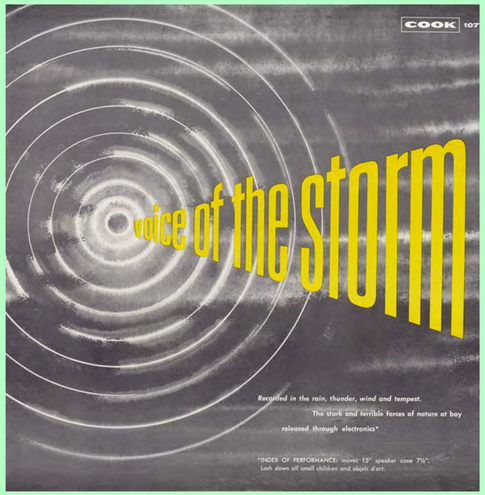




Aesthetics

Field recordings by Emory Cook (1950)





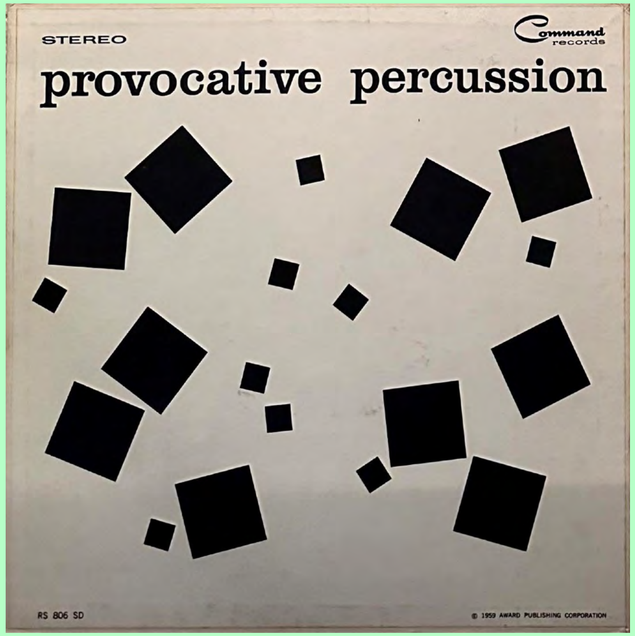




Aesthetics



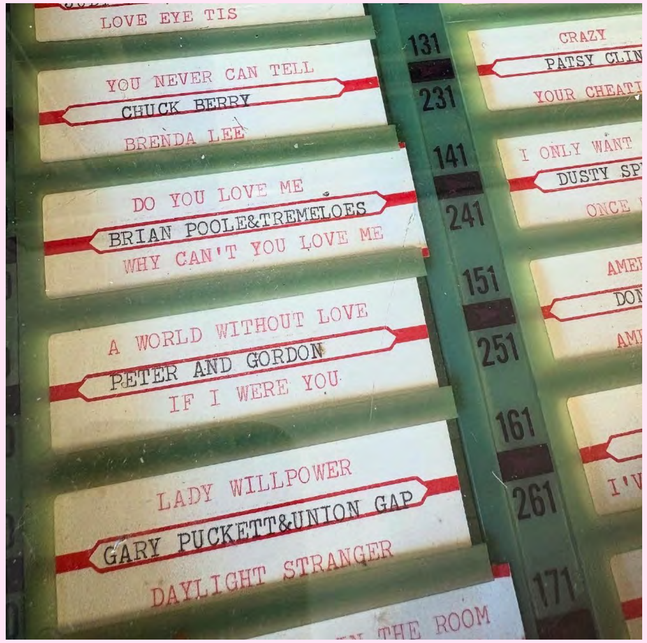
Command Records – percussion series, 1959 onwards







Aesthetics









free play juke-box

Add your choice to the Apple Music playlist