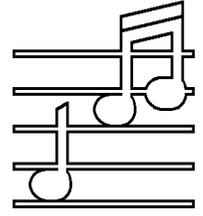


AUDIO BASICS



AN IRREGULAR NEWSLETTER OF AUDIO INFORMATION

OCTOBER, 1995

We are Still Here, with Lots of New Stuff

Research, development, and production design has occupied so much of our time for the past year that *Audio Basics* was set aside until a bunch of new products were completed. Now we are breaking out with significant, carefully researched, and thoroughly developed new products to make "high fidelity" a more meaningful term than ever. The new Fall/Winter 95/96 catalog tells you about all of them, but I want to highlight some of the new things here and tell you a bit more about them.

THE AVA TOPP-DAC IS A TRUE MUSICAL BREAKTHROUGH!

This has been a two year project - to develop a digital-to-analog converter that is truly faithful to the spirit of the music. The industry has thrown away the possibility of true fidelity by leaping to one-bit systems. We have told you for several years that one-bit systems are wrong, wrong, wrong - that they throw away most of the musical content of the performance.

Now we can prove beyond any possible contradiction that we are correct. The AVA technically optimized parallel processing digital-to-analog converter (TOPP-DAC) will tell you we are right the first moment the music gets to your ears.

It is absolutely the most transparent, highest definition, more pure, most musical, and most fatigue free source device for your high fidelity system short of a live microphone. It will make your CDs sound more naturally musical than your records ever did. It reaches much further into the music and plays back naturally and transparently all of the nuances of live acoustic voice and instruments - aspects of a real performance that you never knew could be recorded. Unless you have a very good seat at the live performance, a good CD recording and the TOPP-DAC will actually give you more of the listening experience right at home. It simply changes the way you think about high fidelity.

I am listening to Mozart with the Ω mega III TOPP-DAC as I write this, with an Ω mega III RB preamp, a little Δ elta 120 amplifier, and my B&W 801s. The TOPP-DAC is so transparent that I would rather have it and the Δ elta 120 than to listen without it using the best amp and preamp we have.

There are two models of the TOPP-DAC. The Ω mega III is all solid state with hybrid current buffered audio filters and output circuits. The price is \$499. The Fet Valve TOPP-DAC uses the same digital configuration, but with Fet Valve vacuum tube and power mos-fet circuits for the last 12 dB of filtering and audio output. The price is \$899.

The Ω mega III TOPP-DAC has phenomenal definition, transparency, and liquidity. You would never believe anything could be better. But the Fet Valve TOPP-DAC is better! It reveals that yet another dimension of space, range, and dynamic range was captured on most quality CDs. If you can afford it, it is worth it.

All you need is a CD player (or Laser Disc Player) with a coax (RCA jack) digital output. The TOPP-DAC bypasses all of the digital and audio circuits in the CD player, thus their design and quality is not a factor in the playback process. It is possible to interface the TOPP-DAC to a CD player or Laser Disc player with Toslink optical output by using an external optical to digital converter such as the Audio Alchemy DST, available from discount sources for about \$150.00 plus \$20 for the necessary optical cable. This is a good option for those that already have a CD or Laser Disc player with optical digital out only. We are working on a simpler, better, and much lower priced optical to coax converter - check with us on our progress.

The TOPP-DAC does indeed musically obsolete all of our old CD player models and there is nothing interchangeable from the insides of our old units to the new TOPP-DAC. But of course our old CD players remain really nice sounding machines that should be used as long as they please you. Some models, such as the 473 and the 560, have digital

outputs and so will interface with our new TOPP-DACs.

Because CD players with coax output and good transports are available so inexpensively through mass markets (the Philips 921 for example is only about \$149 from Sound City at 1-800-432-0007 and the very nice Harman-Kardon HD-7325 for \$269 from Circuit City) it is not cost effective to try and add a coax output to older machines that do not now have one. You now need only the transport capability of the CD player along with a coax digital output. We have Philips 926 CD changers available for \$250 or the deluxe 936 changer for \$300. They are newer designs that seem to be solid mechanically. Both have coax digital out and full function remote controls that adjust digital out volume.

Note that the version of the Ω mega III TOPP-DAC that mounts inside an Ω mega III RB or SL preamplifier is not available at this time because the line circuits are not quite quiet enough when they are in the same box with the DAC circuits. But until we can make the internal combination adequately quiet, if you order both the Ω mega III RB or SL preamp and the free standing Ω mega III TOPP-DAC, we will knock off \$100 on the combined price to keep the price the same as if the DAC was mounted internally in the preamp.

We Have an E-mail Address Now

Write us at avahifi@aol.com – isn't that easy to remember. We check in every couple of days or so and will do our best to answer the questions you post there. If you are on America on Line, you just need to send e-mail to avahifi.

You Get Old Amp Prices Until December

Regrettably, although careful new chassis engineering has allowed us to offer new basic small signal models at lower prices than ever, the cost of our power amplifiers has to go up. Vendor prices have climbed too much for us to continue to absorb. However, on our new AVA power amplifiers, you can still buy at our 1994 catalog prices until December 1, 1995. This is the only "sale" for this year, so don't wait if you want a new power amplifier now.

Versa-Kits are in the Main Catalog

We have significantly upgraded and distilled the best of them into the all new RB and SF chassis. You have basic line preamps (both solid state and vacuum tube), RIAA phono preamps, tape buffers, the full function SL preamp, phase inverters, and more all available as complete do-it-yourself kits and factory wired. The brand new SF, RB, SL chassis set is outstanding. It is built like the bigger EC chassis with a heavy steel chassis and cover with a black

anodized faceplate. With few exceptions, there is no drilling and the faces are completely finished and labeled. Refer back to your *Audio Basics* back issues for the older Versa-Kit projects. Many of those are still available. Call us to confirm.

We Have New Reviews Out

Check out the September, 1995 issue of *High Performance Review* for a write-up on the Fet Valve EC preamp and Ω mega III 440hc power amp (we have reprints available). Look at the cover of the October, 1995 issue of *Audio* and you will find us there. *Sensible Sound* is reviewing the Ω mega III amp in its next issue, with the Ω mega III EC preamp to follow. Last spring, *Video* magazine said the Ω mega III was the best sounding amp they tested - but they stuck it in a table ranked by price so the casual reader did not pick up on that. Can't win them all.

Used Equipment

We have a **Fet Valve SL Preamp with Phono** for \$699, a **Super Pas Three** with the works - our faceplate, gold jacks, and ceramic switch in excellent condition for \$395. We have **Pat-4 chassis** for just \$25 extra when you buy an Ω II Pat-4 rebuild kit. We have **Dyna St-120 and St-400 chassis** available for Ω mega III rebuilds at a substantial saving. We have a set of **B&W DM640** loudspeakers in black ash with our crossover upgrade in brand new condition with cartons in brand new condition. They are a trade-in from a local client that keeps his equipment in perfect shape. We sold them originally and can give you the balance of the 5 year warranty (three years left). The performance is the same as new. The price is \$995 for the pair plus shipping. They weigh about 60 pounds each and we can figure UPS shipping costs when you call.

The B&W P4, P5, and P6 Speakers

B&W has just come out with a new series of speakers, the Preference (P) series. These are very attractive slender floor standing columns with real wood finishes and their most sophisticated hi-end drivers. The sound runs from fine to great and the prices from \$1200 to \$1800 a pair. They are easy to drive. They are a much better value (and better sound) than most of the little esoteric bookshelf speakers in that price range. Call us for more details and ask for the nice full color brochure on them.

Free Speakers!

We have a giveaway set of \$300/pair Baltic 30 bookshelf speakers (made in Latvia) donated by their distributor, Walter Leaman. Write us by 11/15/95 and tell us why you would like them and the most convincing response will get them free.

Frank and Darlene Van Alstine