

## **Axpona 2023 notes in the order visited**

Mark Bushinski

All photos from respective manufacturer's Facebook page

### **Linkwitz Lx521**

One of my favorites, the 3d sound stage is excellent. The owner Frank Brenner is friendly and had a good mix of tracks playing. He played Vogue by Madonna and it sounded like she was whispering in my ear. The 4 Seas 10" subwoofer cancelled the stereotype that dipole bass can't have impact. "Poem of a Chinese Drum" had great attack.

### **Grimm LS1be**

Test tracks were "Who will comfort me" by Melody Gardot and "Bird without a home" by RL Burnside. I noted the Seas Beryllium Tweeter to have a crisp sound. They are using a 10" Peerless XXLS with servo but I didn't hear a track that really got it moving.



### **Yamaha NS-5000**

Here they played a Jazz album by Bob James (track was Mister Magic) and at the time I visited the room Bob was actually sitting in the seat in front of me. Very nice clean and crisp sound but I felt like the sound was coming from two boxes, in other words not the 3d image of a dipole or omni. Woofer, mid and tweeter membrane

material made from a composite called ZYLON. They are using some weights on the back of the woofer in strategic spots similar to a BMR.

### **Phillips Design**

Interesting omni design. Upward firing 6" poly/TPX cone into aluminum reflector and down firing 12" carbon fiber woofer. I expressed my concern of the drivers sagging over time and the response is that by the time that happens it will time to upgrade.



### **Treehaus Audiolab National Treasure**

Very cool looking open baffle speaker made from a book matched slab of wood.

I did not care for the Atelier Rullit field coil full range driver it sounded too colored.

They are using a 15" SB Audience woofer.

### **ATC SCM50**

Didn't stay long in this room long but I did notice the dispersion pattern of this 3-way to change quite a bit as I walked around to find a seat.

### **Bayz Audio Counterpoint 2.0**

Very cool looking omni speaker with two Sb acoustics 9.5" papyrus drivers and a unique radial tweeter.



### **Pass Labs**

I stopped in here briefly and they were using Triton One.R Tower Speakers. I did not like the triton speakers they sounded very weak in the upper bass and lower midrange so I'm not sure what to say about the Pass labs amplifier.

### **MBL**

Very cool and expensive omni speakers. One track played was "Sing Sang Sung" by Big Phat Band. Midrange and treble percussion sounded live and tight in this song. In a different song I noticed the kettle drum to lack attack in the bass.

### **Pure Audio Project Trio15 w/Coax10**

Didn't spend a lot of time listening as the midrange from the coax seem distant and colored.

I talked to a staff member and he said that you can still buy PAP raw drivers even though they aren't online.

### **Devialet**

They switched between the Phantom 1 and 2 while I was in the room. It is fun to watch the side woofers dance, but I did not find them to sound good. Frequency response did not seem balanced.

### **Prana Fidelity Dhara**

They are using 2 6" Sb Acoustics woofers and a 30mm Wavecor tweeter. Good sound but one of the tracks had a lot of bass and the sb woofers seemed stressed.

### **Magico S3**

Test track was James Blake's "Limit to your love" which had the guy next to me grumbling about the strange choice of music. However, this track was some modulating electronic deep bass and the 2 9" woofers were up to the task. Staff member said that Magico doesn't use any stuffing inside their enclosures and that the back wave of the woofer never re-radiates back through the cone.





### **Dutch 8c**

I found these to have good balance of the frequency range, great imaging and I like how they can be placed right against the back wall with no ill effects. Martijn is friendly and seems to be constantly looking into new products. I was told the oak case is thin wood  $\frac{1}{4}$ " with 18mm Baltic birch underneath. We joked a little about the high price of Baltic birch. Seas drivers on the front and Wavecor subs on the back.

### **Loudspeaker Project Pad**

Went to this room twice and I thought Javad's big floor standing Omega sounded great. The midrange clarity stuck out to me. Better use of the ATC mid than ATC's SCM50 that I listened to earlier in the day.

### **Avantgarde**

I'm not sure about these. The midrange has a feeling like a flashlight of sound is shouting at you.

## CSS

Talked to Dan and they are retooling their CSS SDX10 subwoofer.

## SB Acoustics

Mark Thomsen is a friendly guy and happy to answer questions about SB products. He had the Sasandu kit speakers going at club levels and they didn't seem to mind. I was intrigued by the design of SW26SFC38-4 10" slim woofer when the coil leaves the gap it sees an opposite magnetic polarity, a soft-limiting design.





## Madisound

Nice to talk to Adam from Madisound and Olav Arntzen from Seas they are both friendly and informative. Olav demonstrated a new cone material TPCD built up in a small bookshelf. I thought the vocals sounded clear through these. To be honest I was a little disappointed by the 4-way Ellipticor speakers. The midrange and treble were excellent, but I didn't like the bass (could be the room I know). In the song "Allah Tano" by Alpha Blondy the quick bass guitar notes were a little slurred. I've read that audience clapping is a torture test for mids and tweeters and the Scanspeak dome mid and tweeter did excellent here in the opening of "Hotel California" From the Hell Freezes Over album but the kick drum seemed dry.



## Parts Express

Very cool to talk to Chris Perez, you can tell he has a passion for speakers. He said they are working on a new driver line with a dished aluminum cone with sound quality in mind close to the reference series. He also said they are working on larger Epique subwoofers but are having trouble finding a basket that can handle the excursion. They had a few kit speakers playing including the Morel Ardon, Solstice, Orian and Amiga. Orian and

Solstice were my favorites. Chris also said they are working on an amplifier and a total redo of the BR-1.



#### **VPE Electroynamics Crystal Dipole Loudspeaker**

Pleasant sounding dipole speaker using a 10" Cube Audio F10 full range and 15" Eminence Kappa Pro. Plexiglass baffle which according to the staff has good damping due to a low elastic modulus and high density. I had already dismissed the cube drivers after seeing a waterfall plot of the 8" version with many tails of resonances, however I didn't notice this during my short listening session. I listened to Christian McBride my favorite jazz



bass player and the plucked bass came through as good as I've heard it.

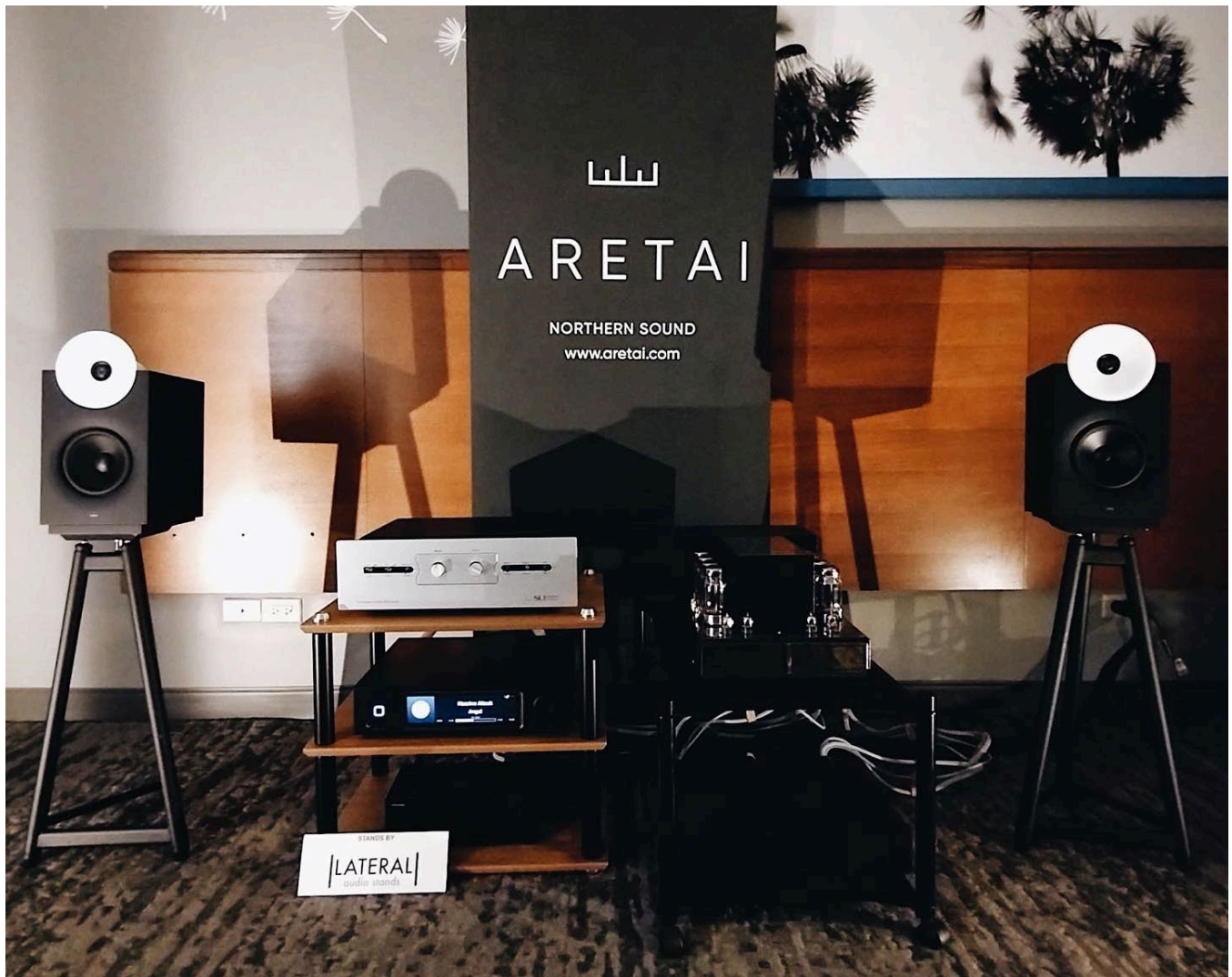


### **Dynaudio Confidence 50**

These were setup in a big banquet room, and I thought they filled up the room well with clear sound. I asked the staff about the advantage of the one-piece dust cap and cone on their woofers. They didn't seem to know much.

### **Aertai Contra 100S**

This speaker has the best bass from a bookshelf that I heard during the show. It's a 2.5 way design with the 6" woofer at the back on a lower lowpass than the front woofer. The tweeter and waveguide sounded crisp too. I believe they are all Sb Acoustics drivers. Joakim Juhl from the Diy Loudspeaker project pad was also in the room and it was nice to talk to him, he is selling Oepi Cables.



### **Focal Maestro Utopia EVO**

This was also in a large banquet room and the deep bass was able to fill the room. One Test Track was “Kashmir” by Marcin. I’ve listened to this track before and the Focals did well with the deep bass but the upper bass kick was recessed. I auditioned some Focal wireless headphones with noise cancelling, I found them to sound clean and punchy.





### **Legacy Valor**

Tall floor stander with two AMT tweeters placed right in front on a 14" woofer and 8 drivers in total.

It could have been the track, but the tweeters seemed a little too bright.

### **Scaena**

Large line array and many subwoofers. A funny room to visit, a stereotypical audiophile setup, there was a guy digging through a collection of cigars and a collection of coffee presses.

### **Plasmatronics**

Plasma tweeter with a helium tank, very clear treble. There was a helium tank on the floor. Non-smoking room.