

Editorial

Glass Redux



DRIVERS:

- ATC
- AUDAX
- ETON
- FOSTEX
- LPG
- MAX FIDELITY
- MOREL
- PEERLESS
- SCAN-SPEAK
- SEAS
- SILVER FLUTE
- VIFA
- VISATON
- VOLT

CUSTOM COMPUTER AIDED CROSSOVER AND CABINET DESIGN

SOLEN CAPACITORS AND INDUCTORS - USED BY THE MOST DISCRIMINATING LOUDSPEAKER MANUFACTURERS.

HARDWARE

HOW TO BOOKS

Contact us for the free
Solen CDROM Catalog.

FREE!



SOLEN

4470 Avenue Thibault
St-Hubert, QC, J3Y 7T9
Canada

Tel: 450.656.2759

Fax: 450.443.4949

Email: solen@solen.ca

Web: www.solen.ca

The special focus of this issue of *audioXpress* is one more symptom of the hardihood of both the vacuum tube and analog reproduction of sound. It is not a covert attempt to revive one of our most popular and yearned for titles. However, in thinking over several trends we noticed in late 2003, we decided to offer a collection of tube-related articles to the significant population among aX readers who love vacuum tube technology.

Since the beginning of this year we have also observed some other straws in the audio world which seem significant. Watching other US audio periodicals, it is surprising how much attention is being given to reviews of tube equipment. *Hi-Fi News* in Britain often features new vacuum tube gear on its cover. The French magazine *Revue du son et du Home Cinema* (whose distinguished editor's essay is included in this issue) regularly not only reviews vacuum tube devices, but its reviews seem to give higher marks in the "dynamics" category to such equipment, in contrast to transistorized products.

In any case, vacuum tube audio technology is not only alive and well, but advancing with newly realized and revived tubes appearing from time to time. Tube enthusiasts also continue to unearth earlier circuit designs and ideas, especially in exploring single-ended power amplifiers. This reexamination of amplification topology history asks pertinent questions about the validity of the pentode in quality terms and in comparison to the older triode. Beyond that, keen questions about the disadvantages of push-pull topologies are being posed.

Engineers, on the whole, however, think we are well rid of vacuum tubes as an antiquated and trouble-ridden stage in the development of audio. The most recent issue of *Elektor* (the UK version, March 2005) features a "debate" about the virtues of Valves vs. Transistors. One of their most distinguished staff engineers, Ton Giesberts, says, "They're simply no good." One of his many excellent transistor designs appears in the same issue, which also features an amp by Giesberts as well as one from China designed by Gerhard Haas.

The articles appearing in aX are almost always volunteered by authors, reflecting their interests. Rarely does the editor assign a topic to an author. Tube articles submitted are more numerous, by a small margin, than solid-state or speaker types. Some articles are hybrids. Our article inventory began to show a surplus of vacuum tube articles in early 2003, which was part of the impetus for presenting these tube related articles.

As always we welcome your feedback, positive or negative. We also appreciate very much the support by advertisers for this special effort.

Please note that later this year we will be publishing the *World Tube Directory*, listing the companies and their applications related to the vacuum tube market. With the resurgence of interest in tube products and services, this 2006 edition promises to be bigger and better than our previous efforts. We look forward to working with tube manufacturers, distributors, and wholesalers who have provided us with the information to make these compilations possible.—E.T.D.