

Evolution or Black Magic?

I am very rarely moved to the point of self-discipline required to put coherent ideas, thoughts and feelings into intelligible words, phrases and paragraphs. But, this is one of those rare occasions. It has come about because of an experience I have had (and shared with others) which has changed my perspective on 1) Where we were in the fascinating journey attempting to faithfully reproduce music in the home and 2) What is now possible.

It would be fair to say that I am opinionated, confident for good reason in those opinions and happy to share them with anyone who will listen. I think it was Steve Dickenson who once described me as “The gob on legs!”, but I was shocked into silence by the reality, the veracity and the beauty of the music pouring forth, firstly in the dem rooms at The Audio Works and later in my own room at home. Silenced and mentally and physically shaken by my emotional responses to the music being played. I literally laughed out loud, cried, sat up in surprise and wallowed in its sheer beauty. All within a few minutes. This was truly like live music in its ability to communicate, and about as far from the sound of “Hi-Fi” as it's possible to get.

Lest you think that in my dotage I am easily fooled or deceived, let me say that I have seen pretty much the same shocked uncomprehending reaction in everyone I have played it to. Especially close friends who share my passion and who are equally delighted, thrilled and perplexed in equal measure.

So what is the source of this huge leap forward in our ability to recreate the performance of music, not just the sound, but the ideas, the passion, the interactions between the players that made the original performances so special?

If I told you it was a state of the art loudspeaker, you might believe me. If I said it was an exceptional cutting edge class A amplifier?

Perhaps a world leading CD/SACD transport and DAC?

What about all the above in one super system?

At The AudioWorks we have all these components and they are all exceptional, but alone or even in concert they are not responsible for the qualitative leap.

The product in question is so unexpected, so out of left field, so powerfully effective when used appropriately that initially your mind struggles to comprehend the enormity of the improvements wrought.

The instigator of this paradigm shift is a new material named Acouplex. A synthesis of two existing materials into a new matrix which has amazing sonic properties. It can be cast and moulded into different shapes and then built into pretty much anything you can think of. Currently we have shelves, equipment tables, record dampers, replacement feet for equipment and a state of the art mains distribution block.

The only parallel I can liken this step-change explosion to is the way that evolution expresses itself on Earth. For millennia, species refine and develop extremely slowly, responding to changes in their environment. Over hundreds of thousands of years they perfect their fit to the niche that they inhabit. Then, like magic, completely unexpectedly, huge changes occur in short order, either as a result of a freak, favourable genetic mutation or as a response to a sudden catastrophic change in the environment. Like the meteor wiping out the Dinosaurs.

In the world of Hi-Fi, after decades of slow refinement since the development of sound recording, true advances have been few and far between (just listen to some 1950's Jazz recordings for proof of this). But this new development in noise reduction is I believe the single biggest advance in our ability to faithfully reproduce music in the home for 50 years.

Until recently, I believed I had a great HiFi system.

I thought we had probably peaked in our ability to reproduce music at home.

Like the Dinosaurs, I didn't see this meteor coming!

Happily, I was wrong.

There is now a way to access a whole new level of meaning, reality and involvement from our music collections, and a whole host of new and old musical styles and genres to explore.

Any of you with an open mind, open ears and an ability to appreciate

Evolution and/or Black Magic can now explore it too.

Don't be a Dinosaur. Contact The AudioWorks to investigate.