

STEREOPHILE TEST CD STPH 002-2

TRACK INFORMATION (Total playing time: 70:54)

- [1] Reference Tone (DDD) 1:21
1kHz sine wave tone at -20dB, L/R, with a spoken introduction by Sam Tellig (The Audio Anarchist)
- [2] Channel Identification (DDD) 0:26
Left (Index 1), then Right (Index 2), with Sam Tellig and Ralph the Christmas Dog
- [3] Channel Phasing (DDD) 0:39
In-phase (Index 1), then out-of-phase (Index 2), with Sam Tellig and Ralph the Christmas Dog
- [4] Pink Noise at -20dB (DDD) 2:15
Correlated between channels, then uncorrelated from 1:11 (Index 3)
- [5] "Why Hi-Fi Experts Disagree" (DDD) 6:17
J. Gordon Holt reads from *Stereophile* Vol. 1 No. 4 (March-April 1963), recorded in mono by Robert Harley with, in order, the following microphones: Shure SM57, AKG D190E, Sennheiser MD441, Electrovoice RE20, Coles 4038, B&K 4006, Crown PZM, Milab LC25, Neumann TLM170, AKG C414B, Neumann U87, Neumann U47FET, Neumann U67, Telefunken U47, Telefunken ELAM251, AKG C12, AKG C12 (modified by Stephen Paul), EAR The Mic. (Index points 2-19 mark the edits between each microphone) Mikes are mainly courtesy of Audio Rents, Los Angeles, CA; Coles courtesy of Audio Engineering Associates; Milab LC25 courtesy of Dick Olsher; AKG D190E courtesy of John Atkinson; EAR The Mic and B&K 4006 courtesy of *Stereophile* magazine. Microphone preamplifier: EAR 824M (which uses tubes). Recorder: Nakamichi 1000 R-DAT.
- [Shure SM57, Index 2] "The high-fidelity initiate, bewitched, bothered, and thoroughly confused by the staggering selection of components he must choose from, often turns to a high-fidelity expert to assist him in assembling his dream system. The expert may be a local consultant, a dealer, or a magazine that the prospective buyer trusts as a source of accurate, down-to-ear information.
- [AKG D190E, Index 3] "If this seeker of high-fidelity truth is wise, he will consult one expert and no more. The more expert opinions he gets, the more confused he will become, because every expert opinion will be different from all other expert opinions.
- [Sennheiser MD441, Index 4] "About the only thing that all high-fidelity experts agree about is that high fidelity is supposed to be realistic sound reproduction. They may even agree that Marantz amplifiers are pretty good, and that Thorens makes a passable turntable. [Electrovoice RE20, Index 5] But try to pin them down about pickups, or other amplifiers, or tuners, or particularly loudspeakers, and one expert's preference is another one's anathema.

"Of course, any expert worth his salt can tell you why there is so much disagreement. The reason? [Coles 4038, Index 6] Well, the other experts, although very nice guys, don't *really* know what they're talking about. Oh, they're pretty good *technical* men, mind you, but they don't *really* have the perceptive ear that's needed for a truly valid *musical* evaluation of reproduced sound.

[B&K 4006, Index 7] "This is the crux of the matter. Measurements can help to describe a component's performance, but the final criterion for judging reproduced fidelity has always been the ear; and when we start to fall back on subjective judgments, we always end up with a diversity of opinions. . .

[Crown PZM, Index 8] "A listener can train his ears to pick out all kinds of details in the reproduced sound—peaks, dips, phase shift, imbalance and the like—but many such trained ears have never heard a live orchestra, so they are hardly qualified to tell you what is and what is not realistic. Also, if they have never heard a system with really low distortion or really smooth response (which many "experts" have not), they will be oblivious to small amounts of muddiness or roughness that will be quite evident to someone who is accustomed to listening to a truly top-quality system.

[Milab LC25, Index 9] "Listeners with identical hearing acuity and identical standards of judgment will usually be highly critical of different aspects of a system's performance. Thus, expert A may be terribly, terribly critical of what happens in the high treble range, expert B may be hypercritical of bass, and expert C may have a thing about middle-range smoothness or 'coloration'.

[Neumann TLM170, Index 10] "We can see how this might influence their judgment of, say, a loud-speaker system. If it is a bit rough at the top, smooth through the middle range, and bass-shy, expert A won't like it much; it will offend his critical ear for treble. [AKG C414B, Index 11] Expert C won't be too crazy about it either, because of the low-end deficiency, but expert B, even while admitting that 'the top isn't as smooth as I have heard; and 'the low end leaves a little bit to be desired,' will just as likely sum it up as 'one of the most natural, musical-sounding speakers' he has tested.

[Neumann U87, Index 12] "They can all hear the speaker's shortcomings, in the sense that the treble peaks and bass thinness will register on their hearing mechanism, but each picks out that aspect of its performance that is of particular concern to him, and tends to judge it mainly on the basis of that aspect.

[Neumann U47FET, Index 13] "No equipment critic worth his salt will judge a component solely by one criterion, but it is not at all unusual for an equipment reporter to 'slant' his evaluations on the basis of a few things which he considers to be of particular importance. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible for him to avoid doing this, at least to some extent.

[Neumann U67, Index 14] "High fidelity may be a science, but it isn't an exact science. There are enough things about it that aren't understood to leave room for a goodly amount of educated opinion. This is one field, though, where one man's opinion is *not* as good as another's.

[Telefunken U47, Index 15] "Many writers of books and articles about high fidelity advise the prospective buyer merely to choose what sounds good to him. Certainly there is no sense in anybody's choosing a music system whose sound he doesn't like, but in a field where definite standards of quality exist, simply liking something does not necessarily mean that it is good, by those standards. [Telefunken ELAM251, Index 16] A person who likes abstract art, for instance, may be judging it by any number of criteria, but resemblance to the original scene is not one of them. If it were evaluated on the basis of its 'fidelity,' or resemblance