

Previous Meeting Program Notes
Sunday, April 19, 2015

This was an interesting meeting with some unusual results. The original premise of the meeting was to hear several of the latest DACs in the \$1k - 3K range. Instead, we ended up listening to the production version of the iFi Audio iDSD Micro that we heard last year as a pre-production model (thanks to Charles Berry from Sight & Sound Gallery), three LH Labs Geek Pulses (two thanks to LH Labs), and the internal DAC in an Oppo BDP-93.

The iFi iDSD is a great sounding unit at its price point, but was eclipsed by the several times more expensive Geek Pulses. We really appreciated Charles coming all the way out to the meeting just to bring the iDSD Micro! All of the outboard DACs severely whipped the poor basic BDP-93 whose sound was acceptable, but certainly not equal.

As predicted, the more expensive Pulse fi was agreed upon by attendees to sound better than the less expensive Basic Pulse. What stumped us was that the more expensive Pulse Xfi did not sound as good as the less expensive Pulse fi. We have referred this finding to LH Labs and they are looking into it. We speculate that the problem might have been an impedance mismatch in the test system caused by using the unbalanced output of the Xfi into two separate amps causing the Pulse to "see" a very low impedance load. Suffice it to say however, that the Pulses are exceptional performers at their price point and any of the three will certainly be competitive even at price points above their own. One member was quoted as saying "they don't just raise the bar, they create a new bar!"

We also had the chance to audition the Pulse fi using member Sam Papadas designed and constructed linear power supply. This was a test power supply, completely unregulated, and would not be safe for home use. It was built to verify that the very good wall wart power supply could be improved upon... and it can! The rest of the meeting was spent listening to digital music provided by members.