

On Sunday, May 17, 2015, the monthly meeting of the Audio-Video Club of Atlanta was held at the Virtual Properties Realty training room at their offices in Duluth. This meeting featured a presentation by Dennis Juranek and Sam Papadas on the use of JRiver software to “rip” and “up-sample” CD’s for hi-resolution audio playback, and comparing these results. There were over 20 people in attendance.

I need to mention that there were a few setup issues. The presenters had tested almost everything ahead of time, but when they connected the system at the meeting site, the music would not play or would play only at a very low volume. After much experimentation, a “backup” laptop was brought in and things started to work. This was no one’s fault – it is the nature of the beast with PC’s (software) and external DAC’s like the Geek Pulse that is essentially a specialized computer complete with firmware. Connecting computers to an external DAC can sometimes require some trouble shooting. Once these problems are addressed, the computer to external DAC connection usually requires little attention thereafter. After the meeting, the issues with the original setup were identified. When everything works, it is well worth the effort! The important thing to remember in trouble shooting is to change only one thing at a time.

We started a bit late, and first up was John Morrison, club president, at 2:10 PM. He announced the results of the elections for Vice President and Treasurer. Dennis Juranek and Paul Tarver respectively won with all 18 members who cast their vote via the web site. John mentioned that the next meeting, which is the headphone and portable DAC meeting, is later than usual in the month, June 28. Tom Horner (your secretary) mentioned that he had created a document that explains how to set up a new laptop for use as a music server, which will be published on the web site. John then gave special thanks to four members who do a lot for the club, Dennis, Sam, Chuck, and especially Jim Petrone.

John then asked a member, Scott Foust, who took home the club’s tube traps last month, for his thoughts on what they did to his sound. He reported that the traps seemed to “mute” his subwoofer which he did not want to happen. Without the subwoofer, there was no change in the sound. He does not plan to buy these for his listening room, but John and he both acknowledged that it was great to be able to experiment with them without having to buy and then return the units to the seller. This is definitely a “perk” of being a member of our club, since the club owns other items that can also be auditioned.

It was time for Dennis’s presentation. The notes from his presentation are in a PDF file on the web site. The playback system consisted of a Dell Laptop with Windows 8.1 and JRiver software, using a USB connection to the Geek Pulse fi owned by Sam. The output of the DAC used an RCA to XLR adapter cable that John built to connect the RCA output from the DAC to the XLR inputs of a pair of Emotiva Stealth 8 powered studio monitors recently purchased by Tom Horner. This meant no need for a preamp or power amp since the Geek Pulse could control the volume. Dennis went through his presentation which includes options to set in JRiver, how to “rip” a CD to a file on a disk, and how to “up-sample” (convert) that ripped file to a higher resolution music file (either 24/88 or 24/176). During his presentation we listened to an original CD, then that CD ripped to a file, then a 24/88 up-sample of that file that we made right then, and finally a 24/176 up-sample of the ripped CD file. After each step, we compared the sound and each time the sound improved.

Tom Horner assisted Dennis in “driving” the laptop (the laptop was the one that Tom had recently set up), and we completed several more rips and up-samples. The results were always the same, the 24/88 and especially the 24/176 files sounded better. Toward the end of the meeting we installed Sam’s home-built power supply (replacing the Pulse’s “wall wart” plug) and again heard better sound. The meeting ended with folks listening to cuts they had brought with them on thumb drives.

The club gives many thanks to Dennis and Sam for working so hard to prepare this presentation and creating such detailed notes for club members to use when they need to set up a music server. Tom Horner had used these notes to set up JRiver on his laptop and made successful rips and up-samples several days before the meeting, with no issues. Also, once again, our thanks to everyone who brought the refreshments.

Thomas Horner  
Secretary, A-V Club of Atlanta