

On Sunday, June 11, 2017, the monthly meeting of the Audio-Video Club of Atlanta was held at a new location, Oak Grove Methodist church, in one of their parish hall's meeting rooms. This meeting featured a presentation by member Lee Scoggins showing off equipment by Benchmark, and wires and accessories from Synergistic Research. We had a good crowd of about 35 members and guests present, including at least one new member and several guests.

John, our club president, announced that the July picnic will be at the Hickory House restaurant on July 16, instead of at a member's home. Folks are to register, and can bring cut fruit or a dessert if they wish. Then in August there will be the annual listening sessions at member's homes – more on this will be on the web site and in a general email in a week or two.

John first thanked Rory Rall, Sales Manager from Benchmark Media, and Ted Denney from Synergistic Research (they were not present) for letting us use their equipment. Then, a special thank you to our presenter, Lee Scoggins, for bringing us this opportunity! Thanks also to Jim Petrone for the setup, Chuck for the Oppo player, stands, and other equipment, and Sam for bringing the Club 2-way speakers. He also gave special thanks to our new Refreshment Director, Dan Wittmayer, for all the drinks and snacks. The club is trying a new way to supply refreshments, having one person buy and bring them rather than multiple volunteers.

We then got an unexpected bonus when three new CD's were given to each attendee by ACA Digital Recording engineers Tommy Joe Anderson and Fred Horton! They gave us a brief outline of what they do. In addition to recording sessions they are hired to do, they are the in-house recording engineers for concerts at Symphony Hall (the ASO) and at Spivey Hall.

John then introduced Lee, a longtime member of the club and a reviewer for parttimeaudiophile.com. He described the two Benchmark pieces first. The DAC3 has 2 line inputs along with 4 digital inputs, so it can double as a (line level) preamp in addition to being an excellent DAC. The new Benchmark AHB2 power amp is designed specifically for use with the DAC3, but can be used by any preamp. It uses a new class of amplification called class "AAA", developed by THX but implemented by Benchmark in this product. It has an extremely low noise floor (-160 dB) and 132 dB S/N ratio. The amp has a selection of speaker connections to choose from. It is rated at 100 watts per channel into 8 ohms, 200 into 4 ohms.

Lee then described the very expensive wires we were using. Synergistic Research provided a full set of their upper range cables (Galileo series) including USB, SP/DIF interconnects, and speaker cables. We used their Powercell 12 UEF SE power conditioner with 12 outlets. Also, there were very thin "ground" wires connected to the interconnects and the speaker wires that terminated into a grounding block. This company also has tuning modules that go with their cables and Electronic Circuit Transducer tuning cones to put on (or in!) your equipment. The average prices of the wires are in \$3000 to \$5000 range. The unusual thing about all their wires is that Synergistic uses a powerful Tesla Coil to "zap" their products with 2 million volts as part of the conditioning process.

Then it was on to listening to multiple selections of music using CD's, Hi-Res files from Lee's Apple laptop, and SACD's using the Oppo as a transport. This took the remaining part of the meeting, along with occasional interruptions to ask Lee questions about the equipment and the wires.

The club gives many thanks to Lee, Tommy Joe and Fred, Dan, and to everyone who helped set up (mainly Jim Petrone).

Thomas Horner
Secretary, A-V Club of Atlanta