

# Simple Approach To A Great Music System!

I was scouring the latest TAS and Stereophile the other day. As I was reading through the myriad of options I was thinking, holy cow, this is absurd! The mags spend inordinate time and effort on a zillion different brands that tend to have one thing in common, they're ghastly expensive. Where's the interest in getting performance for your dollar? Everyone who lives in Milwaukee is interested in hitting that point of diminishing returns!

One writer is talking about speakers for \$100k as a stunning value. Another guy is talking about a 50w/ch integrated amp with four output transistors for \$10k as tough to beat for the money. Yet a third guy is raving a \$28k tonearm, which you should consider cuz its less than its \$35k brother.

The writers are creating "content" for the magazine. They're not trying to help YOU put together a great hi-fi in a cost effective fashion.

The reviewers are immune to reality because they are LOANED equipment to audition. Almost without exception, these writers are ridiculously kind to the company who loaned them the gear. If they do ultimately buy something, it is dramatically less than dealer cost, much less what you would pay. Guys, this is NEVER NEVER LAND.

Audio Emporium lives in the real world. We sell products to people who work for a living. Your money is finite. We can help you get the best performance for the money you choose to allot.

## Step One

Your first step has to be to clean the debris out of the AC line current. If you don't filter out the honey bees on your electrical line, the fine detail we audiophiles crave will be obfuscated by the fog. We have two great choices from Isotek below.

## Step Two

Step two is to run with a GREAT source. There is no better source than MQA! Streaming MQA or CD quality music via a fine service like Tidal runs you \$20 per month. Buy the Bluesound Node 2 for only \$500 to have this world with edge of the art sound and expansive music at your whim.

I need a CD player too. I have lots of music that is not available via streaming. Certain labels don't have agreements with streaming services yet. Whether it's a great classical label like Hyperion or a garage band you might love- sometimes CDs are the only way to get this music into your system. You might choose to add records too. Some music is only available on LP.

## Step Three

Every speaker benefits from a strong, swift kick in the keister. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. Potent water pressure beats wimpy water pressure every time. You're welcome to sit around with pipe smokers and wax eloquently about aromatic bouquets. Yet such effulgent observations tend to blind listeners as to how to spend their money wisely.

I will recommend a couple of cost effective packages that make mucho \$ense for your investment.

## Step Four

There is no substitute for having GREAT SPEAKERS. The differences among electronics are tiny compared to the differences among speakers. Speakers at the same price point can sound dramatically different. There is certainly room for taste.

If you're a rocker you're likely to prefer one of the gorgeous new Klipsch Heritage models. If you want your jazz and acoustic music to be its most precise, you're likely to choose GoldenEar or Magnepan speakers with ribbons. Let's have some fun discussing the options!

## Mains Conditioner

You need to start with a fine Mains Conditioner. If you don't, there is debris coming out of your wall that presents "haze" getting in the way of your music. Isotek is a British company that makes two conditioners that will filter out the noise without quashing your dynamic range. The sonic improvement provided by both these products is quite noticeable.

To ignore this step is to start creating your POSTER with a NEGATIVE that isn't clear. When you blow up the negative to become a poster, it will be softer than it should be. You cannot achieve stellar musical clarity without dealing with line debris. Isotek is our answer. Isotek deals with airborne AND line interference.

### Isotek Polaris \$500

Polaris has six outlets and comes with an Initium Power Cable, worth \$100 a la carte. You would be wise to replace your generic black power cables with Initiums. The sonic benefit is well worth the investment.



### Initium Power Cable \$100

Initium features nickel blades and a dielectric of polyethylene. If you have a Polaris, you'll be able to hear the improvement Initium brings. If you don't have a Polaris, you won't- because your musical detail will be obfuscated by AC noise.



### Isotek Aquarius \$2000

Aquarius is for higher end systems. If you can swing an Aquarius you should! It has six outlets, two of which are dedicated to high power applications. Aquarius not only offers more filtration and better sound than Polaris, but it provides six filters so there's no cross contamination among products plugged into it! Aquarius comes with a Premier power cable. You would be wise to replace your generic black power cables with Premiers as the sonic benefit is well worth the investment.



### Premier Power Cable \$150

Premiers feature gold plated blades and a dielectric of Teflon- the best materials out there. You can use Premiers with Polaris or Aquarius. You must use Premiers with Aquarius. In a basic system of preamp, amp and a source or two, you might end up buying 3 or 4 Premiers. The investment will pay off as long as you run Polaris or Aquarius. Premier C15 is a traditional audiophile connection pictured here. Premier C7 is the smaller round termination for Bluesound.



### Isotek Syncro Power Cable/Network \$2200

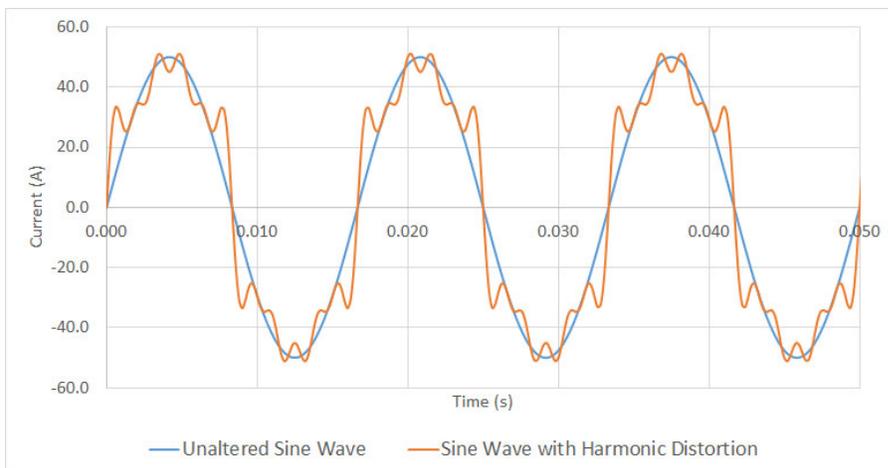
Isotek Polaris & Aquarius do a fine job of improving sound by cleaning up line hash. There is a new product from Isotek that adds just as much improvement to Aquarius. You can buy it right away or wait to blow your mind down the road a piece!

Syncro is a power cable with an active AC sine wave correction network. By inverting phase on the electrical sine wave coming into Aquarius, Syncro literally cancels the distortion from this endemic impediment of your power. The sonic benefit is much improved dynamic range and much more impactful bass. I didn't think this level of improvement could be possible from a product attacking the AC sine wave. I'm shocked at the substantial improvement! All I can say is, I reserve the right to be educated and get smarter. This photo has Euro connectors. Of course the version we offer is American.



Syncro's isolation network takes the orange distorted sign wave and delivers the unfettered blue pattern to Aquarius.

The result is less sludge in the road and cleaner sound.



## MQA & CD Streaming

### Bluesound Node 2 \$500

Node 2 of NAD fame, belongs in virtually every system these days! It STREAMS MQA and CD quality music through Tidal. MQA is a hi-res format delivering state of the art sound to you for a modest \$20 per month Tidal subscription. Tidal also provides outstanding CD quality performance.

Don't pass on introducing MQA to your system NOW. MQA sounds better than hi-res files and you don't have to pay \$25 per album for the music!

MQA measures ten times less in distortion than traditional hi-res digital filters. MQA doesn't sound ten times cleaner than hi-res files, but it does sound more detailed and less harsh.



### Mytek Liberty DAC \$1000

As good as the Node 2 above is, you can't get a state of the art DAC in a unit for \$500. NAD knows this and is super smart to provide digital outs (Opt & Coax) so you can feed Node 2 into the DAC of your choice. What should that DAC be?



While you can buy MQA DACs from \$5-7-18K, please consider the new Mytek Liberty. It runs \$1k and is within spitting distance of the price no object competitors. Inputs include two coax, one OPT, one AES/EBU and one USB-B (yuk). Outputs include analog RCA and BALANCED! You get all this for a grand and I promise, when you hear it here, you're gonna love it.

The improved transparency, immediacy and dynamic contrast are to die for!

## NAD Electronics

NAD has long been recognized as among the best two channel manufacturers out there. NAD's strength is in providing amplifiers of enormous headroom and the ability to drive any load you throw its way. I want to start with the point of diminishing returns, as always!

### NAD C368 Integrated Amp \$900 (80x2 or 300x1)

You can start, and may END your quest for great electronics with the NAD C368. C368 uses NAD's patented Hybrid Digital technology. It uses an analog switching signal (instead of digital) in its

Hypex D design, to deliver amazingly clean & smooth sound. Think of tubes, without the hassle of tubes!



Being an integrated, C368 has a fine preamp on board. Inputs include Bluetooth, two analog ins, two coax ins, two OPT ins and an MM phono input. C368 has pre outs which allow you to add C268- the brand new companion power amp!

C368 is rated at 80x2 but peaks at over 300x2! Most 80x2 amps peak at 81 watts, and shut down if you drive 4 ohm speakers. C368 has a secret weapon if you noticed in the fine print above. What's that 300x1 about ? C368 can be bridged to produce 300x1. All you have to do is buy the companion C268 power amp (\$800, 80x2 or 300x1) and you have absolutely ferocious 300x2 performance from this two box solution for just \$1700!

## NAD C268 Power Amp \$800 (80x2 or 300x1)

You can buy C268 to run with any preamp out there. But for the sake of this entry I want you to consider adding C268 to your C368 above. Yup. For just \$1700 all in, you have a dynamite preamp with 300x2 NAD Power Drive horse power! NAD is kinda plain Jane cosmetically. Under the hood, it's KILLER! Why not spend your money on what's INSIDE instead of outside?



Note that C268 can run single ended or balanced inputs. It can run stereo (80x2) or bridged (300x1)! You have an input level control for many potential uses.

First and foremost, C268 is your ticket to almost quadruple the great C368's horse power and grow your system! Keep in mind that with NAD's Hybrid Digital design, this gear sounds warm and smooth in flavor, not biting or harsh. With the addition of C268, NAD is making it hard on its competitors!

## NAD C538 CD Player \$300

I still need CDs. I have a million and there is plenty of music on CD that we can't yet stream. NAD's matching C538 is built on a steel chassis and is solid.



While it has analog outputs for any system, please notice that in this system, you'll run coax digital out into C368. Yup, you will be using C538 as a transport while you listen to the sweet DAC in C538. Hence you don't have to spend a bundle on a CD player. Orrrr, if I can talk you into getting the Liberty DAC above, you'll be listening to it, while C538 remains as the system's transport.

## Emotiva X-Series

If you want to get bigger/badder than the NAD package above, consider the Emotiva X Series. This combo offers more power and a more tightly etched sound.

### Emotiva ERC-3 CD Player \$600

What a great CD player! Weighing in at 22 lbs and built like a tank, ERC-3 supports BALANCED and single ended options. Get the matching preamp and amp to run a FULLY BALANCED STACK- of course!



If you have reduced your interest in CDs, you'll be won over by running ERC-3 in a BALANCED config with matching preamp and amp. You'll find there is a LOT MORE music on your CDs than you ever knew. To derive top quality, you need to run a CD player, to preamp, and power amp, all in the BALANCED domain.



Also consider ERC-3 if you're replacing an old CD player and need to run with RCAs. A true bargain!

### Emotiva XSP-1 Preamp \$1200

There's no better preamp deal in the biz! Needless to say it is TRUE BALANCED with two balanced ins and outs. It supports RCAs too. It has a fine MM/MC phono section and even a subwoofer out with crossover.



Most importantly the sound quality is unsurpassed short of \$5000! Every other preamp in this range is only single ended and cannot compete with this DUAL RAIL design!

XSP-1 sounds extremely IMMEDIATE and detailed. We old guys would describe it as sounding more like the master tape than a copy. The dynamic contrast and solid bass performance is absolutely unsurpassed for anywhere near its price range.



## Emotiva DR-2 Power Amp: \$1600 (550x2)

Here's where Emotiva beats up the other guys out there. DR-2 is Emotiva's new differential amp. Instead of having one amp per channel, pushing and pulling your speakers, DR-2 has four amps per chassis, each with the specific task or pushing or pulling (not both) each channel. The result is more control and precision than non differential amps.



Please note it runs BALANCED and single ended. It's made in the US with a 5 year warranty.



## Speakers

With either stack of great gear above, you're ready to connect the speakers of your choice. There are zillions of options of course. Might I suggest... it's time to consider speakers that can eclipse the performance of a cone or dome tweeter. Why not step up to the low mass resolution of a great ribbon tweeter? At \$2500 per pair you can even include a powered sub to achieve seismic exaltation.

Your taste comes into play with speakers more than any other product. I assert you've got to have the PUSH to wake up any fine speaker, which is why I'm emphasizing NAD & Emo above. You've hit the law of diminishing returns with electronics. Go nuts with the speakers and get the best ones you can swing. Here is where to spend your poker money!

### GoldenEar Triton 7 \$1400 per pair

T-7 is a super value as it offers ribbon resolution without any bit. GE is smooth as silk and has astonishingly broad dispersion. It images wonderfully, even if your wife makes you stuff them in the corners.

T-7 uses two 5 1/4" mid/woofs to minimize excursion and provide the D'Applito configuration.

The tower generates nice bass which is tuned by two 8" Bass Radiators.

All GoldenEar speakers image beautifully and are more forgiving about lousy placement options than any other brand out there. So if she insists you've got to stuff your speakers back in the corners- don't think twice, go GoldenEar.



### GoldenEar Triton 3+ \$2500 per pair

T3+ is GoldenEar's first tower with a built in subwoofer. Note the 5x9 oval sub below the tweeter. It is driven by its on board 800w (!!) amp. The bass is further controlled by two 6 3/4x8" Bass Radiators.

T3+ uses a 4 1/2" cast mid driver and ribbon tweeter, of course.

Due to the powered subs, T3+ goes much deeper than T-7. It's impact and foundation moving bass will make you smile with glee. T3+ is lean and easy to place. You can turn the subwoofer control as makes sense in YOUR ROOM!



### **GoldenEar Triton 2+ \$3500 per pair**

GoldenEar's success began with its debut speaker, the Triton 2. It has been upgraded to the extremely popular 2+ model.

Triton 2+ uses the ribbon tweeter of course. It features two of the 4 1/2" mid drivers in D'Appolito configuration. These are sealed in their own chamber.

T2+ employs TWO of the GE 5x9 oval powered (1200w!!) subwoofers. T2+ is tuned with two 7x10" Infrasonic Radiators.

You get a TON of hardware for your money in T2+. It has big PUSH and can throw barbells around the room.



### **GoldenEar Triton 1 \$5000 per pair**

Triton 1 is a true assault on speakers that run five figures.

T-1 starts with the ribbon tweeter, of course. It has two cast 5 1/4" mid drivers housed in their own chamber to assure superb clarity.

T-1 runs three of the 5x9 powered (1600w!!) subwoofers. Bass is further controlled by four 7x10" Infrasonic Radiators.

Due to its more massive cabinet and hardware T-1 can achieve superior clarity and imaging than its smaller brothers above. It is an ideal choice for a larger room or difficult environment like your basement.

Basements always need more octane to allow rich bass without having to play unduly loud.

Please study up the large array of hardware you get from T-1. It provides a large sound and yet is smooth and detailed. Until T-Ref came along, T-1 was often written of as a true reference speaker at the reasonable price of \$5k per pair.



### **GoldenEar Triton Reference \$8500 per pair**

Well, it almost ain't fair. The best got better! When you realize the mags are recommending 6" 2-way bookshelf speakers in this price range, you can only shake your head.

T-Ref presents an amazingly life like size of image. It provides height, width, depth and power that can trick you into thinking the musicians are in your room.

T-Ref has a new, improved ribbon tweeter- a notch up from its smaller brothers above.

T-Ref uses two 6" cast mids in D'Appolito configuration, mounted in their own enclosure for maximum clarity.

T-Ref uses three 6x10" powered (1800w!!) subwoofers.

T-Ref uses four 9.5 x 10.5 Quadratic Radiators.

T-Ref's floor plate is a massive chunk of steel. It exceeds even the highly regarded T-1 and is indeed a true, reference loudspeaker.

While T-Ref has better clarity and bass than even T-1, I'd have to say the most defining characteristic of T-Ref... is that its image is nothing short of stupendous. It's absolutely HUGE and convincing.



### **Magnepan MG .7 \$1400 per pair**

MG .7 has outstanding clarity and a large image. Maggies like to be off the back wall so they breathe properly and provide respectable bass.

If you take the time and space to let them perform to their best, you'll love Maggies. If she makes you stuff speakers back in the corner, they're not the right choice.

MG .7 is a two way quasi that sounds equally good at modest volumes. You don't have to play them loud to enjoy fine clarity.



### **Magnepan MG 1.7i \$2200 per pair**

The 1.7i is typically the sweet spot for most of our customers. At just over \$2k this three way is a bit bigger than its smaller brother above, but easily delivers enough more to be worth it.

The inclusion of a super tweeter gives 1.7i more air and space on top, and provides a wider listening window than .7 above.

We have demo'd 1.7i many a time in a room with a subwoofer in plain sight- NOT CONNECTED. Invariably the listener asks how much the sub is that we're running with the Maggies!

If 1.7i is properly pulled out from the back wall with a nice amp like one of the Emos described above, the bass is bigger than you'd dream and quite impressive.



### **Magnepan MG 3.7i \$6000 per pair**

MG 3.7i is Maggie's first speaker to employ its superior TRUE RIBBON tweeter.

3.7i is a 3-way with bigger bass, image and of course improved definition.

3.7i produces industry famous air, space and depth as well as any speaker at any price!

What do the Euro competitors offer for \$6k? 6" 2-ways in modest cabinets with some exotic dome tweeter. They're perfectly fine speakers. But the value? Seriously?!



## Klipsch Heritage Speakers

If you're more of a rocker and want a vintage look, consider the new Klipsch Heritage speakers. All these new models have been recently revised and offer modern performance featuring dynamic horn designs. Vintage meets modern!

### Heresy III \$2000 per pair

Heresy is a 12" 3-way. It uses K's new 1" Titanium horn tweeter and 2" Titanium horn midrange with new horn design. 99dB SPL. You can drive it with anything! Pictured here in cherry. 23 7/8h, 15 1/2w, 13 1/4d, 44lbs



### Forte III \$3600 per pair

Forte is a 12" 3-way with rear firing 15" passive. Using the same tweet & mid of Heresy above, make not mistake that Forte has oodles more bass and dynamic contrast. 99dB SPL! Pictured here in walnut. 36h, 16 1/2w, 13d, 72lbs Please note, Forte is only 13"d and easy to place!



**Cornwall III \$4400 per pair**

Cornwall is K's classic 15" 3-way.  
With same mid/tweets as Forte and Heresy,  
Cornwall brings even more thunder to the party.  
102dB SPL!

Pictured here in walnut.

35 3/4h, 25 3/8w, 15 1/2d, 98lbs

Note that while Cornwall is sizable, it isn't  
really thaaaaat deep!



**LaScalla II \$8000 per pair**

Move over and let's get ready to rummmmmble! All Heritage models are available in the  
three finishes you see on LaScalla, black, walnut or cherry.

LaScalla features K's classic folded horn technology. There's no prettier speaker in the history  
of hi-fi says me! You can probably hear the Hammond B3 jumping off the page!



LaScalla uses a 15" woofer in folded horn enclosure. It features two 2.5" horn loaded mids and  
one 1" horn loaded tweeter. 105 dB SPL!

LaScalla is 38 1/2h, 24 1/4w, 25 1/4d, 175lbs.

**McIntosh MA-252 Integrated Amp \$3500 (100x2)**

Aw what the hell! Since we're having fun here, why not consider the new Mac integrated to go with some classic speakers?!

This boy is all analog. It uses four tubes in the preamp. It has inputs of MM phono, two RCA analogs & Balanced. It has a sub out. It comes with remote and has a sweet headphone amp.

