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Introducing the exclusive Linn Audio of New Hampshire Music Surround System

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David Linn, the founder of Linn Audio of New Hampshire, has developed a true High Performance surround sound music system, which is today, totally unique in the high end audio market.

This system is what Sony first intended with the introduction of the SACD playback system, which was meant to be a true high definition sound reproduction system, and included the feature of 5.1 channel playback. Thousands of SACD disks have since been produced with this system, using the DSD recording method (a tremendous improvement over the previous "red-book" CD format) and a vast library of program now exists which has so far been under-utilized by the high performance audio community.

What is the reason for this lack of participation in what was meant to be (and still is) the ultimate in a High Performance music playback experience? It seems that the mass of the market subsequently split into two directions: 1.) surround sound systems for the home theater market, using 5.1 or 7.1 playback systems, along with a video screen in order to enhance the video playback experience; and 2.) the truly High Performance music community, which has stuck with stereo playback, and has moved largely to vinyl for the program source. Consequently, though the high definition surround program sources are there in abundance, no one has gone on to develop the electronics needed to play back a mostly music surround system, of the highest possible audio quality.

The "Home Theater" market has, of course, an abundance of electronics offerings for surround playback, most notably in the form of complete A/V receiver units, which combine all the functions of pre-amp, power amps, and controls, as well as numerous digital-domain functions. *But these units are not made or intended for truly high performance music reproduction.* What is missing in the high performance reproduction market is a pre-amp/control system for multi-channel surround playback, designed and built for the ultimate in sonic purity, and capable of reproducing the recordings in the highest definition possible with electronics today. Linn Audio has filled this gap and is now producing such a unit.

A/V receivers are really not intended for the highest sonic performance possible from the recordings, but are built to what has been termed "mid-fi" reproduction. This is all that is deemed necessary for the surround sound reproduction of the music component for a home theater audio system, where it is intended to be only an enhancement to the overall video experience.

But there are those who still want a mostly music surround system, with truly accurate reproduction of the original recordings, similar to what high performance stereo aficionados now expect in the high end of the audio market. Engineers at Linn Audio *have* created this system, and say that it is capable of truly astounding performance, and that it provides a tremendous enhancement to a music reproduction system. Most high performance audiophiles have simply not been exposed to this experience, and do not yet know what they are missing!

One of the reasons that audiophiles shied away from the surround sound concept was that it would be too expensive to have five high quality speakers, and the money would be better spent on just two speakers of good quality. And this is a valid consideration in the mid-range of the audio market, but people today are routinely paying \$150k and up for just one pair of stereo speakers, those of high performance quality. Yet the entire Linn Audio surround system, including the preamp/crossover/control unit, as well as all the amplifiers, cables and interconnects required for the system, is priced at no more than \$160k. And the "Reference Granite" speaker, utilized in this system, is, Linn Audio believes, among the highest performing speakers on the market today, regardless of price. Even a plain stereo pair will perform better than units costing three or four times as much. Using five of these units in a surround system, the Reference Granite sounds simply spectacular!

David Linn, the founder of Linn Audio, created an experimental system of this type when SACD recordings and playback equipment were first introduced in the early 2000's. He was astounded at the enhancement to the music experience that was possible. But he was frustrated by the lack of playback equipment available on the market, and went on to design and build his own units for this purpose.

Now, some years later, Mr. Linn has decided to re-introduce this concept of a primarily music surround system into the high performance audio market, and has developed the equipment to do so. He is prepared to market this equipment, along with the Reference Granite speakers which are already produced by Linn Audio.

Actually, the only missing element to create this system is the preamp. Many good power amplifiers are available, and only need a preamp/control system to drive all the separate amplifier units that are necessary to power a five channel surround system. (The .1 channel is not needed in these systems, since the speakers used are completely full range, and do not require a sub-woofer.)

So, Linn Audio developed a brand new preamp from scratch, one that has all the controls necessary for a 5 channel surround sound system. But they have gone further than just develop the preamp. They have also added the functions of active crossovers to the unit. So, in the proprietary Linn Audio surround system, all five speakers are identical high performance types (using the Reference Granite three-way speaker unit) with separately driven drivers, i.e. three amplifiers per speaker. This utilizes a total of fifteen individual mono amps for a tri-amp configuration of all five speakers.

All the binding posts and wiring on the rear panel of the Reference Granite system allow for three alternative wiring possibilities; i.e., single amp, multi-amped using the internal passive crossover components, or multi-amped using an external, active crossover unit.

All five speaker units in the system are, of course, controlled by one master volume control. But all the individual power amps (fifteen in all) are individually controlled by separate attenuators. All amplifier controls use stepped-attenuators for the highest possible quality, and the least coloration of the sound. The rest of the crossover/preamp unit is built to the highest standards of audio quality, which is to be expected for a true high-performance offering. All components used are of the highest quality obtainable, and the whole system is *completely analog, with no digital components whatsoever!* Once the DSD data stream has been converted to analog, it *stays* in analog, all the way to the speaker drivers, unlike the typical home theater preamps that re-digitize the analog signal for processing. *But this latter method takes all the life out of the music.*

In addition to the use of high-quality components, Linn Audio follows through on their primary design philosophy of minimizing components in the signal path, all of which add distortion and coloration to the sound. A higher quality preamp than theirs is simply not obtainable, primarily for these two reasons: 1.) the use of the highest quality components and 2.) absolutely minimal circuitry that is necessary to do the jobs of both active crossover and preamp functions.

Linn Audio realizes that the mass of the market will continue to gravitate toward the two separate current offerings; i.e., surround sound home theater systems, and truly high performance stereo music reproduction systems. But Linn Audio believes there are some audiophiles out there who will want what David Linn himself has always wanted; a mostly music surround system, built with the highest quality components and capable of reproducing surround sound music with all its inherent high definition capability. In other words, a really clean, distortion free reproduction with all the detail, definition and musicality expected from high performance audiophiles, but with the truly spectacular sound capable of being reproduced with five channel SACD recordings on a surround system setup.

The system can, however, double as a home theater setup, and utilize a typical home theater preamp to do so. Linn audio supplies a transmission unit that can switch all 5 channels between the home theater preamp, and the high-performance Linn Audio preamp/crossover unit. So the best of both worlds may be obtained.

Linn Audio has this system available for audition in their new factory showroom, located in Oakland, California, only minutes from the Oakland International Airport. They encourage serious audiophiles from all over the world to visit them, and to hear for themselves the spectacular sound and music that this system is capable of producing.

Links for further information about Linn Audio and the Reference Granite speaker systems:

Linn Audio website: <http://www.linnaudionh.com>

Detailed description of the Reference Granite speaker system:

<http://www.linnaudionh.com/images/referencebrochurenew.pdf>

Formal Brochure for the Reference Granite speaker system:

<http://www.linnaudionh.com/images/brochurechris1.pdf>

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