

# German Physiks CES 2008 Press Coverage

## AVGuide.com News

### Jonathan Valin Explores the World of High-End Loudspeakers at CES

January 23rd, 2008



I'll end this report with another speaker that suffered from terrible room conditions (it, too, was parked in a Venetian Meeting Room echo chamber with forty-foot ceilings)—the German Physiks Carbon Mk IV (\$39k), a “bending wave”-driver (like a neo-Walsh driver) loudspeaker that uses a carbon-fiber cone and a carbon-fiber enclosure. To be honest, I didn't really come to hear the German Physiks speaker but the Continuum Criterion turntable with Copperhead arm that had been so disappointing at last year's show (and was not overly impressive in various rooms at this year's).

With an LP from Acoustic Sounds' Chad Kassem—a Speaker's Corner EMI reissue of Maurizio Pollini playing Chopin's First Piano Concerto—spinning on the Criterion, I sat down to listen, not expecting much. Guess what? In spite of the terrible room the German Physiks sounded quite respectably good, with very nice detail on string choirs,

good depth and separation, excellent piano tone and imaging, and a marked liveliness without aggression. This was much better than the German Physiks and the Continuum had sounded in the past (or than the 'table/arm sounded elsewhere at the show). I think, next year, these guys ought to do themselves a favor and find a smaller, less daunting room to show in. If the speakers and 'table could sound this good in awful conditions, imagine how both might sound in better ones.

## Jim Hannons's Best of Show

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**Best sounds:** No clear-cut winner, so excellent source material tipped the scales for me. I loved the massed strings and dynamic headroom via The Tape Project's mastertape on the TAD Reference One, the boldness and naturalness of a tape of Ella's voice via Nagra electronics driving the Verity Sarastro IIs, the scale of the orchestra on an EMI test pressing of Fauré's Pelléas et Mélisande on a Lyra/Tri-Planar/Atma-Sphere/Classic Audio Reproductions system (the best horn speaker system I've heard), the palpable performances from a CSN concert test pressing spinning on a Criterion in the Continuum/Vitus/German Physiks room, and the realism and focus of the piano on a 1963 McCoy Tyner "Impulse" recording spinning on an SME 20/12 with unnamed Sumiko cartridge/Audio Research electronics/Vienna Acoustics "The Music" speakers. In general, smaller systems like the Verity Fidelio in the Artemis Labs room sounded more natural and coherent than the larger systems.

## Jim Hannon Mines CES for the Treasures in Turntables, Tonearms, Cartridges, and Phonostages

January 23rd, 2008

### Turntables, Part 1



Continuum's Criterion turntable (\$49,995), based on the Caliburn turntable, was making great music in the VTL, Continuum, Koetsu, and BAT rooms. It uses a magnesium alloy for both the platter and the chassis and includes vacuum hold-down, a unique motion control system, and a new decoupled armboard design using magnetic stabilization. While all the units I saw used Continuum's "Copperhead" tonearm, the Criterion can be used with other arms. Despite the formidable acoustic challenges of the ballroom floor, the Criterion (coupled with an Air Tight PC-1, Vitus electronics and German Physiks Carbon Mk IV speakers) spinning a test pressing of a live Crosby, Stills, and Nash

concert was one of the best sounds I heard at the show with natural timbre, fine detail, spaciousness, and image solidity.

## Stereo Times

Clement Perry



Chris Sommovigo of Signals SuperFi, importers of Continuum, StereoVox, Vitus and German Physiks showed their collective best - in all black no less. Showing very good soundstaging capabilities via the omni-directional way was the German Physiks model PQS202 (\$55,595 with full carbon fiber cabinet finish) and the Vitus mono SM101 amps (\$65k!) were driven by its own SCD-010 CD player (\$16,995) and SL100 linestage (\$40k). My very own reference discs sounded quite nice with a very airy and open effect that appeared realistic despite the less than ideal acoustics. Always a fan of omni designs, and a personal long time admirer, I think the German Physiks are certainly one to keep an eye on.

## Stereo Times

### 2008 CES/T.H.E. Show Part 1 Dave Thomas

Audio Design and Marketing: When it comes to component matching and system setup there are few people in the industry like Bruce Jacobs of Audio Design and Marketing. Jacobs put together two wonderfully musical systems. The first system featured the Exemplar CDX-1 CD player (\$6,500), Belles Statement LA-01 preamp (\$6,750) and MB200 mono amps (\$6,750/pr), and Sonics Allegra loudspeakers (\$7800/pr). The cables used were the Stereovox Reference speaker cables and interconnects. Amp stands and spikes were Stillpoints ESS (\$6,500).



The main system featured the TW Acoustics Raven AC turntable (\$10,000) with Triplanar arm and Dynavector X1 cartridge, and Tron Seven phono stage (\$4,000). The electronics were the Exemplar Reference preamp (\$12,000) and Berning Quadrature Z mono amps (\$29,995/pr). **The speakers were the German Physiks HRS 120 (\$28,995/pr) and again, the cables used were the Stereovox Reference. Both of these systems were characterized by a musicality that was uncommon for show conditions and was easily the best sounding room at the St. Tropez.** If you ever get a chance to meet him Bruce Jacobs is a treasure to talk to and a veritable encyclopedia of audio knowledge. Just don't ask him about the Green Bay Packers. It's a touchy subject.

## Stereo Times

### Live, at the Venetian!

After spending the better part of the first day over at T.H.E. Show, I was now itching to jump into the fray over at the Venetian big time.... Once I found the CES press room and grabbed a quick snack, it was off to the show I went. The first show rooms I found were actually in the Sands Convention Hall where a dozen or so companies chose to set up shop away from the madness up on the hotel tower floors.



**Signals Super-Fi:** My first stop was in the Signals Super-Fi room which is the North American distributor for German Physiks loudspeakers, Vitus Audio, and Continuum Audio Labs, and the global distributor for Dragon power cords and the Stereovox line of cables which are designed by Chris Sommovigo who also is the owner of Signals Super-Fi. They set the bar for all the upper echelon systems I would hear this week and I mean set it high. Any system that uses the awesome Continuum Audio Labs Criterion turntable with their own Copperhead tonearm (\$55,595)

is setting the bar high (I almost forgot the Air Tight PC-1 cartridge). Now consider running that front end into the peerless electronics from Vitus Audio - SP-100 phono stage (\$29,995), SL-100 line stage (\$35,995), and SM-101 mono amps (\$55,595/pr). There was even a Vitus SCD-010 CD player (\$16,995) handling digital duties as well. The whole system was wired with Stereovox Reference interconnects and Dragon speaker cables and power cords. Everything feeding a pair of German Physiks The Carbon Mk IV loudspeakers (\$55,595/pr) and PQS-202 Carbon loudspeakers (\$55,595/pr).

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