

## C.E.S. 2000



CES 2000 found me (second from left) helping out Jim and Julie Wang (second from right and far right) in room 2115 of the Alexis Park, right next to the St. Tropez (home of T.H.E. Show) and the Hard Rock Hotel. I was happy to be able to help explain the philosophy and design principles behind the Harmonic Technology products, along with Connecticut Harm Tech dealer Jonathon Goldman (left). And I loved being involved with the first public audition of the new Magic™ line of products which I helped develop. Besides the new Magic™ Power cable, I got to demonstrate the prototype of the Magic™ Silver speaker cable as well. The Magic™ Power Cord is fashioned of Harmonic Technology's 99.999997% pure, single crystal silver. The result is a stunning level of performance in transparency, timbre, precise imaging, micro and macro dynamic freedom, bass detail and articulation previously unprecedented in the power cable category.



I was lucky enough to get to spend two weeks or so with these cables before the show, so I got to know them pretty well ahead of time. We had a grand time, and Jim and Julie are two of the nicest, most down to earth folks you could ever ask to meet.



One of the first chores I encountered was final set up the on the room. We were using a Denon DVD2500 DVD Player as our transport, feeding the wonderfully rich Bel Canto DAC1 via the Cyber-Link Platinum. The DAC1 was connected to the BAT VK30 SE preamp with a pair of single ended Truth-Links. We settled on a balanced set of Pro-Silway Mk II's to hitch the preamp to the BAT VK200 amp. A set of Pro-9 Plus's drove the tweeters while the prototype Magic™ Silver speaker cable drove the woofers on a pair of Meadowlark Shearwater Hot Rods. Power Conditioning was handled by 4 of the Richard Gray Power Company boxes. We used one box to feed the other three. The VK30 SE was fed via a Magic™ Power cable from secondary box one, the VK200 was fed via a Magic™ Power cable from secondary box two and the DAC1 was fed via a Magic™ Power cable from box three, which also powered the transport.

When I arrived Thursday morning, the system sounded okay, but was not what I thought we could achieve. One thing was that the cables were all jumbled behind the rig, lying on the carpet. After asking if we could "make some adjustments", I went to

work after we closed the room for the night. I first disconnected EVERY cable and started from scratch, carefully routing each cable on its destination, first the power cables, then interconnects and finally the speaker cables. When I started that, I sent someone to pick up a sleeve of Dixie cups. I wanted something to hold the cables off the carpet. Paper cups were the best thing I could think of. All that could be found were plastic, so I used them open end up, after having Steve Woolsey cut two half round notches in each one.

Though this last idea raised the eyebrows of all participating listeners, once it was done and BEFORE I moved the speakers (which needed to be done too), EVERY SINGLE LISTENER had to admit that just dressing and elevating the cables made a more than subtle change to the sound of the system. Micro dynamics improved greatly, as did the rise and decay of most sounds. Upper frequency clarity improved greatly as well. Focus, detail, timbre and image specificity all took great benefit from the change. Cool, now it was time to move the speakers!





The came together about six inches and forward about four from the original placement, and the sofa came forward about nine inches, before it was all said and done. Bass was greatly improved, as was the depth, width and focus of the soundstage. Midrange clarity was also more to my liking, but some in the room found it a bit lean, so we moved the speakers back a tad, sacrificing some of the wonderful midbass bloom.

The most often heard comment from visitors to the room was that the system sounded so much more musical and involving than systems in rooms which had over three times as much money invested in the associated equipment. I have to agree, it was a very synergistic performance.



I was fascinated to see that MBL of America chose to demo its MEGA BUCK room (see photos) with Harmonic Technology products. The room was a meeting place for music lovers. One of my new friends at this CES, Kirk, was quick to point out that the MBL products are designed by music lovers - for music lovers. There was a rich, spacious sound - undeniably realistic - created in that room.

I also got a chance to talk

with speaker designer extraordinaire, Albert Von Schweikert. Recently back in business with [Von Schweikert Audio](#), he had a dynamic display of the new \$15,000 VR-7 (lower left) being driven by the Bel Canto EVo 200.2 hybrid digital amp, the as yet new and unnamed Bel Canto solid state pre amp, sourced by a Pioneer DV-414 transport and the same Bel Canto DAC1 that we were using in the Harmonic Technology Room. I only managed to get to talk to Albert for about 15 minutes late in the morning Saturday, and only mustered about another 15 minutes early Sunday afternoon for the demo, but I can tell you it was all good! It was one of the better demos I've heard at and under show conditions. The static VR-5 (lower right) was available to ogle in a beautiful finish. Guess what? Albert has promised me a set to evaluate as soon as possible - hopefully by early August. Watch for it!



*The VSA VR-7 was live and sounded phenomenal.*



*The smaller VR-5 was static, but if looks could kill...*