

# GTT Audionet Launch

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## A Creative Forum for the Audio Arts

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### Lynn in the BIG room

Last year Lynn and I trekked out to New Jersey for the YG Acoustics Sonja XV speaker press event. That roll out went so well that GTT Audio staged a reprise this year for the launch of the Audionet Heisenberg amplifier and Stern preamp. So, Lynn and I recently returned for a day with Bill Parish to report on what's happening in the GTT BIG room.



### The Installation

The system appeared largely similar to last year: Sonja XV speakers, Audionet source components, Kronos Pro turntable. The major differences were the Heisenberg and Stern amplification, of course, and the new Kubala•Sosna Realization wires. (Just how much the cables contributed to what we heard I cannot say, though I'm sure it was significant.)



### Stern Preamp

Audionet calls these new statement products the Scientist Series. The Heisenberg and Stern have a serious, we're-not-playing-around, visual that will stop you in your tracks with their scale, cosmetics—and ambition! Both units are encased in nearly identical aluminum chassis of flawless German metalwork (by German design legend Hartmut Esslinger). The Stern has already been placed in the Smithsonian's National Gallery of Art.



## Stern interior

The Stern (MSRP \$45,000) has got to be one of the largest preamps on the planet. It is fully the size of a Heisenberg monoblock. Why so much real estate? I was told the interior is chock-a-block with circuitry. It boasts some amazing specs:

- Frequency response: 0–2,200,000 Hz (-3 dB), DC coupled
- Channel separation: >144dB, 20–20,000 Hz
- Signal to noise ratio: >123dB, 4 Vrms



The Heisenberg (MSRP \$105,000) likewise can afford to boast:

- Frequency response: 0–700,000Hz (-3dB)
- SNR: >125dB
- Filtering capacitance: 200,000  $\mu$ F



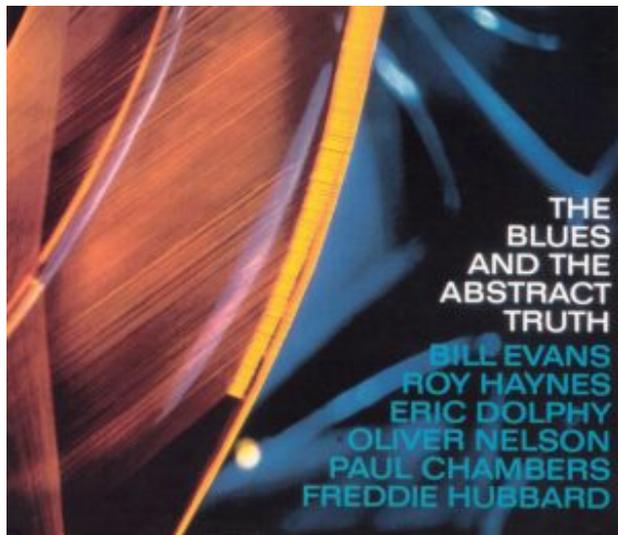
## Heisenberg interior

### Listening to the Audionet Scientist Series

After a few LPs (only vinyl source was used at this demo), I grasped the gestalt of the system. The difference from last year is there's more: more tone, more timbre and, most especially, triumphantly, the grandest dynamic peaks I've encountered in residential audio.

I'm always fiddling with or critiquing tonal balance—it's rare to find a system that leaves me with no complaint—but with this rig I didn't want to change a thing. The tone was BIG, with 100% saturation, and striking in its uniformity from top to bottom. The treble was sweet and extended, but never harsh, and certainly not of a quality I associate with solid-state. The mids were clean; the bass full, round and tight. All of uncommon purity. Yay! The tone showed no compromise.

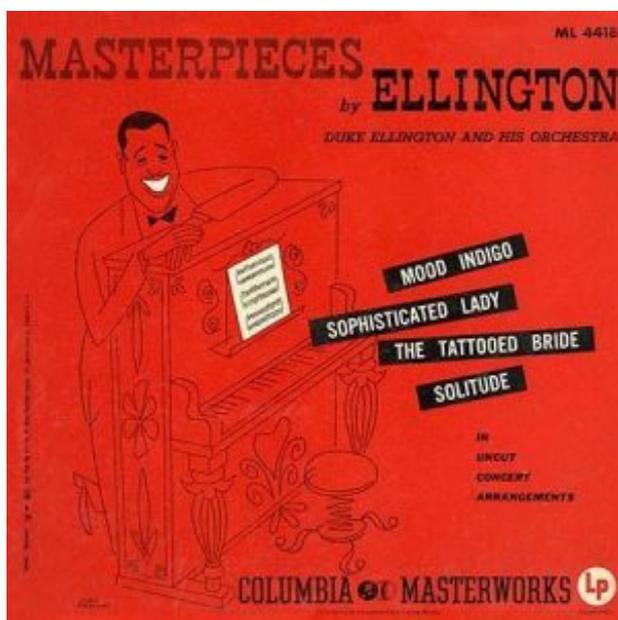
On a 45 RPM reissue of Oliver Nelson's *The Blues and the Abstract Truth*, the trumpet, saxophone and many reeds Eric Dolphy employed all exhibited exceedingly well-developed timbres. There was no mistaking the instrument(s) at work at any moment. It was as if the Heisenberg/Stern gave you the overtones that other amplification resolved—and then added another layer of harmonic richness. This was no bloomy coloration. It remained linear and true.



But these advances were second fiddle to what happened to dynamic peaks. Just like what it did to tone and timbre, the Scientist Series amplification brought you to a familiar place and then piled on more, so you wound up in an unfamiliar zone (unfamiliar for an audio reproduction, that is). The instruments on *The Blues and the Abstract Truth* grew from *ff* like you get with other *über* components, and then pushed beyond that to full *fff*, where no amp has gone before.

This is the first time I'm hearing macros as grand as life for small-to medium-sized ensembles. It's startling to hear this in reproduction. Comprehension dawns (somewhat) when you peruse the specs. Consider two pairs of Heisenberg monoblocks, throwing 2 x 1050 watts (into 4 ohms) at the Sonja XVs. The power reservoir is a very deep pool.

While it sure gets big and pumped up, if that's what is on the source, it can be intimate and immersive. The highlight of the evening was another 45 RPM reissue, *Masterpieces By Ellington*. Bill Parish described the LP as "porn for audiophile ears." It's such a relic, so cute, I was grinning from ear to ear through the entire side.





Last year I wrote about how the BIG room possessed nearly lifelike soundstaging and real acoustic dynamics. Well, GTT's gone and done a head fake on me; that was nothing to what's laying down now.

Boundaries were scaled and broached in the current iteration. Without a doubt, the GTT BIG showroom is at the edge-of-the-art for what's possible in audio reproduction.

**Audionet**

<http://en.audionet.de/>