

**MBL wins the Stereophile "Best Sound of Show" distinction at AXPONA 2012":**

Jason Victor Serinus, the Stereophile writer who covered the AXPONA Show in Jacksonville, Florida this past weekend, gave MBL "Best Sound at the Show:"

"As you read through these show blogs, you'll discover that five rooms vied for personal "Best of Show." In the end, perhaps because MBL North America's Jeremy Bryan had the advantage of working with a closed system of components that were designed to work in synergy, **the Palmetto Leaf goes to the sound of his fabulous Reference Line Combination D array** (\$259,700 plus cabling). I hate to confess to lust, but there you have it. **What especially blew me away was how good MBL North America's far less expensive Corona Line Combination B (\$39,000 plus cabling) sounded."**

From: <http://www.stereophile.com/content/axpona-jacksonville-experience>



"At Saturday night dinner with Channel D's Rob Robinson, his wife Claudia, and Jeff Joseph of Joseph Audio, we spoke about the number of exhibitors at audio shows who either come ill-prepared to deal with the vagaries of hotel room sound, don't know what to do about room-invoked sonic anomalies, or think any attempt at amelioration is futile.

This was certainly not the case with Jeremy Bryan, President CEO of MBL North America, Inc. Faced with an air-walled room replete with bass boom, and whose ceiling was sonically divided halfway back into the listening position (with the back half of the ceiling concealing a crawl space that did not extend forward), Jeremy took immediate action. He may have been up until the wee hours, but when we arrived in his fabulous-sounding space, I had no idea that behind the rear drapes were concealed double rows of mattresses, stacked on their ends, that were absorbing errant bass. Rob and Jeff were familiar with this fix, because they had done the same in their room.

Let me tell you, folks, the fix works, at least when judiciously applied, because the sound in the MBL room via their \$259,700 system (minus the cost of the WireWorld Platinum Eclipse cabling) was exceptional. That's exceptional. Instead of booming, it was totally in control, and as mellow as can be. When Jane Monheit sang something like, "The game is charming in a romantic kind of way," I thought she was singing about how I felt listening to the L set-up.

**Story continues on page 2**

**continued from page 1**

*Next, because I was now too forward in the seat, my chair was moved back to compensate. At this point I was beginning to feel like Cleopatra on her barge, waiting for someone to peel her grapes. Thank god there weren't many people in the room, because I was feeling more than a bit embarrassed by all the unrequested attention. Of course I am an only child...In short, I got over it as soon as I reached the correct distance and height and everything clicked into place.*

*That's when I discovered what happens when you sit in the sweet spot in an MBL set-up. The sonic picture not only makes sense, but makes sense in a palpable, living, breathing way equalled by few systems I've heard. As the title says, "wow." It was fabulous.*

*More fun came my way when Jeremy played "Under the Sea" from the Little Mermaidsoundtrack. Hilarious. Equaling it in beauty was a movement from a Mozart Flute Quartet. Size of images, breadth and depth of soundstage, and timbre of instruments was right on.*

*The system, MBL-wise, included the 101E Mk.II Radialstrahler (the loudspeaker reviewed by Michael Fremer in the April issue of Stereophile due to hit newsstands this week), 1621A CD transport, 1611F D/A converter, 6010D preamp, and 9011 power amp. Don't know about you, but I find the white a refreshing change from piano-gloss black. It probably looks better in homes of the dusting impaired, especially when they're inhabited both by people and pets. Anyone with a spare \$259,700 times two is invited to buy one system for themselves, then share the wealth by cabling the rest to you know who. We thank you for your concern."*

*"The Absolute Sound Magazine" pronounces MBL's Reference and Corona systems "achieved a level of performance rare at an audio show."*

**More info:**

**Neil Gader**, Associate Editor of **The Absolute Sound Magazine**, covered the show for **TAS** and **AVguide.com**:

*"MBL showcased the redoubtable mbl101E (\$70,500) driven by what else, Reference line monoblocks and front end and Wireworld's Platinum cabling. An impeccable setup courtesy of the ministrations of its North American President/CEO Jeremy Bryan these speakers both small (mbl126) and large (mbl101E) achieved a level of performance rare at an audio show. They were at their most grand recreating acoustic landscapes in the symphonic venue. The more natural, the more vast the recording, the better for these speakers to express their full potential. The sound was as expected, one of the most wide ranging mixes of bone-tingling dynamics and output with some of the most delicate details and ambience. And virtually zero localization artifacts. There's the obligatory three-dimensional depth which is a large part of MBL's claim to fame. This system remains as one of the most complete packages in the high-end.*

*Revisiting the room later in the day I had a chance to hear the smallest Radialstrahler in the line the mbl126 (\$11,800) driven by the company's soon to be released Corona Line electronics (which is on my review slate). Mind you this was a large room fully capable of accommodating the 101E but normally far too big for the unpretentious 126. Incredibly, and I mean incredibly, the 126 particularly on smaller scale passages nearly passed itself off as a 101E. The vast soundstage, the attention to low level details, the openness—all there. Obviously when the big dynamic bear came a calling all bets were off and the 101E resumed its place in the pecking order but for a few minutes there, damn it was close."*

From: <http://www.avguide.com/blog/axpona-jacksonville-part-one>

**A. Colin Flood** covered the show for **Enjoy The Music.com**:

*"A string quartet showed me why the MBL room is so highly regarded. It replaced the whiny teenage girl squeal of violins with the precise accuracy of sweetness... In general, the women liked the sound of the most expensive and elaborate dream systems the best. I do not think any one of the high-end systems was a particular favorite. Maybe with a slight edge to the gorgeous white-on-white MBL system."*

From: [http://enjoythemusic.com/axpona\\_2012/page4.htm](http://enjoythemusic.com/axpona_2012/page4.htm)

### Confessions of a Part-Time Audiophile:

\$260k will buy you a lot of things. A house, perhaps. In some places, it'll buy you a house — and a boat and a pair of cars. What it'll buy at mbl America is a called "Reference Line Combination D". This includes:



- ♦One pair of mbl 101E MkII Radialstrahler loudspeakers
- ♦One pair of mbl 9011 monoblock amplifiers
- ♦One mbl 1621A CD Transport
- ♦One mbl 1611F DAC
- ♦One mbl 6010D Preamplifier

Cables are on you. Here, they were Wireworld's top of the line.

*I've heard mbl at several shows now, and honestly, I can say with a complete honesty and a totally straight face — if you've heard one, you've probably heard the others. Does that seem like a knock against mbl? It's not intended that way. I meant it this way: there is a fundamental constancy to the mbl sound.*



*It's key is the sound field, which is voluminous and immersive. To get image lock, you're going to need to find that one spot in the room where everything snaps in. Everyone else will get remarkable tone, speed, dynamics and quite a bit of what that lucky bastard in the sweet spot is getting. The fact that the sound of a given mbl system is so constant, so regular, so predictable is most definitely not a bad thing. The mbl team knows what it's about and should you be one of Mitt Romney's billionaire friends, you'll be comforted knowing that what you're hearing at the chalet is precisely what you'll be hearing at the beach house. This is most definitely heady stuff, if not exactly ... ah ... inexpensive. I have to say, I am a HUGE fan of the new white finish. It's lovely and very fresh after countless examples of piano-black. mbl makes sexy-time gear, fo' sho'.*

**Story continues on page 5**

*continued from page 4:*

*I didn't get a chance to catch the "Corona Line Combination B", which was the alternative system that was supposedly set up whenever I wasn't around. At a more affordable \$40k, this combo would get you:*

- ♦ One pair of mbl 126 Radialstrahler loudspeakers
- ♦ One mbl C31 CD player
- ♦ One mbl C11 Preamplifier
- ♦ One C21 Stereo amplifier



*Again, cables are on you.*

From: <http://parttimeaudiophile.com/2012/03/14/axpona-2012-mbl/>