

The monthly news for stereo types.

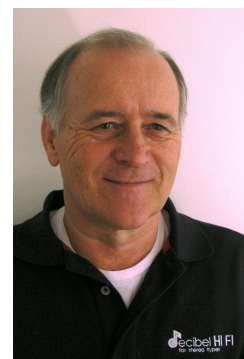


No. 50, March 2017

*Hello Brian*

*I mentioned last month that AJ van den Hul is visiting Australia this month, it's actually next week. Unfortunately he won't be coming to Brisbane but the schedule of presentations is below. I'll be going to the session in Canberra so please say hi if you attend.*

*I introduced the E.A.T. C Major turntable a couple of months ago. It is an outstanding turntable, but at \$2799 is beyond the price range of many hi fi enthusiasts. So I was pleased to find out that E.A.T. are about to release a more modestly priced unit, still incorporating some of the technical developments from their premium models. The B Sharp will sell for less than \$2000 and is due to arrive in April. We have a pre-release unit available for demonstrations now.*



*One of my favourite activities is DIY hi fi projects, and I have been keen to promote this over the last 14 years of this website. But the lack of interest in DIY speakers has been disappointing. However, there are some DIY projects that are far less daunting, in particular speaker cables and interconnects, and I am pleased to be able to provide several new opportunities for enthusiasts to save a whole lot of money. In particular, van den Hul make many of their cables available by the metre, and we have high quality connectors available, some of which do not involve soldering. See below for DIY speaker cables.*

*musical regards*

**Brian Maddern**

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## Aalt Jouk (AJ) van den Hul visit

During the event, Mr. van den Hul will assemble a moving coil cartridge live on stage and talk through the process of making a high end musical instrument. You can see this demonstration first hand and then participate in a Q & A session with Mr. van den Hul, as he will explain the ethos behind their products.

Monday March 13th, 6:30pm - contact Life Style Store, North Parramatta  
Tuesday 14th, 6:30pm - Hyatt Canberra, contact Duratone Hi Fi or Miranda Hi Fi  
Thursday 16th, 6:30pm - Melbourne, register on Carlton AV website

Numbers are limited so it is necessary to contact those dealers listed.



## E.A.T. B-Sharp turntable

When I first started unpacking the B-Sharp I thought the importer had sent me another C-Major, as it looked nearly identical. And then as I assembled it I discovered the slight differences. The two part base with vibration absorption in between is still there, but the finish is gloss black rather than the stunning carbon fibre of the C-Major. The sub-platter is plastic rather than metal, and although the tonearm looks the same it is a lesser model with plastic headshell and no damping.



However, despite these mainly cosmetic differences, the overall appearance is still extremely attractive. The B-Sharp has the same motor and bearing as the C-Major but E.A.T. have produced a new lower entry point model that still includes many of the features of their more expensive models.

Assembly was straightforward, and I installed a Garrott Optim S in the tonearm for testing purposes. Through my lounge system I was able to produce a well defined stereo image, with nice tonal balance, and good dynamics.

At RRP \$1999 without cartridge, this turntable represents very good value, and will appeal to someone wanting to step up from a Pro-Ject Debut or similar entry level or older turntable but stay below the \$2,000 price point. We will bundle it with an [Audio Technica AT95HE](#) cartridge for \$1980, a saving of \$179.00.

In October I wrote about the new Pro-Ject Audio "The Classic" turntable and I was lucky enough to have one of those to compare to the B-Sharp. Interestingly, E.A.T. is run by a lady who is the wife of the head of Pro-Ject Audio, so E.A.T. get access to the Pro-Ject manufacturing facilities. In fact E.A.T. occupy one floor of the main Pro-Ject building.

The turntables use the same power supply, so I presume the motors are the same also. The platters are nearly identical, with the Pro-ject one being slightly heavier. They both have a sub-chassis suspended on three damping pads, and locked down for transport by three transit screws. The Classic has a brushed aluminium top plate inside a timber (this one was Eucalyptus) frame. Which one is the most attractive is a toss-up, although the Classic looks very much like a Linn Sondek LP12, which may be a deliberate styling decision. The interconnects are the same. A significant different difference is the tonearms, the Classic uses a new carbon fibre/aluminium sandwich model.

So what about the sound. I fitted both turntables with a Garrott Optim S cartridge and swapped a stylus assembly between them so both there was no difference in the "running in" of the cartridges. Usually in an A-B comparison the last unit has an advantage, and so it was. If I listened to a track on the B-Sharp first then the Classic seemed slightly better, and vice versa. So no surprises there, these two turntables are excellent performers and provide almost identical performance levels. I'd need to spend a lot more time and a whole lot more red wine to be able to identify the difference between them. Considering that the principals of the two manufacturing companies are partners I guess it's not surprising that some "pillow talk" has resulted in products that are so close in performance. I guess if I had to make a call I think the B-Sharp is a smidgeon better in mid-range clarity and bass definition.

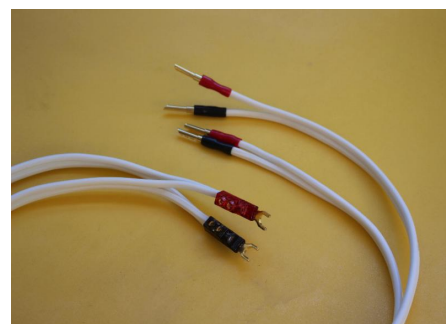
The Pro-Ject [The Classic](#) has been awarded "Best Product - Turntable 2016/17" so it has that endorsement, but the B-Sharp has only just been released so maybe it will garner some accolades also. In my opinion if you want to upgrade to a turntable in a class above the Pro-ject Debut these two are ideal choices. And I think both of them outperform the Rega RP6 and Thorens TD203 which is their direct competition.

The Classic is available now, and the B-Sharp will be here in April. We'll put all the info and specs on the website as soon as they are available.

## [D.I.Y. Speaker Cables](#)

Amplifiers drive loudspeakers via speaker cables, and it makes sense that the cables need to be very low in resistance in order that the voltages generated by the amp can control the speaker's drivers properly, and so power is not wasted in the cables.

Cables vary in their materials, and their construction. Some use solid core wire, others are



multistrand. They vary in price from a few dollars per metre up to thousands.

Bi-wire speaker cable

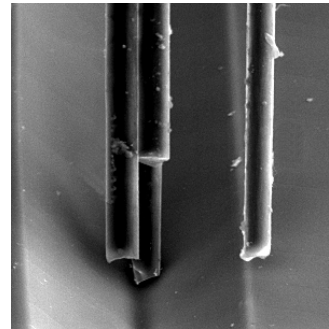
The van den Hul [Arctic cable](#) is available by the metre and can be used without terminations, although we do have non-soldered spades and banana plugs that can be put on for convenience of making it easy to connect and disconnect. This cable is also ideal for wiring up home theatre systems where the cables are laid in the walls.

Many speakers have dual sets of terminals so that the tweeter and bass/midrange drivers can be separately connected to the amplifier. The simplest form of this is called bi-wiring, where separate cables go to each driver but they are connected at the amplifier end. It is easy to make up such cables if you buy bulk cable like the Arctic and use our [GPBP banana plugs](#) or [DBST spade terminals](#) as in the photo. A pair of 1.5 metre bi-wire cables like this will cost \$216 in parts (6 metres of cable, 4 spades, 8 banana plugs). As an example, the Graham Slee bi-wire cables are \$396, so you can see that significant savings can be made by [Doing It Yourself](#).

### New Wet Cleaning Brush

From China via Singapore comes a new brush for cleaning records. The [Vinyl Records Groove Cleaner](#) boasts 260,000 ultra-fine (50 micron) bristles and has been specifically designed to get into the grooves for wet or dry cleaning. My testing confirmed that it is very effective at sweeping dust from the grooves and scrubbing them with cleaning fluid prior to vacuuming off the dirty fluid. Recommended for everyone who has a Record Doctor V cleaning machine or uses a manual wet cleaning method. A good alternative to the Disc Doctor brushes.

RRP \$35.00. Introductory offer is \$25.00 including postage until the end of March.



Electron microscope photo of the bristles in a vinyl record groove

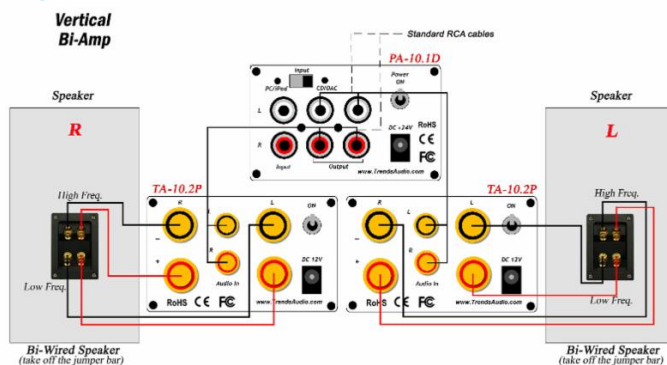


### Inexpensive Bi-Amping

We've been selling T-amps for many years since the original Sonic Impact ones in 2005. Trends Audio have been building them for a few years less than that but have garnered a reputation for higher quality units and also a refined and expanded model range.

More recently they have promoted the idea of bi-amplification with their units. Put simply, the idea is that if you drive the bass/midrange drivers of a loudspeaker separately to the treble drivers you will achieve a higher level of clarity than with a single amplifier. All two way speakers include a passive crossover so Trends Audio approach is simple - just send the same signal to each driver via the passive crossover. You can take advantage of this approach if your loudspeakers have two sets of terminals (joined by links). Remove the links and you can drive the treble section separately to the bass/midrange section. This is a step up from the bi-wiring arrangement outlined in the DIY speaker cables article above, but not the ultimate solution where an external electronic crossover unit divides the signal so that only the appropriate frequencies are sent to each driver and passive crossovers are not required.

Trends Audio make this possible to achieve with quite inexpensive components. Two little [TA-10PSE t-amps](#) are just \$600. You use each one to drive one loudspeaker. As they are stereo amps you can use one channel for the treble and one for the



bass/midrange on each side. You also need a pair of their [splitter RCA cables](#) to connect your preamp. I have set up this system with my Whatmough S15 monitor speakers and ADL GT40a preamp/DAC and can vouch for its excellent sound quality. In fact it is astounding to hear just how clear these little T-amps are at moderate listening levels considering their low price.

If you don't have a suitable preamp to set this up Trends do have a bundle which includes their PA-10 valve preamp, two TA-10PSE power amps, and the splitter cables for \$1100.

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