

The 45rpm Phono Gazette

Rochester AWA Conference 1999



The ultimate plug-in 45 rpm Attachment 'The Berkshire'

It's getting to be a regular thing. As the end of the summer approaches thoughts of Rochester enter one's mind. This year the same trio rented a van and headed north for the 7 hour trip. This would be the 3rd consecutive year that Dan Saporito, Marv Beeferman, and myself would get together to share stories and show some interesting equipment. Little did we know that the weather would be picture perfect for the entire trip.

Tuesday night

After some dinner we met some of the phono gang at the Microtel. There was Doug Houston (Michigan), Ray Tyner (Ohio), Bob Havalack (New York), and my brother John Vourtsis (New Jersey). The seven of us enjoyed checking out the interesting items that some of us brought along. Dan provided a refurbished 45EY2 playing in the background. Ray teased us with a 6JY1C attachment in the original box, unopened! Then I brought out two unusual units. The first was a phono attachment which was single play only. There is no cycle cam and the spindle is short and stubby. A close inspection showed no model number. The spindle platter is metal and resembles the one used on the rp-186 single play. However I tried installing it on an rp-168 chassis and it would not fit properly. It was definitely made to fit the rp-190 type changer. Then I unveiled the Berkshire attachment. This optional attachment was designed to work with the top of the

line Berkshire High Fidelity System sold by RCA in 1948. Because the 45 system was introduced in early 1949, this optional attachment provided the Berkshire owner the ability to play 45's. The Berkshire was very expensive (\$4000 in 1948). To be worthy of use with this system, the optional attachment is housed in a beautiful cherrywood box with plenty of brass accents to protect the corners. Inside the tonearm is equipped with a GE variable reluctance cartridge and there is a special capacitive start motor with built in fan. To top it off, the turntable pad is black felt and everything is black except the brass spindle. This unit came with the original tags and may never have been used. We would play it through Bob Havalack's hifi system on Thursday night.

Wednesday morning

Dan, Marv, and I are ready to enter the flea market. It is still dark. I am the only one equipped with a flashlight. Off we go! Within 5 minutes I see Dan with something under his arm. It is a wooden Emerson 45 player, great catch. As he heads back to the car I say to myself, I have the flashlight and he finds a hard to find Emerson. Good for him! I continue looking and see a couple of attachments, nothing special.

. Here comes Dan again with something under his arm. Another Emerson! This time it is the Bakelite model with built in radio! The odds of finding 2 Emerson's in 10 minutes from two different vendors

when I have the flashlight must be 10,384,829 to 1. Here comes Ray Tyner with something under his arm. It is a Voice of Music portable with 45 player. Another nice catch. At this point I have been through the whole flea market and seen nothing unusual. Joe Centanni joins me and says, "Did you see the console over there with 45 player"? "No" I say. "Did you see the unusual one in the back with half a spindle"? "No" I said as I threw the flashlight in the nearest garbage can. I decided to have my eyes checked as soon as we got back home from the trip. Thanks to Joe, I picked up the console and the strange looking attachment that looks like it came out of a jukebox.

This year my brother John met us at the flea market and enjoyed the goings on. We had been up and going for 6 hours when John arrived, but then again he is not a full-fledged flea market fanatic yet!

Wednesday Afternoon

The theme of this year's AWA conference was "Philco". There were some interesting talks given and my favorite was "The Miss America Pageant and the Philco Predicta". The 1958 and 1959 Pageants were brought to you by Philco. So you got to watch beautiful women and vintage Philco Predicta commercials!

Thursday Morning

Back to the flea market. Pretty much the same vendors were there so now I (continued on page 2)



- 1) "R.C.Ray" Tyner managed to acquire this RCA curtain this year.
- 2) One of the nicest reproductions available today, the "Sparton Sled" radio



- 3) Bob has a few of these interesting storage devices called "stackers" which store about 16 records.
- 4) We always insist that Bob spin some platters on the 15E Demonstrator.



- 5) Interesting color combination (tan platter and black spindle cap) only available on Canadian attachments.
- 6) The big trade took place in the Microtel parking lot on Friday morning. Console in foreground was traded for mahogany and blond multispeeds in background plus Zenith scalloped attachment and table radio. Other interesting trades were also made between members of our group .

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Rochester 99 (continued)

concentrated on looking at vintage paper and radios. An annoying new rule was imposed not allowing any cars from outside the Marriot hotel guests to enter the swap meet parking lot. We had to take a shuttle bus from our hotel to the meet. This was OK but I'm glad I bought the console yesterday. Could you imagine trying to get something like that back to the hotel on a shuttle bus?

Thursday Afternoon

At this point I could no longer resist the temptation of buying a replica of the famous Sparton Sled radio. This replica looks very much like the original with fancy glass case and all. And it is the first reproduction I have seen without the gaudy cassette player on the side. It's just an AM/FM radio with good tone quality. After the flea market, I received a call from Tom Paruta (New York). He said he simply had to have the console I picked up and would make me an offer I couldn't refuse. He was right, I couldn't refuse a trade for a scalloped Zenith attachment, a blond multispeed Orthophonic High Fidelity model, a mahogany multispeed with optional table featuring built in extension speakers, a Zenith table radio and detailed schematic for the Zenith Twin Seven phonograph!

Thursday night 7:00pm

Most of the gang met at Bob Havalack's place in Rochester. After the usual annual pizza dinner, Dan demonstrated how the rubber cycling cams could be reconditioned using 'Plastic Dip' which is available in hardware stores. (Refer to 'The Workshop' article.) I hooked up the Berkshire attachment to Bob's MacIntoch system and we enjoyed really full fidelity from the GE reluctance pickup. Ray presented his famous RCA Victor curtain which we kept hanging for the occasion. Bob showed us some of his more interesting players including the 15A Demonstrator. An aftermarket storage system called the 'stacker' was also shown too. Bob has 3 or 4 of these which hold about 15 records apiece. Then they can be stacked one on top of the other.

Another interesting item was a Canadian attachment which used a different color scheme than those manufactured in the U.S. Normally a tan turntable pad will be with a red spindle cap and a red pad would be with a black cap. The Canadian model uses the tan turntable pad with the black cap. Check out the pictures on page 3.

Then we unveiled the new improved RCA 1949 video "Your Surest Selling Job". That was followed by a video collage of movie and TV clips featuring 45 phonos. After much spirited conversation, we reluctantly broke up at about 2am in the morning!

Friday Morning

While some of us attended the numerous AWA morning auctions, Dan and I met with Tom to consummate the much-talked about trade from yesterday in the Microtel Parking lot. Now it was time to head home with all the new goodies. Once again we all had a terrific time and are planning to return again next September. Maybe the theme for the conference will be RCA Victor next year. Stay tuned! I will let you know in a future issue.



One of two sketches provided in RCA Victor EP set called Treasure Chest of Mood Music
Courtesy of Phil Vourtsis Collection



The Workbench

Revitalizing Cycling Cams

A new product on the market called "PlasticDip" appears to be perfect for revitalizing old cycling cams. At a demonstration in Rochester, NY, Dan Saporito poured a small amount of "PlasticDip" in a slightly long shallow container. He used half of the plastic case used to hold an Astatic 51-1 cartridge. Any comparable container could be used. It is about 3 inches long by 1 inch wide by 1/2 inch deep. After the cam has been thoroughly cleaned of dirt and grease, etc, lower the cam wheel vertically into the liquid, just deep enough to coat the outer part of the rubber cam and slowly turn the cam so that the next part gets covered. Continue this until you have turned the cam completely around and all outside parts are covered. Now carefully remove it trying not to touch the coated parts. Stick the cam into a piece of Styrofoam so it can dry without contacting other surfaces. Let it dry for 12 hours and coat it a second time. After this stuff dries, it forms a really tough bond with the existing rubber and dries pretty thin.

I installed the wheel I had coated in a test machine and let it reject 1000 times. The cam looked fine after all of those cycles. Dan suggests practicing a couple of times first to get the hang of it. One can of "PlasticDip" will last a long time as long as you seal it up good and use the small container as described earlier.