



unique high end audio

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AXPONA
AUDIO EXPO NORTH AMERICA

hi-fi+

Eric Neff, editor of the magazine hifiplus, reports:



"The MBL room was the top of the food chain room at Axpona for sheer scale. The total value coming in somewhere just north of \$750,000 USD (Speakers and amps alone were \$475,000) Also included were the 6010D Pre-amp, a 1611 DAC and the 1621 CD Transport. A United Home Audio ¼" reel to reel tape deck also provided source material. Cables were supplied by Wireworld, Shun Mook and Siltech. At an after-hours party Friday night, they put on a tape of Kenny Loggins and his band playing at an outdoor venue. The scale and dimensionality of the soundstage was immersive and breathtaking. This was a stadium experience writ large!"

from: <http://www.hifiplus.com/articles/axpona-2016-show-report/>



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Mark Henninger, editor of avsforum reports:

MBL Radialstrahler 101 X-treme: Best in Show AXPONA 2016



“Dear reader, if you find it upsetting that the best system at an audio show sells for \$558,200, as is the case with the MBL Radialstrahler 101 X-treme, then I suggest you stop reading now.

Cool, I’m glad you are still here. I just got back from AXPONA 2016 in Chicago and have dozens of systems to write up. However, I figured it was worth starting off with the system that set the standard for 2-channel audio reproduction: The MBL Reference Line Combination D

featuring the 2800 lb 101 X-treme speakers (\$263,000) as well as four monstrous MBL 9011 pure mono balanced amps (\$53,000 each), a model 1621 A CD transport (\$28,000), a model 1611 F D/A converter (\$28,700) and a model 6010 D preamp (\$26,500) . With a price tag north of a half million bucks, it was the very essence of a cost-no-object super-system and truly sounded phenomenal.

MBL’s speakers are instantly recognizable due to the unique design of its Radialstrahler drivers, which directly radiate sound in a 360-degree pattern. The X-treme speaker system rests at the top of MBLs unapologetically high-end offerings and combine twin towers of 12” subs with the almost alien-looking speakers.

Because Radialstrahler speakers are truly omnidirectional, treating a room to get great sound is crucial. Between the enormous 22 Hz helmholtz resonators in the front corners (hidden by a curtain) and the 50 Hz resonators lining the walls, room modes were very effectively attended to with passive absorption...



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....

I auditioned the AXPONA MBL supersystem with Dennis Young from Home Theater Shack. We wound up spending a lot more time in the room than we had planned. He noted that "Once I took command of the sweet spot chair, everything snapped into sharp focus. Most definitely a one person listening window, but oh, what a large, clean window it was." I totally agree, appreciating the true performance of the speakers requires attentive listening from the sweet spot.

Dead Can Dance's "Yulunga (Spirit Dance)" from the album Into the Labyrinth is a great test track for any system thanks to its production values. The fidelity the MBL rig achieved was complete and seamless from top to bottom. Folks who say subwoofers don't belong in 2-channel audiophile systems would surely change their minds after hearing the 101 X-tremes. ...

By the time "With a Little Help From My Friends" played toward the end of our room visit, Dennis and I had already agreed the MBL Reference represented the best sound at the show. It was truly something special to hear The Beatles sound so transparent.

As much as I'd love to dwell on this system in this post, just as I did with the real system at the show, the unobtainium nature of such a lofty price tag makes it more of a curiosity than a potential purchase. But, since the very essence of high-end audio is to achieve elevated performance regardless of cost, it's great to hear a system that actually pulls it off. Just remember that room treatments and subwoofers were a significant part of the audio equation and that (perhaps) you too can achieve superlative performance for a substantially lower cost."

from: <http://www.avforum.com/mbl-101-x-treme-best-sound-show-axpona-2016/>



"I loved every minute I was in the room with MBL's cost-no-object supersystem."

from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pzEvo-day4>



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Jonathan Valin, executive editor of the magazine

The Absolute Sound, reports:

"My final best-of-show is the \$250k omnidirectional **MBL 101 X-Treme** driven by **MBL MBL 9011** amps and **6010D** preamp and sourced alternately by MBL digital and a **United Home Audio Phase 12 OPS** reel-to-reel tape player. In spite of the fact that these omnis don't have the transient concision and focus of direct radiators—or really really deep bass (at least in this room)—the usual rich, enveloping, electrifyingly dynamic, three-dimensional Radialstrahler sound made the X-Tremes sound analog even when the source was digital —so much air, space, and body. (The track "Battle Between" was simply wonderful.)"

from: <http://www.theabsolutesound.com/articles/axpona-2016-loudspeakers-20k-and-up>

the absolute sound



Julie Mullins, editor of the magazine The Absolute Sound, reports:

"Best Sound (cost no object)

Getting goosebumps while listening is a sure symptom of hi-fi madness, so I pick the MBL room (pictured above) with its amazing omnidirectional MBL 101 X-Treme loudspeakers driven by an arsenal of MBL 9011 amps, the 6010D preamp, and a United Home Audio Phase 12 OPS reel-to-reel tape player source (all big-sound, big-budget items) for resolution and pure excitement. Sure, the bass got a bit boomy at high SPLs, but so what? Close your eyes, and there was Janis singing. This massive system's presentation was easily the most three-dimensional, thrilling, and visceral experience of the show."

from: <http://www.theabsolutesound.com/articles/axpona-2016-julie-mullins-on-electronics-20k-and-up/>

the absolute sound





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Ray Seda, form dagogo.com, reports:



"I'm generally not one to give too much attention to million dollar rooms such as this one, and quite frankly I have heard MBL systems at shows that were really good and some that were seriously lacking or flawed. This one however, grabbed me by the throat, demanded that I step over the masses that were already piled in and seated and wrestle my way to the single available seat.

This was no ordinary MBL system. I sat there mesmerized as I heard an open reel tape of Peter Gabriel's "Ovo" (the show for the Millenium Dome). This concoction of circa quarter million dollar speakers, MBL "Xtreme", a quad of MBL 9011 amplifiers, 6010D preamplifier and assorted bits of cable from Wireworld delivered the most arresting, beautiful image of the song "Voice of Eden" that I have ever heard. Yes, this is an audio show, and yes, this means that the room acoustics suck. However, this system simply overcame any of those normal obstacles. The duet of Peter Gabriel and Sinead O'Connor were so beautifully presented in a multi-layered tapestry of sound and an almost other-worldly presence.

I had goosebumps and my blood pressure spiked as the pure chemical reaction over what I was hearing took over. (Am I exaggerating? No, actually. I've been known to suffer a nosebleed or two in the presence of sonic greatness.) I stayed for a couple of songs, and did not dare return."



from: <http://www.dagogo.com/2016-axpona-show-report-part-4-memorable-rooms>



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Hometheatershack.com, reports:



MBL 101 X-treme, which includes the behemoth bass bins.

As I jumped around the room snapping photos, getting nearer and closer to the speakers, no matter where I stood the sound did not seem to be coming directly from the omni loudspeakers. Sitting down for an off-axis listen, the SS&I was indistinct. Once I took command of the sweet spot chair, everything snapped into sharp focus. Most definitely a one person listening window, but oh, what a large, clean picture window it was.

Huge variable hemholtz resonators tuned to 22 Hz resided in the back corners, lining the walls were diffusers from SMT of Sweden, which were parked atop more hemholtz resonators tuned to 55hz.

The U.S. Naval Band's "Liberty Fanfare" from reel to reel tape - Kettle drum was powerful, a wow moment. The weight was surprising, even knowing it was coming, it still instilled a sense of shock and awe. Best of show sound, in my opinion, and in fellow reporter Mark Henninger's opinion, as well. He states "By the time "With a Little Help From My Friends" played toward the end of our room visit, Dennis and I had already agreed the MBL Reference represented the best sound at the show. It was truly something special to hear The Beatles sound so transparent."



from: <http://www.hometheatershack.com/forums/gtg-clubs-associations-audio-fests/147546-audio-expo-north-america-axpona-2016-show-report-3.html#/forumsite/20818/topics/147546?page=3&postid=1435130>



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John Stancavage from parttimeaudiophile.com, reports:

PART TIME **AUDIOPHILE**

“Even within the high-end, there is extreme and then there is really extreme. I’m talking about the seriously out-there, beyond-Pluto type of gear that makes the Robb Report look like a Walmart flyer.

This can shock the unwary. “I see you’re writing about \$5,000 speakers,” friends will sometimes say to me. “Who would pay that?”

I just grin and explain to these audio innocents that, in the upper end of the market, \$5,000 wouldn’t even buy the power cords for some rigs. I usually don’t have the heart, though, to tell them I just heard a \$250,000 pair of speakers at a show, in a system that was priced considerably above a half-million dollars.

Such was the case at AXPOA 2016, where I encountered MBL’s 101 X-Treme speakers (\$263,000 a pair in black and chrome finish), driven by \$300,000 worth of MBL electronics including four 9011 power amplifiers, the 6010D preamplifier, 1611F DAC and 1621A transport. And the total system cost referenced above did not take into account the

United Home Audio quarter-inch tape deck in use, or the reference cables from Wireworld, Shun Mook and Siltech. It’s often said that when you get into the silly money you’re chasing that last 5 percent to 10 percent improvement that’s possible in audio quality. So, what does a system sound like that aims to reach these outer limits?

In the case of MBL, it’s a presentation that is unlike any other in the industry — in both appearance and sound. The German company’s Radialstrahler speaker design, which it has been perfecting for a number of years, features omnidirectional radiators. In the case of the Extremes, each tower looks something like a pair of miniature Zeppelins docking vertically inside an open steel support frame.

The MBL sound may not match some traditional speakers in focus and imaging, but they do excel at throwing a huge sound stage and presenting music with plenty of energy, lightning-quick transients and upper-frequency detail. ...





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... It's a sound so different that it may not be everyone's cup of tea. Those who prefer their systems to be laid-back with every sharp edge buffed to a smooth shine may not want to bother their banker about the MBLs. But for others among the well-heeled who accept that real music, live, can be brash and powerful, this equipment should be on their short list.

Is any music system worth such a price tag? That's a whole 'nother discussion. Most of us cubicle drones never will have to worry about it, but for the deep-pocketed few who see value in original art or classic automobiles, gear like MBL's offers a similar satisfaction in ownership."

from: <https://parttimeaudiophile.com/2016/04/24/axpona-2016-mbl-redefines-extreme/>



Dr. David W. Robinson, Editor-in-Chief, Positive Feedback

awarded MBL with Audio Oasis! Award for the 101 X-treme demonstration

"There was real audio righteousness going on in your room, and I'm here to recognize it! And a grand scale that was unbelievable! I do believe that this was your best room ever, Jeremy...nicely done.

Congratulations again! You really made my trip to AXPONA 2016 a great pleasure while I was in your space! *Encore!*"



Myles Bastor, from audionirvana.org reports:



"... There was simply no feeling of any soundstage restrictions. The sense of ambient space was off the charts. Instruments—and contrary to what you might read about the imaging capabilities of MBL speakers—were incredibly three dimensional. Every detail and nuance of the recording was there without laser beaming it into your brain. The low end was the best integrated I've heard from MBLs too. Perhaps the coup de grace of the listening session was that funky live tape of Kenny Loggins that Greg Beron pulled out of his treasure chest of tapes. Without question, this was the best two channel experience I've heard at an audio show ever."

from: <http://www.audionirvana.org/forum/title-to-be-added/audio-shows/axpona-chicago/11364-countdown-to-axpona-2016/page4>