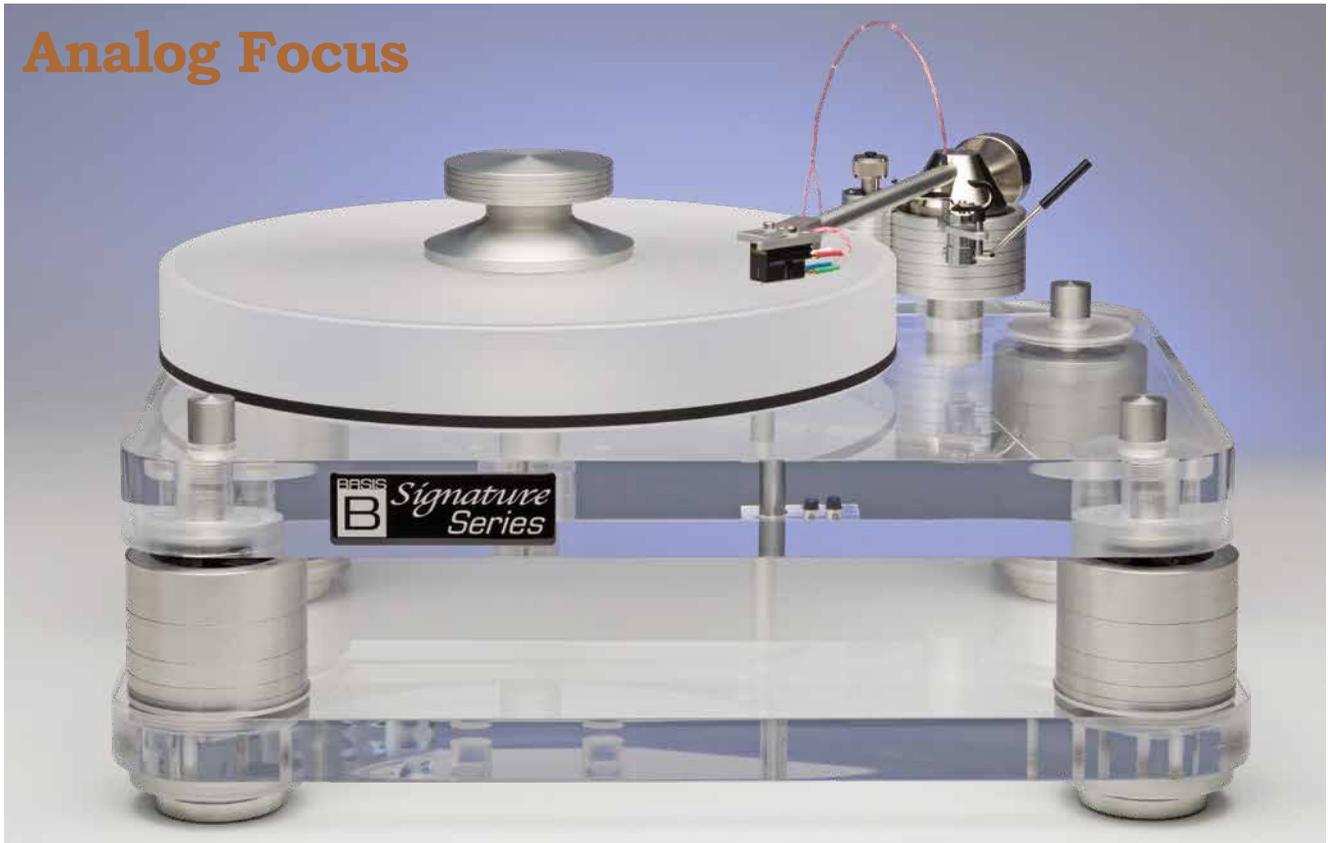


the absolute sound

Analog Focus



Basis Audio 2200 Signature Turntable & Vector 4 Tonearm

Further Thoughts

Wayne Garcia

By a stroke of pre-pandemic luck, at the close of 2019 I purchased a Basis 2200 Signature turntable and Vector 4 tonearm, a serious upgrade to my playback system that has helped keep me at least semi-sane, positive, and grounded during this seemingly forever time, and that has proven to be continually revelatory.

Although Basis Audio products have been thoroughly covered in these pages—most recently in Issue 295, wherein Robert Harley reviewed founder A.J. Conti’s posthumous masterpiece, the Transcendence—it’s been ages since the items I’m revisiting here were initially reviewed by Paul Seydor. [Issue 180, 2008].

It’s extremely rare in any field for products to remain current a decade and a half after release. But then A.J. wasn’t the type of guy to spend his time designing, perfecting, and producing gear—nay, works of audio art—that was unable to stand the test of time. He was famous for bringing a “fanatical precision” to all he did, and his tireless research and strict adherence to physics resulted in record players that remain state of the art, while so many others have come and gone.

Alex Bourque, who has been with Basis for over two years, is a gifted and extremely thorough engineer whose fanatical attention to detail would please A.J.

Sadly, we met but infrequently at audio shows, but Conti’s drive to create the finest gear lives on, as, notably, does his company.

As A.J.’s widow Jolanta expressed in a recent email:

“You are asking me about the challenges I faced after A.J.’s passing. Wow, where should I start!”

A stay-at-home mother with two kids, then ages 9 and 11, Jolanta was thrust into a business she admittedly knew little about “while grieving the loss of my husband and my kids’ father, and at the same being a sole caretaker of our family, and I mean sole since my family lives in Australia.

“It is a testament to A.J. and his committed followers, both professional and personal, that Basis survived what seemed like an existential crisis with his sudden demise. A.J. was Basis, and without him many assumed the company would be gone.”

Although the initial setup is time consuming—Conti, of course, recorded a series of invaluable videos walking us through the process—once dialed-in, cartridge

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switch-outs aside, Basis gear is essentially tweak- and maintenance-free.

As reported elsewhere in this issue, over the past 18 months I've employed two very different moving coils with my Basis rig, from Koetsu and My Sonic Lab. In each case the sound I heard seemed truly to be that of these transducers, not of the Basis combo.

I see that "revelatory" is a word that Robert, Paul, and I have each used to describe the Basis experience.

And while I'm sure that Conti's Transcendence and other stratospherically priced designs may take you steps beyond the 2200/Vector 4 (\$18,410 with Reflex Clamp, Calibrator Base, and Cable Isolation), I must report that never in my almost four decades as an audiophile have I lived with a record player like this one—so across-the-board uncolored, transpar-

ent, coherent, and seemingly responsive to whatever frequency, dynamic, ambient, tonal, spatial, ambient, and other microscopic information may be pressed into vinyl grooves.

So, without A.J. where is Basis today?

Jolanta's immediate challenge was finding a mechanical engineer to maintain her late husband's quality standards. "I take extreme pride in our products and view my role as continuing A.J.'s legacy," she told me. "The search took a long time, but Alex Bourque, who has been with Basis for over two years, is a gifted and extremely thorough engineer whose fanatical attention to detail would please A.J.

"Who knows? Maybe our 14-year-old son, Armando (named after his father), who wants to study engineering and has already started helping out at the company, will

Specs & Pricing

2200 Turntable

Dimensions: 17" x 15" x 5.5"

Weight: 35 lbs.

Price: \$8000

System as reviewed

(with reflex clamp, calibrator base, and cable isolation)

Price: \$18,410

Vector 4 Tonearm with VTA Micrometer

Price: \$6900

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one day want to run it."

There are some upcoming new products in the works, too. Toward the end of his life A.J. designed new models that will roll out over the next few years, including the SuperArm 16, slated for release this year. Alex Bourque's new design for a turntable, which I'm scheduled to review when it launches, along with a less pricey Vector arm, will also be introduced this year.

"They look awesome and of course sound amazing," Jolanta wrote, "using the same principles of precision, attention to detail, quality of build, and aesthetic appeal that Basis is renowned for." **tas**

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