

IO GOLD Review by Leonard Norwitz

Hello there,

A few words on my first serious audition with my newly refurbished Io Gold à la Darko.

After about 8-10 hours of random break-in over a couple of weeks, I spent a solid 4 ½ hours last night listening to new and old records of every genre.

I was accompanied by Paul Healy, a neighbor who has often joined me over the past 10 years or so for music listening and/or movie watching. Paul is in his late sixties, retired with a disability (cerebral palsy) and definitely NOT an audiophile. Despite this he attends closely and responsibly, though he lacks our language to describe critically what he hears.

Besides never tiring during our 4 hours, Paul's oft repeated observation was telling: "Where did the record go?" I concurred. Except for that familiar moment when first the stylus sets down on the record, the fact of this relationship having disappeared over the course of playing the record was delightfully palpable (if I can be permitted to mix opposites.) We could never depend on the record to bring us back to reality. What noise there might be soon disappeared into the night.

Indeed, even the final inch or so of play was never met with strain — a situation I don't recall ever having experienced in my living room — a disagreeable state of affairs for years, sad to say.

Limiting factors: a somewhat modified M3 preamp, AN-S5 MCT step-up, first-generation high efficiency hemp AN-E SPX speakers with outboard X-overs (sitting on a shelf instead of proper weighted stands, not ideally optimized for location), and very early SPX and VX cabling. And yet, remarkably clean, full bodied attacks, subtle deep bass and whispering treble. Tangible midrange. Every record, often every track, its own, valid sonic universe. Absent any fatigue for the duration. Nuanced, yet vivid performances.

In short: BLOODY CRACKERJACK! RIPPING! BONZER! BRILL!

Leonard Norwitz