

## The 45rpm Phono Gazette

Home entertainment systems then  
and now



Folks enjoying music on the all new 45 system in 1949. AM and FM radio were also an option

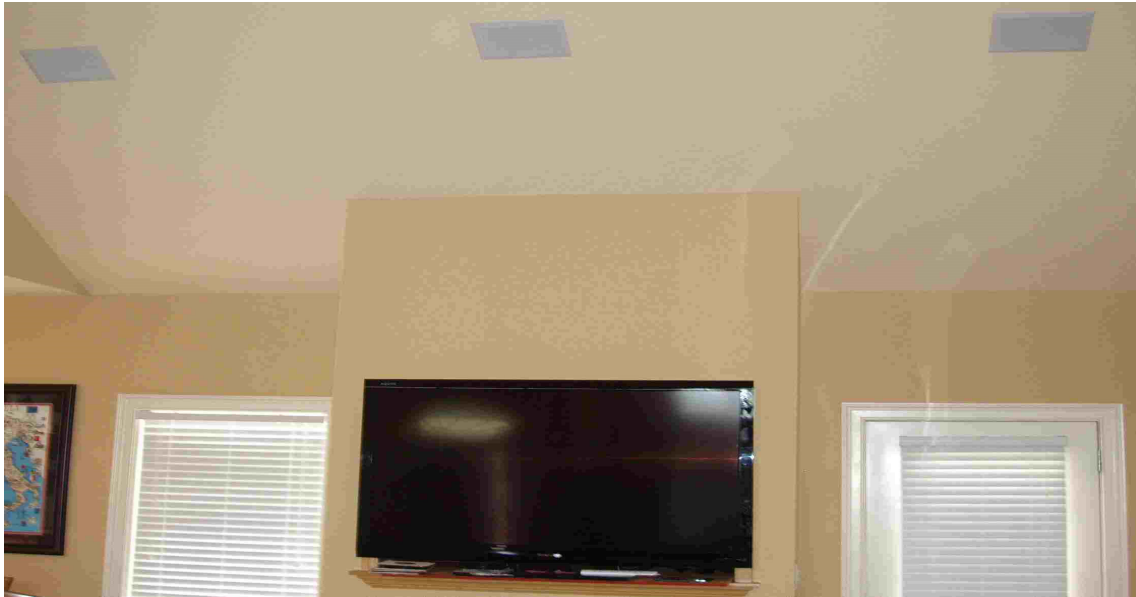
By Phil Vourtsis

In 1949 RCA Victor introduced console radio/phonographs that either featured the new 45 system as shown in the picture above, or featured two separate record changers. One was the new 45 system and the other was an automatic 78 changer to play your existing record collection. Even though the new 33-rpm records were now available, RCA Victor did not want to promote them or manufacture them. After all, the 'war of the speeds' was in full swing. Within the next year or two both formats were accepted by the public, so RCA Victor consoles started including the 33 speed on the 78 changer.

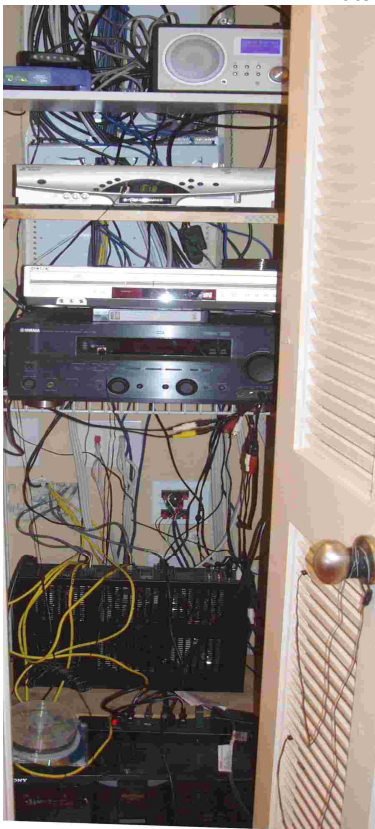
Look at how much fun these folks are having in the picture. The reality of having home

entertainment including records, radio and even that new thing called television was quite exciting. Now let's fast forward to the present and see what is available in home entertainment. Now there is so much gear involved, many people put the gear behind closed doors called a media closet. Yes, when you open the closet door there is a mess of wires but this is because I am always modifying something in there. But when the door is closed there are no wires anywhere. Notice the 60 inch High Definition TV is built into the wall and all speakers are mounted in the ceiling. You can see the left, right and center speakers above but there are also two rear speakers in the ceiling for surround sound. A 12-inch subwoofer is installed behind the television. Back in the media closet the 3<sup>rd</sup> shelf up from the bottom contains the most important piece of gear, the audio/video receiver. In the old days this would be your main amplifier which would control your audio input sources like phono, AM, FM, and tape. But today we also control the video sources. So the typical receiver today will control the audio, AM, FM stereo, tape, CD, Internet Radio, Ipod, MP3. Video sources would be Cable, Dish, VCR, DVD, Blu-ray, etc. The receiver also contains the myriad of different Surround Sound options and sound ambience choices like concert hall, jazz club, etc. The CD jukebox is on the bottom shelf and can automatically handle 200 CDs. The 4<sup>th</sup> shelf holds the combination VHS tape and DVD player, The 5<sup>th</sup> shelf contains the cable box, and the 6<sup>th</sup> shelf holds an Internet radio. With this radio I can tune in any radio station in the world that has an internet address. Shelf 6 also contains a modem and wireless router for internet access anywhere in the house. Shelf 2 holds an audio distribution system. (Con't on page 2)

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Latest Entertainment Systems can be built in with no wires showing



Media Closet- Keep door closed!



**Wall Unit Controller provides 4 choices of input to 4 different areas of the house. You can even control fast forward and reverse.**

(Con't from page 1)

This allows me to listen to any of 4 input sources in 4 separate locations in the house. Each location has a white control box built into the wall that allows me to choose the input source and volume (page 2). Stereo speakers in the ceiling provide the audio at each of the 4 locations. Now since the equipment is not in the same room as the video source, there is a special infrared receiver which picks up and sends the signals

from your remote control and send it to the correct device in the media closet. Also, because there are so many remotes, a Sony remote controller has been programmed to do all remote functions from the one remote. All of this was already installed in the house and I think I finally understand how to use most of it! But in case I need some help I can always look at the instruction books that came with everything. The Receiver manual is 250 pages long. Sixty of the pages describe the different speaker configurations that you can use. Quite a difference from the paper that was supplied with the 1949 Console which was only a few pages. It's kind of ironic that I don't have a record changer or turntable hooked up to the new system, but then again I can always play one of the 100 45 players I have in the collection!



## 15th Anniversary- A look back

By Phil Vourtsis

Back in the Summer of 1995 a work colleague was generating a daily report with a newspaper type format. When I saw how easy it was to use I started playing with it and put together two pages about 45 players. A friend of mine saw it and asked for a copy and we were off and running. Pretty quickly I found that 4 pages were my limit done four times a year. Although most of the focus is on the 45 system of recorded music created by RCA Victor, I have interspersed other articles pertaining to multi-speed players, juke boxes, and radio. Whenever I can I include a 'workshop' article when I come across shortcuts or interesting new ways to handle problems. Several of you subscribers have been good enough to provide me with articles. This has been very helpful and I hope it will continue.

I've picked four gazettes out of my files just to take a look back at what was covered. The first one is from 1999 and goes into details about RCA Victor's advertising for the 45 system. When first introduced, sales were not very good. The consumer who had a collection of 78 rpm records and phonograph could now choose to buy the new 45 system, the new 33 system from Columbia, or stick with their existing 78 system. RCA Victor started an advertising blitz in September of 1949 and reduced the prices of the phonographs substantially. While they would not make much profit on the phonograph, the consumer would be locked in to buying the 45-rpm records. This was a successful strategy.

The next issue is from Jan. 2003 and discusses RCA's use of colored vinyl. RCA thought they would sell more records if they were colorful. The extra work required on the assembly line became an issue. The line would have to be stopped each time there was a color change, Still wondering how the green and red record was made on the cover of that issue.

The third cover shows a radio/phonograph by Silvertone. RCA Victor was smart enough to allow other companies to use the 45 changer in their products. Some companies

like Sears used the record changer but designed their own cabinet and amplifier. Other companies like Decca and Crescent just changed the logo on the RCA Victor record player.

The forth issue is from late 2001 which is when the book "The Fabulous Victrola 45" was almost ready. It took a year to prepare the book and it was much more work that I thought it would be. I was very fortunate to have an avid amateur photographer willing to take all the pictures on 35mm color slides because the publisher would not permit digital pictures. Of course digital pictures are used everywhere now but back in 2001 they were not quite good enough yet. There was a scary moment when all the slides were sent to the publisher right before the 911 attacks and couldn't be found for over a month because of the Anthrax problem. The book is now 10 years old and the prices are no longer accurate so I'm hoping the publisher will allow an update to the book.

During these 15 years a lot of interesting things have occurred with respect to this hobby. There are some talented folks manufacturing parts that were not available before. This includes idler wheels, cartridge kits, and the rubber cones that suspend the record changer. You can also get cam repair kits and replacement bottoms for models 45EY2 and 7EY1 and 2. There are also very informative forums available now on the internet. My favorite is the antiqueradios.com forum which contain a section dedicated to Phonographs.

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Send to Phil Vourtsis, 13 Cornell Place, Manalapan, NJ, 07726 or you can use Paypal (Account is pvourtsis@optonline.net, no credit cards please)*

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