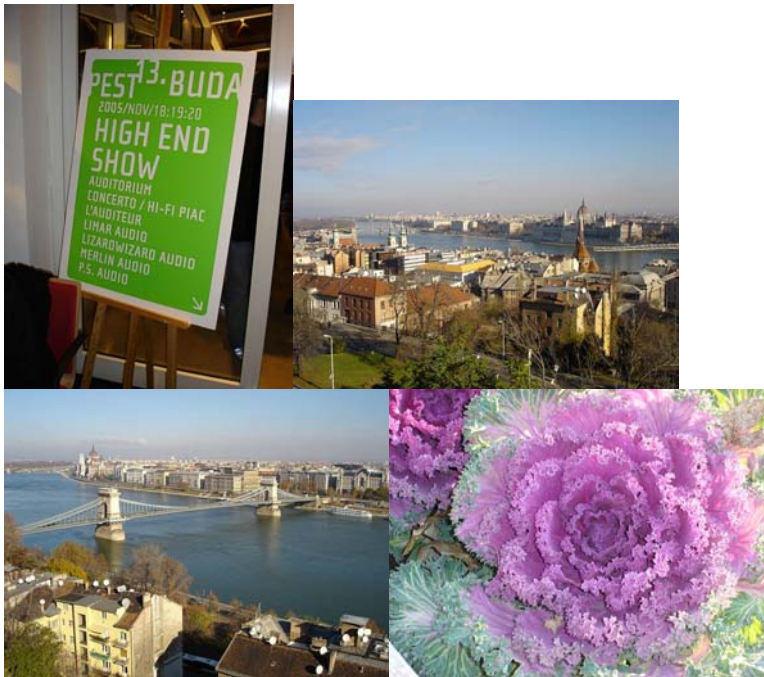


Budapest Hi End Show 2005-11-25



Held at the ArteOtel in Budapest and organised by Istvan Csontos the man behind Merlin Audio the Hi end distributor in Hungary. Quite possibly the nicest hifi show we have ever attended, beautiful surrounding with a small but very select range of hi end products on demonstration.



You're even greeted by beautiful girls (something our British show organisers could learn a thing from)



The first two rooms were the basement and both quite large rooms, one with the Avantgarde Trio system, which sounded very big scale with super fast midrange and a very delicate openness to the sound.



This room was always full and was playing a varied range of well recorded music.

Next door just down the corridor was the Audio Note Room, a range of valve amplification and digital and analogue sources, which is sadly missed in the UK (strange seeing how it's manufactured in Hove and one of the best sounds at the show)

Fronted by the ever popular Peter Qvortrup, this room had me going back more than once!



Merlin Audio had a total of 7 rooms two with full Avantgarde systems in And a multitude of other superb equipment.



47 lab shigaraki /Avantgarde / Solo



47 lab “flatfish” and “Progression” /Funk Firm Turntable with Schroeder
Tone arm ZYX cartridge/ Final laboratory / Avantgarde Amplifier/
Avantgarde Duo.
This system was featured on the evening news ! oh yes in Hungary this stuff
makes the TV and the radio and the newspapers too!



This room featured the new Martin Logan “Summits” along with amplification from VAC, SME and Ayre front ends.



Another well presented room was the Audio Physic and Ayre Acoustics room, lots of very active discussion going on too! The whole thing had a great vibe but without any attitude.



As always the 47 lab room sounded great with great music and a friendly approach to the customers. Always willing to play any type of music at a drop of a hat.



Martin Grennall and Sead Lejlic keeping the 47 flag flying and the bar open until 3am!



This room featured Jadis CD Player with the Italian Viva 845 Valve integrated along with the new Focal JM Lab Electra, and proud representatives of the distributor L`auditeur.



Quite possibly the “worst sound at the show” was the Gryphon/Clearaudio/Wilson Benesch room , We were hoping for so much more from this system as it looked amazing.



A good range of classical and jazz records were on sale too from Concerto Records, I think I stopped them eating all those cherry fondants on the table. Wilco and John from Audio Cube got a stack of stuff of the ladies at good prices.



Audio Analogue importer Auditorium was preaching to the converted, considering it was one of the more sensibly priced rooms it was holding its own quite well.





One of my favourites was the McIntosh/ Wilson Audio Room from Importer PS Audio, one word breath taking realism with superb dynamics, well done guys.



Lizard Wizard amplifier was the strangest thing I saw and heard at the show, a small flat block of what appeared to be painted MDF! to resemble a “etch a sketch” but it did sound very good.



System Clearaudio/ Unison Research/ Opera
Relaxed open and Musical!



Oh and Linn had a system there too, playing vinyl and very welcoming, with a great finger buffet, and a nice Chardonnay.
As you can see this not like any show you will find in England or the USA, I have to say it's most refreshing and has refuelled my enthusiasm to try and get something along the lines of this to happen in the UK.

Well done Merlin Audio

John Roberts

Some more pictures of Budapest.
Enjoy

