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## 12 Questions for Cyrill Hammer, President, CEO, and Owner, Souldution Audio

### What ignited your passion for high-end stereo? Did it come from the music side or the electronics side?

From both sides. During my time at high school and university I played the piano quite intensively while studying electronics. One provoked a natural interest for the other.

### How do you define high-end audio to someone unfamiliar with the hobby?

High-end audio gives you the opportunity to invite your favorite musicians into your home at any time you like and to listen to their performance with a close-to-lifelike quality.

### What is the first thing you listen for in any high-end system?

A good system should not alter the music at all. So you should not be able to hear any specific characteristic. Beyond that, I listen for tonal balance and timing.

### Is there a difference in the expectations or listening biases of European audiophiles and American audiophiles?

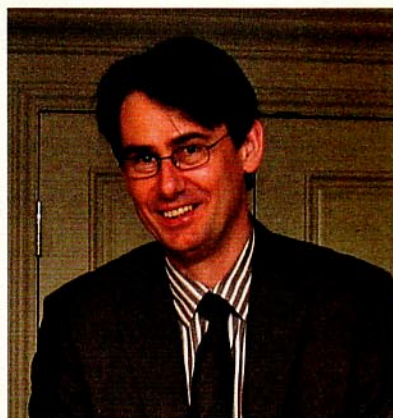
So far we haven't recognized any general preferences for European or American audiophiles. We think that the well known stereotype—European audiophiles are “intellectual” listeners and American audiophiles are “think big” listeners—is more related to the fact that American as well as European manufacturers designed their products for very different listening environments. Twenty years ago the average size of a European living room was significantly smaller than its American counterpart.

### What impact will server and solid-state memory have on the high end in the next few years?

The music server is a single hardware device that allows you to reproduce different music file formats—from low-res MP3 up to high-res files. It also permits upgrading to a more high-res format without changing the required hardware. Climbing up the quality ladder on the software side may bring these users to higher-quality audio systems. This is, of course, partially wishful thinking; however, we will be able to monitor this trend by looking at the number of downloads of high-res music files.

### What is the biggest innovation you've seen in electronics in the last 10 years?

High-resolution digital formats and the corresponding D/A



converters. Going from 16 bits to 24 or even higher word lengths has increased the performance of digital playback systems dramatically, provided that the homework on the analog side has been done as well.

### Analog or digital—do you have a preference?

Well, it depends on the recording.

### Are you surprised at the survival of analog in a digital marketplace?

Not at all! Recordings—analogue or digital—are collectable time documents. Playing back these original music

documents at the highest level of quality is key.

### What are the challenges confronting the high end?

In Europe there are several new regulations under discussion or already in force which focus on the reduction of power consumption of consumer electronic devices, and they could have a significant impact on the European and global high-end marketplace. Even more important is the challenge of involving younger people in our industry and hobby.

### Is there an outstanding issue or area of the high end that has you especially excited or optimistic?

State-of-the-art technology is required for achieving the highest quality of music reproduction. At the same time this technology must be subordinate and transparent to the music. To solve this apparent dilemma really excites me.

### Souldution's parent company Spemot AG is in the automotive sector. What unique synergies do they bring to one another?

The two business help each other by building reputation and creating trust. If a potential client for the motor business sees the Souldution products, he immediately and subconsciously understands that any company able to develop complex and prestigious products like a Souldution amp will also be capable of developing an electric motor.

### What still inspires you about your work?

As a young and still small company it is fascinating and inspiring to build up the business by investing in new products and new markets. More fundamentally I get inspired by the fact that the products we sell create positive feelings in our clients. It is very rewarding to see how much joy and enthusiasm audiophiles bring to their passion. **tas**