



A SOUND EXPERIENCE NEWSLETTER 01 FOR 2009: 25 DECEMBER 2008

This is the first newsletter for 2009, issued each month. Read more about:

- ' Tacet LP, CD, SACD and DVD-A
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- ' Rega hardware specials

A SOUND EXPERIENCE NOW SUPPLIES TACET

Tacet will be known especially to vinyl supporters for the excellent quality of their recordings. I remember selling off some pre-owned titles which belonged to Heinz Zaczek and the one Tacet copy was grabbed by a buyer the moment the list was made public. Had I known about the value of the record at the time I would have bought this jewel for myself.

As mentioned in the December 2008 newsletter, the emphasis in 2009 is on supplying out of the ordinary software. Tacet is certainly not an ordinary label. In their own words:



The LP had its heyday in the late 1950s and the 1960s. It still enjoys a great deal of popularity, which has increased again in recent years. The reasons for this include:

- its vital, warm sound;*
- the (analogue) uniqueness of each copy from a series;*
- the nostalgic feelings it evokes and historical interest; and*
- the material and its optical qualities.*

All our currently available LPs were produced exclusively using the "Tube Only" technology which was developed by Tacet, in other words with valve (or tube) microphones and valve amplifiers, recorders and cutting equipment. The cutting is done by hand with scissors and adhesive tape. The most important microphones we use also date from this era: The "U47" was developed by Neumann in 1947, the "M49" in 1949. And the many V72 amplifiers, the components of the tape equipment etc. also originate from the time when LP was at the height of its success. All LPs sold are 180g in weight and come with a great deal of interesting information and photos.

We have always been especially pleased to receive so much feedback about our Tube Only productions. This motivates us even more to keep working with this technology and rescue it from oblivion. People have told us that the music sounds warmer, without losing any of its TACET brilliance. The timbres glow more. We have also heard that people have the impression of a more homogeneous sound, whatever that is meant to be. So let everyone listen to their own hearts and to the Tube Only recordings and feel something special! Even the sheer joy of this slightly nostalgic outstanding technology can be reason enough to like these productions. Yet what would it all be without the wonderful work of the artists!

Of course this technology is no longer only available on vinyl but also on Tacet's catalogue of CD, SACD and DVD-A products. Having been appointed as distributor means that the entire catalogue will be available in all formats, should a particular title be made available in all formats. Tacet seems to have favoured a combination of venue, orchestra and leader for most of their titles, the Polish Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra with Wojciech Rajski in command. In some cases the Stuttgarter Kammerorchester was chosen as the setting.

ARTISTS

Tacet combines a circle of excellent musicians who receive regular accolades of praise from the music critics. (On the relevant product pages you can find links to the reviews.) We truly value our artists and take care to work with them long-term so that their tremendous artistic talent can always develop and flourish. A good example is the Abegg Trio: since 1982 we have produced more than thirty meticulously worked recordings made under the best conditions. Today the Abegg Trio's recording of Beethoven's Piano Trios, made in 1988, is still rated as one of the milestones in recording history.

Evgeni Koroliov's very first recording, made in 1990, of the "Art of Fugue" by Johann Sebastian Bach, is "a yardstick no-one is likely to overreach soon," ascertained the Süddeutscher Rundfunk. This is still true today. Koroliov's Tacet series has grown steadily and now comprises more than ten productions, and there are a number of further projects in the pipeline.

It is a wonderful experience to observe such a great artist or ensemble grow and mature with the years; with the many recordings we made with the Auryn Quartet we often thought that there was no improving on the degree of intensity of their harmonious playing; and many a time we were pleasantly disillusioned!

In December 2007 the Auryn Quartet started the immense project of comprehending, performing and recording all of Joseph Haydn's 68 quartets in their special, original form: as meticulous, accurate interpretations over the course of several years. This is the crowning (to date) of their long creative process under TACET's aegis.

So it is not surprising that the recordings by the TACET artists have grown into proper series, such as the "Lindemann series" or the "Gaede Trio series". In addition there are also series dedicated to specific topics, e.g. the first systematic production of the Welte-Mignon catalogue. Browse though our programme. You will be amazed how many treasures you discover!


TUBE ONLY

"Tube Only" means that only tube microphones and amplifiers were used for the recording. For transfer to a digital disc (CD, DVD or SACD) a connection to an A/D- or a DSD transformer must be activated. For the LP, however, (except for rare exceptions, justified for musical reasons) the signal is even stored on a tube tape recorder and then mastered with valve equipment, so that one would be right in saying that for the entire production not a single transistor was used.

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THE CATALOGUE

To get an idea what is available, below are just some of the titles and relevant information. While the images shown are those of the vinyl versions, most titles are also available on CD, SACD and DVD-A.

	<p>0164-1 LP-180g</p> <p>Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 5 in C minor op. 67 Polish Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Wojciech Rajski</p>
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	<p>0163-1 LP-180g</p> <p>Tacet's Four Seasons Antonio Vivaldi The Four Seasons Polish Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Daniel Gaede, violin</p>
	<p>0139-1 LP-180g</p> <p>The Welte Mignon Mystery Vol. I Enrique Granados today playing his 1913 interpretations Selected works by Granados</p> <p>This is not a historical recording. Yet mysteriously the music is performed in an interpretation which is historically authentic down to the last detail. The key to this mystery is: the original performer was present at the recent recording session, but not physically: the music is heard on a modern Steinway. Never has music stored in the Welte-Mignon system sounded so "right" or so well. Thanks to TACET's much-praised recording technique, and because the Welte-Mignon memory system and sound production mechanism have now been newly adjusted for the first time by the leading expert in the field - and are thus able to meet TACET's requirements. (Welte-Mignon was invented in 1904.) The Welte-Mignon mystery can now speak to us without distortion.</p>
	<p>0136-1 LP-180g</p> <p>The Tube Only Night Music W. A. Mozart A Little Night Music KV 525, Divertimento KV 136 Polish Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra, Wojciech Rajski</p> <p>This is not only an absolutely fabulous sound and a perfect example of transparency, but also musically of highest merit - despite the almost overwhelming number of other recordings by just about every conductor of the last hundred years.</p>
	<p>0994-1 LP-180g</p> <p>The Best of Tacet Vol. 1 Greatest Classical Composers in Exciting Sound Quality played by the Best Artists</p> <p>A wonderful journey through the musical world of TACET</p>

Orders are being taken right now. Tacet has indicated that with higher volumes ordered, costs will come down considerably. For the moment, expect to pay some R450.00 for a vinyl record; R290.00 for SACD and R230.00 for CD.

SOFTWARE DATABASE AVAILABLE ON WEB SITE

All titles stocked by us can now be viewed on the web site, www.asoundexperience.co.za. There is no overkill - you can search on title or artist alphabetically or do more detailed searches and filters on label, genre, artist and more. The main page of the web site shows the current five best sellers while lower down a random selection of ten titles are shown, irrespective of label and format. Click on **Order item** to send e-mail to me to enquire about the item. If in stock, you will be invoiced immediately and on receipt of proof of payment your order will be shipped, after adding shipping costs, which start at R49.00. Please note that cash payments are not accepted due to excessive charges levied by banks to handle cash deposits. The only methods of payment accepted are EFT (electronic fund transfer) or direct bank deposit.

If the item is indicated as **On order** it means that stock is due in the next order. **Out of stock** means just that - the item is on the catalogue but not in stock and will be ordered as soon as the next order is placed. Please accept that it may happen that you have missed the cutoff date for an order and that the next order may only be placed in the following month.

OTHER HIGH QUALITY LABELS

You will know by now that we are not in this game to bring in ordinary items. I cannot compete against Look and Listen and do not wish to do so. As such, the items offered by my business are those you will not find anywhere else unless you were to import this on your own at great cost. Currently we import Stockfisch, Naim Label and Foné Records on a regular basis, with Groovenote and Tacet having been added. Negotiations are under way to bring in other labels as well.

E-MAIL CONTACT LIST

One afternoon in November 2008 I suffered a massive loss of information when MS Outlook unceremoniously corrupted the PST and OST files. This resulted in the loss of virtually all my contacts, despite my best precautions. Should you wish to subscribe to the newsletter, please send e-mail to andrieso@iafrica.com with the subject title "Subscribe to A Sound Experience newsletter" so that I can get everything updated again.

DELIVERY POLICY FOR 2009

Those who have purchased items from A Sound Experience before will know that I always try to get stock to clients personally where possible or otherwise use Postnet. Should I deliver personally, this is usually tied with business in your area so that I do not have to charge delivery fees. However, this is not always sustainable and delivery charges can take a huge chunk out of the profit margin, which is already very small.

As from 01 January 2009 a shipping charge of a minimum of R49.00 will be added to every order, should the item be sent via Postnet, the post office or be delivered personally. The minimum fee will increase as the shipping weight or travelling distance increases. In order to ensure accurate billing for shipping, these costs may be sent with a separate invoice.

I trust that this will be accepted as not intending to rip off anyone. Of course, those who have decided to import items themselves will testify that it is often expensive and thus ordering through a supplier is still the cheaper option.

RETURN POLICY FOR 2009

This is a tough one. Vinyl is a delicate medium and the purchase thereof has been the centre of huge controversies with other suppliers in the past. It sometimes happens that the very best record could have unknowingly been damaged while being handled (record put into the sleeve for example) before shipping. This defect will only show up once the item is opened by the purchaser. Not good. At the end of the day humans still handle the items and damage may occur.

The process is simple: should a vinyl product be genuinely defective, I will replace the item immediately. Should I not have another copy in stock, the client can choose something else to the same value, or pay the difference should the selected item be more expensive. It is not always possible to refund a client and I expect client to understand and accept this. If a record is genuinely faulty, it will be returned to the supplier for replacement.

What are the problems encountered with vinyl records? In some cases there is end-of-side distortion (Mozart's Zauberflöte on Deutsche Grammophon being one title I have in stock with this problem). There is nothing I can do about this other than to warn the client about the problem. This happens to be a common problem with Deutsche Grammophon pressings. The other title, which I do not supply but know that there is a problem with, is Eva Cassidy's Songbird. The sibilance on the title track at the end of Side One is a recording fault. It sounds the same on the CD version and is thus not a tracking error on the vinyl copy but rather an anomaly in the original recording process. If a vinyl record has this "defect" I will not replace it as it is part of the package.

I am often tempted to open a product before shipping it to the customer. I sell hardware on this basis - no item leaves my premises without having been opened and played in my own system. This way I ensure that whatever I supply meets my own standards. Should I feel the need to open and check a vinyl record before shipping, I will ask the customer's permission first. The chances that one gets a sealed LP in a less than perfect condition are slim, but still exist.

SUPPLYING "DEALERS"

Definition of a "dealer": *A dealer is someone who sells and promotes products I supply, through his retail outlet.*

Since he has overheads to cover, a dealer receives a discount on items purchased from me. Unfortunately there are some dealers who have no intention at all in reselling my products and instead will purchase a single item or more, use it at home for private purposes and then expect a huge discount. I quickly see which dealers are serious about supplying software on a relatively *constant* scale (I did not say that they would always supply on a *large* scale.) and these dealers can expect the discount agreed on. Other dealers who are once-off purchasers will get no discount at all. In turn, should I purchase an item from another dealer with whom I do not have a dealer agreement, I pay the full price for the product(s) and do not expect a dealer discount.

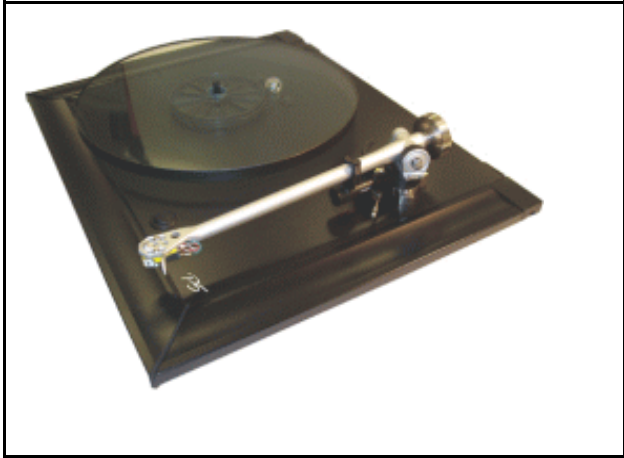
HARDWARE SPECIALS

To start the year on a new note, why not treat yourself to some decent equipment. The following items are brand new, some having been only used for review purposes by Audio Video South Africa (AVSA) Magazine. These are available to private buyers at the prices indicated below in bold. Dealers interested in these items should enquire with me:

	<p>A brand new pair of R5 loudspeakers, used by AVSA for their October 2008 review of this fine product, is available. The retail price is R13 000,00 and the boxed pair is available for R10 000.00. The speakers carry a full one year guarantee and are in perfect condition. The finish is Maple.</p>
	<p>A Cursa pre-amplifier with MC phono stage built in, is available. This item, together with two monoblock Exon amplifiers, was reviewed by AVSA in March 2008 and as a set will retail for over R45 000.00. The combo is available for R30 00.00 and carries a full one year guarantee. The units are finished in black and can also be purchased separately.</p>
	<p>The Radio 3 FM/AM tuner is perfect to complement the rest of your Rega equipment. Available in both black and satin, the item retails for R7 500.00 and is available for R5 000.00.</p>



Rega's RB1000 arm is a work of art and able to perform with the very best out there. While it appears to look like the older RB300 arm, the technology and craftsmanship are way beyond what many thought was possible in tone arm design. Retailing For R19 000.00, the RB1000 is available for **R15 000.00**. Special three-point pacers and extra heavy counterweights, specifically designed for this arm, are available.



A P5 turntable, with satin surround (black surround pictured here) is available. Used for a few hours during a demonstration, there are a few marks on the headshell where the cartridge was bolted but it is normal for all Rega arms to show this wear as the external paint surfaced will scuff, no matter how careful you are. The unit normally retails for R13 700.00 and is available for **R11 000.00**. Add the TT PSU off board power supply (retail price R3099.00) available for **R2500.00**, in either silver or black and you have probably the best value for money of all Rega's turntable, including the much liked P3-24. The quality of the RB700 allows fitting a really top notch cartridge of your choice and special three-point spacers are available to raise the VTA if required.

Best regards, Andries O
084 531-8046