## Munich High End Show

- The modestly sized **Wilson Sasha DAW** scored again in the **Nordost** room. This time it was driven by **Dan D'Agostino Progression** integrated amp. You know how some systems just sound "right" on initial hearing, with no thought or analysis required? This was one such system. Here, in addition to their other attributes, the Wilsons offered killer bass incongruent with their modest stature.

- The **Göbel** room, with a pair of the **Divin Marquis** mains and another pair of the new **Divin Sovereign** subs, plus **True Life Audio** electronics, proved both a winning combination and the company's best recent trade show outing. Not only did the main speakers disappear, but so did the gigantic subs. Nor was there any trace of discontinuity between the two. Though capable of large-scale sound, it was the system's subtle dynamics and tonal nuances that really enhanced its musicality.

- In the **CH Precision/TechDAS/Rockport** room, with the company's recently upgraded source components, **10-Series** electronics, Rockport **Lyra** speakers and **Nordost Odin** cable, the impression of actual musicians being in the room was spookily realistic. At one point, Buddy Holly stood there, on a physical stage, and sang with natural warmth. And that was from a Red Book CD!

- **Living Voice** room. This anti-trade show room was all about the music. A balm for tired ears and an elixir for the musically inclined. (See Sidebar: "Sorry, Not for Sale.")
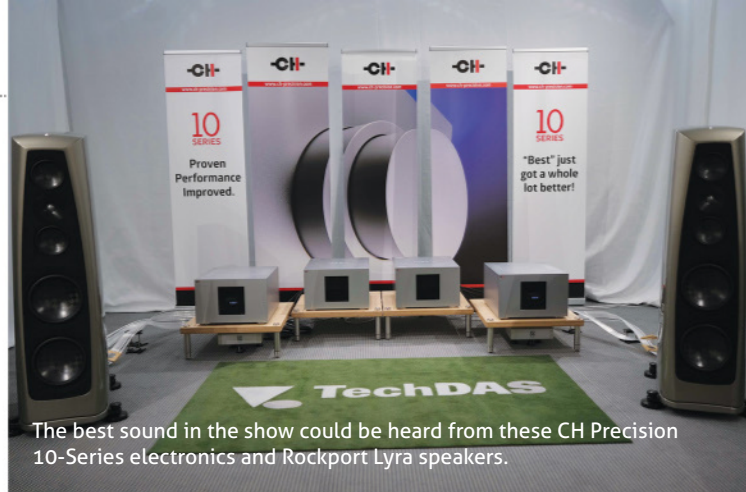
The best sound in the show could be heard from these CH Precision 10-Series electronics and Rockport Lyra speakers.

- **Rockport's** system was anchored by **Avior** speakers, powered by **Absolare** electronics and sourced by **Request Audio**'s streaming DAC. This was another system, like the CH Precision room that also featured a Rockport speaker (coincidence? I think not), that was almost tangible in its realism. The sound was refreshingly unpretentious but not polite. This combo could really swing when asked to.

- The **Kharma** room sounded like Kharma usually does, which is wonderful. Backed by Kharma and **dCS** electronics and a **Euphony** streamer, the big **Exquisite Grand** speakers amply displayed the specialness of Kharma's midrange. Add in earthy bass and startling dynamics and you've got a system deserving of a top ten slot.

- At exactly 10:01am every day, a swarm of visitors dashed across the MOC floor on a non-stop course to the **Burmester** booth. Their mission: to score tickets to one of the by-reservation-only demos taking place throughout the day. Why were these seats so coveted? Was Burmester doing something unique? Or was it just that they were hometown favorites?

I had to find out. On the last day I caught the last show—but only because the nice PR people interceded on my behalf. I have no idea what the presenter was saying, because this was the only room where the language spoken was German. Perhaps that was the draw. Also, the sound was

The Munich Playlist

WHENEVER I was in a room playing a good-sounding piece of music with which I was unfamiliar—or an unfamiliar recording of music I knew—I Shazamed it. For those of you not familiar with Shazam, it's an app that, when instructed, listens to currently playing music and within seconds identifies it. Not just the piece of music, but the recording as well. The mind boggles at the computing power needed to perform this feat, but it works amazingly well, with few "Sorry, no matches."

Handily, the app keeps a history of everything you've Shazamed. So, when you're done with a show, you have what is effectively a playlist of all the great-sounding music you heard. Here's my playlist from this year's High End Munich, in no order other than when I encountered each piece. Just search each of these titles on Tidal or Qobuz and you can make your own Munich playlist. I did this on Qobuz and made my playlist public. So, to make things even easier, you can just go on Qobuz and search for a playlist called "Munich 2022 Discoveries." It contains all the tracks below that are available on Qobuz, which is most of them.

- "Liberty"—Anette Askvik
- "Fields of Gold"—Eva Cassidy
- "Walking on the Moon"—Yuri Honing Trio
- "Soothing"—Laura Marling
- "Diaraby"—Ali Farka Toure and Ry Cooder
- Liszt "Piano Sonata in B Minor"—Nelson Goerner
- "Caronte"—Apparat
- Beethoven Symphony No. 7, 2nd Movement—Bayerisches Staatsorchester
- "Prelude"—Vikingur Olafsson
- "That Don't Make It Junk"—Leonard Cohen
- "True Love Ways"—Buddy Holly, *From the Original Master Tapes*
- Mahler Symphony No. 2, Michael Tilson Thomas
- *Sketches of Seasons,* Atzko Kohashi & Eddy Koopman

SHOW REPORT

Munich High End Show 2022

BEST OF SHOW

Best Sound (Cost no object): The **CH Precision/TechDAS/Rockport** room was the only one that conjured a convincing apparition of live musicians. What more need be said?

Best Sound (For the money): **Scansonic's** room was moderately priced (for this show, at least) yet made lovely music. The **MB6** speakers, which go for just $11k, supported by a modest **Moon Audio** stack, had an easy-going, unforced presentation. The ribbon tweeter and small mid/bass drivers were blazingly fast, and there was more depth than you usually hear at shows.

Most Significant Product Introduction: The **Wilson Benesch Omnium** speaker augers an era where plant-based materials, which are far better for the planet, not only replace their carbon equivalents but improve speaker performance as well.

Best Demo: The **CH Precision** "Fine-Tuning a System" seminar. If your timing was right, you could catch a one-hour seminar wherein Roy Gregory coaxed Stirling Trayle to reveal the juicy details behind his setup of the best-in-show system. Their message was that the CH 10-Series' very fine-grain tunability really matters. And, boy, did they bring that point home.

In particular, they demonstrated the effects of the CH's ability to adjust the ratio between global to local feedback, which allows optimization of the amp for the specific speaker, from 0 to 100% in 1% increments. Playing a simple solo piano CD, they showed how unhappy the Lyra speakers were with a mere 5% of global feedback. The playing sounded sloppy and lethargic. As the global feedback was reduced, 1% at a time, the performance gradually snapped into focus and gained vigor. With this trend, everyone present predicted 0% global feedback to be the optimal setting—but it wasn't. At the 1% mark, everything clicked into place. At 0%, there was a thinning of timbral information and other detractions. It was clear to all that 1% was the correct setting.

Most electronics don't provide any means of optimizing their interface with a given speaker, let alone in such fine increments. Even lower-level CH gear has courser settings. The demo proved that 1% increments is not only useful, but in this case it was essential. All in all, this was a demo that had a point to make, and it did so convincingly.

Most Significant Trend: I saw more **Air-Motion Transformer** (AMT) tweeters at this show than at the last several shows combined. The AMT is notable for its extension and high sensitivity. Unfortunately, in several instances the driver sounded strident.

Most Coveted Product: **Wilson Benesch** again, this time with the supremely lust-worthy—and unimaginably costly—**GMT System® turntable**. Pictures don't do it justice. Sounded great, too. **tas**