

Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Foreword..... | 1 |
| Preface1 | |
| Notes 6 | |
| Ralph Baker’s Writing | 6 |
| Four Level Outline | 6 |
| Index 6 | |
| Acknowledgements | 6 |
| Biography: Sherman Keene | 6 |
| Biography: L. Ralph Baker..... | 7 |

Chapter 1—Hearing and Sound Quality 9

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| 1.1 The Ability To Hear Well | 9 |
| 1.2 Protecting The Gift | 11 |
| 1.3 Hearing Expertly..... | 16 |

Chapter 2—What Is Good Sound Quality? 23

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.1 Faithfulness..... | 23 |
| 2.1.1 Overly Massive Transducers | 25 |
| 2.1.2 The Use Of Inferior Amplifiers | 28 |
| 2.1.2.1 Improper Design From The Outset..... | 28 |
| 2.1.2.2 Improper Carrying Out Of The Design | 28 |
| 2.1.2.3 Fragile Design | 29 |
| 2.1.2.4 High Quality Parts | 29 |
| 2.1.2.5 Listening Tests | 29 |
| 2.1.3 The Mismatching Of Impedances..... | 30 |
| 2.1.4 Use Of A “Building Block” Amplifier That Is Not Flat | 31 |
| 2.1.5 Improper Audio Alignment..... | 32 |
| 2.1.6 Use Of Poorly Designed Cut-Off Filters | 32 |
| 2.2 Powerful Low End Where The Fundamental Is Heard | 33 |
| 2.3 Clean High End Without Fuzziness | 34 |
| 2.4 Presence | 35 |
| 2.5 Definition | 36 |
| 2.6 Fatigue Free Listening | 36 |
| 2.7 Level Capability to Suit the Listener | 38 |

Chapter 3—Impairments To Quality 43

| | |
|--|----|
| 3.1 Harmonic Distortion (HD)..... | 44 |
| 3.2 Intermodulation Distortion (IM)..... | 45 |
| 3.3 Transient Intermodulation Distortion (TIM) | 45 |
| 3.4 Saturation — Soft Clipping | 45 |
| 3.5 Clipping—Hard Clipping | 46 |
| 3.6 Induced Radio Frequencies (RF) | 47 |
| 3.7 Quantizing Noise | 49 |
| 3.8 Wow | 50 |
| 3.9 Tape Speed Flutter | 50 |
| 3.10 Intermittence | 51 |
| 3.11 Phase-Related Distortion | 55 |
| 3.12 Speaker Motion NonLinearity | 56 |
| 3.13 Ringing | 58 |
| 3.14 Overshoot | 59 |
| 3.15 VU Meter Distortion | 59 |
| 3.16 Microphone Diffraction Effects | 60 |

Chapter 4—The Management of Quality 61

| | |
|--|----|
| 4.1 The Listening Test | 61 |
| 4.1.1 A/B'ing | 61 |
| 4.1.2 The Split/Sum Technique | 64 |
| 4.2 Microphone Considerations | 66 |
| 4.3 Console Considerations | 69 |
| 4.3.1 ConsoleDesign | 70 |
| 4.3.2 Opamps | 73 |
| 4.4 Claimsmanship and SpecsmanSHIP | 76 |
| 4.5 Avoiding And Correcting Audio Difficulties | 76 |
| 4.5.1 Doing The Swap-Out | 76 |
| 4.5.2 Performing a Redesign | 77 |
| 4.5.3 Building Your Own | 78 |
| 4.5.4 Working With ICs | 79 |
| 4.5.5 Shortening The Audio Chain | 80 |
| 4.6 Expense/Value Considerations | 81 |
| 4.6.1 Initial Cost | 82 |
| 4.6.2 Cost Of Upkeep | 82 |
| 4.6.3 Resale Value | 84 |
| 4.6.4 MTBF | 85 |
| 4.6.5 Quality of Original Manufacture | 85 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| 4.6.6 Level of Factory Support | 87 |
| 4.6.7 Upgrade-Ability | 89 |

Chapter 5—Working for Quality in the Real World 91

| | |
|---|-----|
| 5.1 Mikes And Instruments Versus Speakers And Control Rooms | 91 |
| 5.1.1 Working With Sound From Speakers | 91 |
| 5.1.1.1 Hearing Fatigue | 95 |
| 5.1.1.2 Consistent Levels | 96 |
| 5.1.1.3 Speaker Component Failure | 96 |
| 5.1.1.4 Drugs | 97 |
| 5.1.1.5 Control Room Empty or Full | 97 |
| 5. 1. 1.6 Treatment of Control Room (or Studio) Surfaces | 97 |
| 5.1.1.7 Acoustic Anomalies | 98 |
| 5.2 Noise Reduction Systems | 99 |
| 5.3 Multi-Track Heads | 100 |
| 5.4 Monitor System Alignment | 101 |
| 5.5 Guarding Against Poor Quality Recording Medium | 102 |
| 5.6 Handling Tape Media | 103 |

Chapter 6—Getting Quality From Microphones 105

| | |
|---|-----|
| 6.1 High Quality Sound From Mikes | 105 |
| 6.1.1 Dynamic Mikes | 106 |
| 6.1.2 Condenser Mikes | 106 |
| 6.1.3 Electret Condenser Mikes | 106 |
| 6.1.4 PZM Mikes | 107 |
| 6.1.5 Ribbon Mikes | 107 |
| 6.1.6 The Qualities of Microphones | 108 |
| 6.1.6.1 Signal-To-Noise Ratio | 108 |
| 6.1.6.2 Frequency Response | 108 |
| 6.1.6.3 Dynamic Range | 109 |
| 6.1.6.4 Output Impedance | 109 |
| 6.1.6.5 Proximity Effect | 109 |
| 6.L6.6 Handling | 109 |
| 6.1.6.7 Sensitivity | 109 |
| 6.1.6.8 Polar Response Versus Frequency | 110 |
| 6.1.7 Separating Mikes | 110 |
| 6.1.8 Balancing Leakage | 111 |
| 6. 1.9 The Vocalist Fortress | 113 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 6.1.10 Circular Miking | 113 |
| 6.1.11 Localization of Sound Sources In Stereo | 114 |
| 6.1.11.1 Amplitude Cues | 114 |
| 6.1.11.2 Phase Cues | 115 |
| 6.1.11.3 Brightness | 115 |
| 6.1.12 Amplitude Stereo | 115 |
| 6.1.13 Amplitude/Phase Stereo | 118 |
| 6.1.14 Binaural Recording | 119 |
| 6.1.15 Spaced-Apart Mikes and “Depth Distortion” | 120 |
| 6.1.16 Two Criss-Crossed BI-Directional Mikes | 121 |
| 6.1.17 Twin Cardloids | 122 |
| 6.1.17.1 Coincident Angled-Apart | 122 |
| 6.1.17.2 Small Separation, Angled-Apart | 123 |
| 6.1.17.3 Large Separation Aimed Straight Ahead | 123 |
| 6.1.18 Stereo Field Checking | 124 |
| 6.1.19 MS Milking | 127 |
| 6.1.19.1 Decoded MS Input Mode | 128 |
| 6.1.19.2 Undecoded MS Input Mode | 128 |
| 6.1.19.3 MS In/MS Out Console Mode | 129 |
| 6.1.20 Stereo/MS/Stereo Width Adjustment | 133 |
| 6.1.21 Adding Point Sources To Overall Stereo | 134 |
| 6.2 Generating Acoustical Delay Summation Anomalies | 137 |
| 6.2.1 Frequency Location of the Combs | 139 |
| 6.2.2 Depth of the Combs | 142 |
| 6.2.3 Avoiding Comb Filtration | 144 |
| 6.2.4 Going to Analog Disk With Comb Filtered Audio | 147 |

Chapter 7—Checking Transducers for Quality 151

| | |
|--|-----|
| 7.1 The TrueRTA | 151 |
| 7.1.1 Plotting Monitor System Response | 154 |
| 7.1.2 Caring For Microphones | 157 |
| 7.2 Cleaning Condenser Capsules | 159 |

Chapter 7—Examining Audio Systems for Quality 161

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| 8.1 Using The Oscilloscope | 161 |
| 8.1.1 The “Trigger” | 162 |
| 8.1.2 The Verniers | 163 |
| 8.1.3 Scope Probes | 164 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 8.1.4 The Vertical Scales | 164 |
| 8.1.4.1 Scope Probe Magnification | 166 |
| 8.1.5 The Horizontal Scale | 167 |
| 8.2 Finding The Clipping Level | 169 |
| 8.3 Measuring Rise-Time | 169 |
| 8.4 Measuring Slew-Rate | 170 |
| 8.5 Measuring Phase Response | 171 |
| 8.6 Measuring Impedances | 175 |
| 8.6.1 Measuring Output Impedance Magnitude | 175 |
| 8.6.2 Measuring Input Impedances | 177 |
| 8.7 Testing Common Mode Rejection | 178 |
| Square Wave Simple Observation | 181 |

Chapter 9—Projects to Build..... 183

| | |
|--|-----|
| 9.1 The OhmLad Scope Shunt | 183 |
| 9.2 The OhmLad “Scope Pot” | 185 |
| 9.3 The Ohmlad Fixed And Variable Resistance Boosters | 185 |
| 9.4 Measuring Weighted Noise..... | 186 |
| 9.5 The Octopus | 188 |
| 9.5.1 Using the Octopus | 192 |
| 9.6 A Stage Bridging Box | 194 |
| 9.7 A Series “Y” Box | 195 |
| 9.8 Common Mode Rejection Tester | 195 |
| 9.9 A Common Mode Rejection Transformer For Transformerless Consoles | 197 |
| 9.10 The Jensen Direct Box | 199 |
| 9.10.1 The Jenson High-Loss Direct Box | 200 |
| 9.11 A Complete Microphone Input Circuit For Demanding Work | 203 |

Appendix A—Cleaning..... 207

Appendix B—Subjectiveness of Sound Quality by Ralph Baker211

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Low Frequency Response | 211 |
| 2. Midrange Frequency Response | 211 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| 3. High Frequency Response | 212 |
| 4. Bandwidth | 212 |
| 5. Distortion | 212 |
| 6. Signal To Noise Ratio | 213 |
| 7. Coloration | 213 |

Appendix C—The dB

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| by Ralph Baker | 215 |
|-----------------------------|------------|

Appendix D—Measuring Impedances

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| By Ralph Baker | 219 |
|-----------------------------|------------|

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Appendix E—Glossary | 221 |
|----------------------------------|------------|

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Index | 249 |
|--------------------|------------|