

CANADIAN AUDIO



IT'S ALL MADE HERE

Until quite recently, the Canadian audio manufacturing industry was tiny, and concerned mainly with supplying the lower-end of the market. In the past few years, not only has the number of companies making audio components in Canada grown dramatically, but the level of quality of the products they make has also risen, to the point that domestic products can compete with imports and win. Contributing editor Alan Lofft investigates what's happening amongst Canadian manufacturers.

Surprising as it may seem, it has been estimated that 60% of all the speakers sold in Canada are actually *made* here. Time was when an audiophile had to think long and hard to come up with the name of even *one* Canadian-made speaker, let alone any electronic component.

All this has changed, of course. In the ten or so years since the Canadian industry really began to blossom, a remarkable range of Canadian-manufactured products has emerged. In 1980, it is not only possible to find Canadian-engineered speakers that compete with — and in some cases surpass — the best that Britain, the United States, or Europe has to offer, but it's also practicable to assemble an entire audio system (save for the phono cartridge and tape deck) from Canadian-designed components. Given the high fatality rate of Canadian audio manufacturers in the past (of some 24 companies in operation four years ago, only 12 remain in business today), it must surely be some kind of testament to the spirit and risk-taking of the Canadian industry that the list now numbers over 50!

While some readers may have trouble swallowing that 60% statistic on speaker manufacturing, it should be pointed out that some brands that one might otherwise assume originate outside Canada are, in fact, made here. Sony, Akai, Kenwood, and Hitachi are just a few of the Japanese audio companies who have some of their speakers made to their specifications by Canadian manufacturers, and several U.S. and European manufacturers do the same — Electro-Voice, Acoustic Research and Philips spring to mind.

Of course, speakers are not the *entire* Canadian audio industry. If anything, the one really remarkable change that has occurred since *AudioScene's* last look at the industry in 1976 is the diversity of products now made here: amplifiers, turntable mats, power output displays, pre-amps, moving-coil "head" amps, record clamps, a high-end turntable, mixers, speaker stands, tape and record-care accessories — the list goes on.

It takes a special kind of resilience to survive in the Canadian market, particu-

larly in the light of Canadian audiophiles' long-standing preference for name-brands with international reputations. Not only is the domestic market much smaller than that of the United States, Japan, or Britain, but Canadian companies must also meet head on the enormous marketing clout of large, wealthy American audio firms. When it comes to slick merchandising, the Boses and JBLs are formidable adversaries.

That a significant number of Canadian companies manage not only to hang in there amidst the competition, but also to *export* their products to other countries, certainly speaks well of a unique Canadian stick-to-it-iveness.

Speaker manufacturing still represents a very substantial portion of the industry, and while it would be difficult to ascribe a certain speaker "sound" (in the manner of the American "New England sound" or the "California sound") to a particular area of the country, it does make *sense* to look at the industry from a geographical point of view.

For reasons determined as much by the

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fact that the part of Ontario around Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge has always been an area of serious audiophile activity, as by its accessibility to a ready market, there are a surprising variety of audio manufacturers based there.

PSB Speakers of Waterloo is an excellent example of a company that has grown from humble beginnings eight years ago (a Kitchener garage) to a sophisticated and quality producer of speakers that compete with the best. Now operating from a new 15,000 sq. ft. plant in Waterloo, PSB has 28 employees and manufactures 2,200 speakers per month. About 15% of this output is assembly for other manufacturers. That high-quality drivers can be developed in Canada is born out by the fact that PSB has some of its woofers (including those in the new PSB sub-woofer) made to spec by Canadian driver manufacturers. PSB has also had considerable success with its Infrasonic Barrier, a small electronic subsonic filter. PSB's careful attention to design is evidenced by the fact that every PSB speaker goes through an extended period of careful testing and experimentation at the National Research Council acoustics division in Ottawa.

Waterloo is also home base for **Audio Design**, a small company established four years ago by Howard Brown, who also happens to be chief designer. Aimed at the high-end audiophile market, his PA 100 Power amplifier and PM 100 preamp include such high-end niceties as interchangeable moving-magnet and moving-coil phono cards, separate power supply, and, in the case of the power amp, extreme stability under any kind of load. Audio Design now has distribution in seven provinces and will shortly be introducing a new pre-preamp to its product line. Obviously, golden-eared audio buffs

need look no further than their own country's products for classy high-end electronics.

According to Alex Eulenberg, Marketing manager and designer for **Sceptre Acoustics**, the company aims to "compete chiefly with the Boston Acoustics or Polk type of speaker line from the U.S." Established a scant six months ago, the Kitchener-based firm is currently producing two ported designs from its 3,000 sq. ft. plant. Both the S1 and S2a utilize Peerless tweeters and woofers made to spec by Cambridge Speakers, one of the few Canadian manufacturers of drivers. Eulenberg believes there is "a large mid-fi market out there", and hopes to add both a car speaker and a sub-woofer to the Sceptre line in the coming year.

John Szabo has been involved in audio



design with other companies for most of his life, but two years ago decided to strike out on his own to set up **Szabo Audio Systems** in Cambridge, Ontario. Szabo currently manufactures one model, the 424 A, a compact, two-way system with a bass extender (the B510-S) available as an option. Drivers and crossovers are manufactured to spec in Canada (except for the tweeter, which is imported), and final assembly is done by Szabo and an assistant. Current output is about 1,000 pairs a year, with distribution fairly extended through Ontario.

With its spectacular scenery and laid-back lifestyle, Canada's West coast seems an unlikely setting for audio manufacturing, but in fact, the Vancouver area supports a number of audio companies. One unique product from the West is made by **Eon Research**, a company so far engaged solely in the manufacture of *The Pod*, a molded, polycarbonate disc-clamping device designed to dampen out troublesome platter and disc resonances. Conceived by Eon president Brian Thurston as an alternative to some of the heavy record weights, the Pod has already received an enthusiastic review from Britain's prestigious Gramophone magazine. The Pod is extensively distributed throughout Canada, Britain, the United States, and Europe.

Vancouver is also home to **Jumetite Laboratories**, manufacturers of a rather



Szabo 424 "A" speaker (above)



Father and son, Dave and Brian Thurston of Eon Research. Brian is the designer of *The Pod*, and his dad handles the money.

Wilsdon Engineering plant in North Vancouver, B.C. Routing the corner of a Web enclosure (above left).

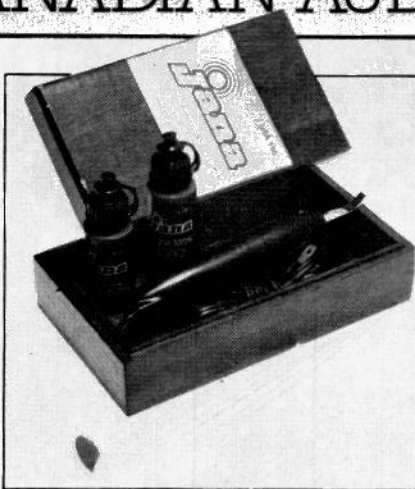
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esoteric, horn-loaded ribbon tweeter which is used in the Jumetite CR610 speaker system (coupled to an acoustic suspension woofer). The ribbon tweeter/midrange is also sold as a separate unit. A relative newcomer to audio technology, Jumetite is just now gearing up for production. According to company vice-president Ted Hobrough, Jumetite "is not actively pursuing the Canadian market." Instead, it is opening its first sales office in New York to serve the Northeastern region of the U.S.

Wilsdon Engineering, manufacturers of **Web** speakers, boasts an interesting statistic: more members of the Vancouver Symphony once admitted owning Web speakers than any other brand. Web speakers began their life 10 years ago as a house-brand for Web Sound, a Vancouver retail outlet, though now Wilsdon is a manufacturing operation only. Like many Canadian speaker makers, Wilsdon installs imported drivers in enclosures of their own design (a design they call a "Vented Internal Port"). Marketed chiefly in the West, the Web speaker line has the endorsement of the Juno award-winning rock group Trooper, who have used Web speakers during recording sessions.

A retail chain of stereo outlets through Alberta and B.C. is also the catalyst behind the **Vega-Linear** speaker line, produced from a 26,000 sq. ft. factory in Edmonton, Alberta. Unlike many pure assembly operations, however, Vega-Linear make their own drivers, though they do sub-contract the core and basket-punching stages of driver production. Employing a full-time engineer, all speaker design is done in an in-house anechoic chamber. The plant turns out about 2,000 speakers a month, a large portion of which go directly to the retail chain, the remainder to dealers across the country.

In addition to its **R.W.O.** line of consumer speakers, **R.W. Oliver Electronics** of Winnipeg manufactures a series of professional control-room monitors under the name **Fostex**. According to engineer Ted Telesky, driver selection and enclosure design for both lines are arrived at by using an IBM computer; Q's, resonances, and acoustic compliance are all optimized, then the drivers are manufactured to spec by suppliers in the United States and Japan. "We've always felt pro monitors have never had the sonic accuracy of many good domestic hi-fi speakers, so we've designed the Fostex monitors to



Jana Taperecorder Care Kit

fit the requirements of the studio, yet deliver the accuracy of a good domestic speaker." Some of the features of the pro monitors have been incorporated in the R.W.O. consumer speaker line.

With the assistance of a chemical engineer at the University of Winnipeg, **Jana Electronics** of Winnipeg has formulated its own line of specialized tape and record-care products. Analysis of some competitors' tape pinch-roller cleaners, for example, revealed the presence of an alcohol base which, over time, could cause the rubber to dry out. To overcome this, Jana added a soluble silicon base that seals the outer pores of the rubber. Jana also found inadequacies in other record-care solutions, so it formulated its own anti-static spray, record cleaner, and stylus cleaner. The Jana line is well represented across Canada and can also be found in some department stores.

Toronto reflects a broad range of audio manufacturing — everything from private-label speakers to high-end electronics. In the latter category, the **Bryston** amplifier has enjoyed an enviable reputation for a number of years in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Designed by chief engineer Chris Russell, the first amp was custom-built in 1973 for a recording studio. Deciding they had a superior product, Bryston has gone on to produce a range of high-quality amplifiers, and this year added a preamp, the 1B, to its line-up. With 25 employees, Bryston does an annual volume of \$1 million, and exports 40% of its amps to the United States.

In contrast to Bryston, **Pulse Acoustics** is a new company and still growing. According to Charles Aggerholm (who did his thesis at Ryerson on loudspeaker design, and engineered both Pulse models), imported drivers are used in his systems because of difficulty obtaining

suitable Canadian-made units. Pulse is a stickler for quality control: the sensitivity of all Pulse mirror-image pairs is matched to within 0.25 dB. Currently, three employees are producing 20 pairs of speakers a week.

Alex Raub, president of **Audiosphere Audio**, has taken a "middle-of-the-road" approach — nothing over \$500 — with his line of **Accusound** and **Audiosphere Research** speakers. It's obviously an approach that works, for his 32 employees will produce about 50,000 speakers by year's end! About 20% of Audiosphere's output is in "private-label" speakers — the speakers an audio dealer sells with his own name on them.

"Factory-direct is the way to go," says **Laser Phase** president Mark Merrens, noting that 80% of his Laser Phase systems are sold through the front doors of his factory. A transplanted Californian, Merrens says he got the idea from a friend of his who runs a similar operation in Los Angeles. Established two years ago, Laser Phase has three Toronto warehouse outlets where Laser Phase speakers are sold to consumers "for 30% to 40% less than an equivalent system would cost at a retail outlet", claims Merrens.

In contrast to the volume approach, **Angstrom Acoustics'** managing director and chief designer Rob Sekeris has spent several years developing and tweaking his systems with the help of the National Research Council acoustics division in Ottawa. Using drivers built to spec in France, the actual assembly of the Angstrom line is sub-contracted to another company. Sekeris feels the time spent tinkering with his designs has paid off in two speakers that deliver linear response with low coloration. Angstrom is currently distributing across Canada with some product going to the United States as well.

Rocelco, heretofore a distributor of Celestion speakers, has become actively involved in audio manufacturing with the introduction of its **Sigma-Null R400** professional power amplifier. Fan-cooled with a peak-reading LED display, the R400 delivers 200 watts per channel into 8 ohms. Jack Yeager, vice-president of Rocelco, expects full production of the amplifier to commence by early 1981. At a suggested list price of \$999, Yeager feels it will offer stiff competition to imported amps in the same power range.

Inception Audio of Toronto got into the speaker manufacturing business as a distributor of the British Tangent line of

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**Sigma Null R400 200-watt power amp
from Rocelco**



speakers. When Tangent met with financial trouble, Inception began making a similar line of speakers under the **Mirage** brand name. Using Audax and Peerless drivers, the actual assembly of the speakers is sub-contracted to other Ontario companies. Inception has recently hired Kevin Voecks, American designer of the esoteric and highly regarded Symdex Sigma speaker. Mr. Voecks has engineered the new Mirage SM-1, and has had considerable input on other Mirage systems. Mirage currently has good distribution throughout Canada and the U.S.

About 90% of the speakers made by **Accusonic** are sold under the **Audio Research** label, according to Otto Rada, general manager of Accusonic. The company itself has only several employees and sub-contracts all of its speaker assembly to other firms — nevertheless it has done about \$500,000 worth of business in the past year. Accusonic uses Canadian-made drivers in nearly all of its speakers.

Although it has only been in business seven months, **Lamda Audio Engineering** has introduced ten models of **Criterion** speakers — all available in kit form (at a saving of 50%, says Lamda president Chung Park). According to Park, Lamda is essentially a "warehousing operation" run by five employees, with all speaker assembly sub-contracted to smaller companies. Lamda uses Canadian, American, and Japanese-made drivers in its speakers, 15% of which are made for private-label buyers.

As has been mostly evident so far, most Canadian speaker makers do not manufacture their own drivers. One that does is **Paisley Research** of Markham, Ontario. It can produce up to 400 drivers a day in its 26,000 sq. ft. plant. Unlike other speaker-makers who do their own cabinetry and buy their drivers, Paisley makes the drivers and sub-contracts the encl-

sure assembly to Soundwood of Toronto. Ian Paisley, president and chief engineer, uses B & K equipment, an anechoic chamber, and a sophisticated gating system to develop the designs for his four Paisley speakers. According to Michael Rosenberg, marketing manager for Paisley, about 60% of the company's driver output is made for other speaker manufacturers.

Although the name **Soma** has been a familiar one for years in Canadian audio, the company is distinguished by its sheer size: on any "normal" day, their 28,000 sq. ft. plant produces 1,000 speakers from two production lines. With the hiring of acoustical engineer John Mayer a year ago, Soma has developed some highly innovative driver technology — a flat-diaphragm woofer and midrange for their new Coherence speaker line. Much of Soma's output — about 85% — is for private-label buyers, but their speakers are distributed world-wide — to Africa, Belgium, France, Turkey, Germany, Greece, the U.S., and Italy. Quality control is also important: every Soma speaker is individually swept with a B & K spectrum analyzer. If there is more than ± 3



**Audiosphere AX-Monitor 18 speakers
(above)**

**Mirage speakers from Inception Audio
(right)**



**Mission 770 speaker
(below)**



dB variation compared to a test model, the speaker is scrapped.

Pan Canada is another old name in Canadian audio. In one form or another it has been making audio tape for almost 20 years, and they're the only Canadian company who do it from scratch. The raw film is coated with oxide, slit in any number of different widths, then packaged in open-reel, cassette, and 8-track formats. Although they do have a standard consumer line of tapes, company president Harry Woolley says that much of their business is special orders — some of which may total tape lengths exceeding 12,000 miles!

Despite its small size, **Moss Electronics**

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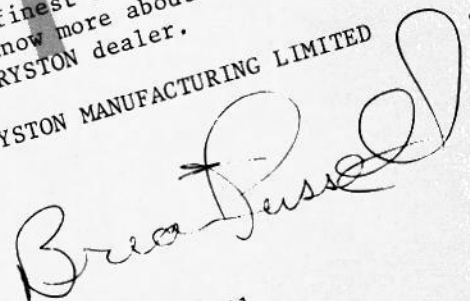
There is a large audio market in Canada that is, by and large, supplied imports from such places as Japan, the United States, Germany and England. There are also Canadian manufacturers. They are usually hard-working Canadians who care about the products they manufacture. So you know that if a particular Canadian firm has made itself known, and highly accepted, in most parts of the world, it is for such reasons as quality, reliability and price.

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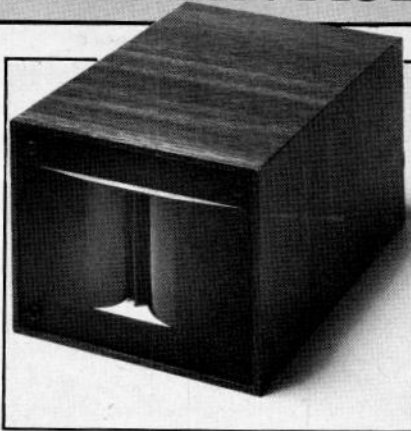
turns out some very sophisticated electronics: LED peak power meters for domestic and auto use and a professional digital recording-time indicator. The latter unit is also manufactured for Revox, who custom-fit it to some of their open-reel decks. All products are designed by company president Kris Alwani and are distributed across Canada.

Andy Staffer spent three years learning everything he could about speaker design before he set up **Staffer Sound** in Richmond Hill, Ontario. The result of his research (and a good deal of tinkering and tweaking at the National Research Council acoustics facility in Ottawa) is a new three-way system, the Staffer 3, designed to compete with the world's best speakers. Using Audax drivers, Staffer has some of the assembly sub-contracted, but does final assembly and testing with his partner. Of "unusual shape", the Staffer 3 will be introduced in early December. Having done considerable part-time work in Toronto recording studios, Staffer felt there was a lot lacking in studio monitor design. His attempt to "bring hi-fi quality into the control room" will soon be seen in the Staffer 4, a tri-amped, three-way monitor that uses no horns but still delivers very high efficiency.

Peel Trek Industries, based in Mississauga, Ontario, is currently turning out 1,600 speakers a month with the **PTI** label. According to Vic Trustrum, president, PTI have been making all their own drivers, as well as doing the cabinet work. But the driver manufacturing will probably be phased out because it's "too costly". There are nine models in the PTI line, all designed by in-house engineer Don Trustrum, and the speakers are distributed across Canada. Peel Trek have about 20 employees working out of a 17,000 sq. ft. plant.

Sound Distribution is probably best-known for its **Studio Lab** line of speakers, although the company also produces three other lines — **Synergy**, **Electron**, and **Zytron** — from its 10,000 sq. ft. Toronto plant. According to Ed Weiss, chief engineer, the drivers are made to spec for them, but all cabinet work is done by Sound Distribution. About 40% of the 150 speaker-a-day output is for private labels.

Although most audiophiles associate the **Mission** name with Britain, Mission Electronics is now making three of their speakers (the 700, 710, and 770) in a Toronto plant, and will follow this with production of the Mission electronics line



Soma RT-1000 add-on ribbon tweeter

— amplifier, preamplifier, and integrated amp. Rather than simply being a Canadian assembly operation, Mission have set up a full R & D lab and have brought over the English technical director. In addition to distribution across Canada, Mission products are also handled by 50-American dealers.

Audio Products International must take credit for being the largest Canadian speaker manufacturer. A.P.I., the parent company of **Sound Dynamics** and **Energy**

lots of bass "punch" — more in keeping with the American "California sound". According to company co-founder George Baker, combined sales of the **Sound Dynamics** and **Energy** speaker lines will total 12 million dollars in 1980. The lines are heavily distributed internationally; European sales alone will account for \$5 million, and Australia, the United States, and Canada represent another large market.

Oakville, Ontario, is the home base of **Mitom Industries**, producer of **Laser** speakers. Established only eight months ago, Laser is another company that makes all of its raw drivers, cabinetry, and component parts from scratch. According to company president Emil Bazinet, the Laser models are designed to compete directly with the **JBL/Cerwin-Vega/Altec** type of sound. All the Laser models feature high power handling, high efficiency, and user-adjustable midrange and high-frequency level controls. In marked contrast to a number of other speaker manufacturers, Mitom maintains a well-equipped listening room with facilities to compare the Laser line instantly with competing brands. With 50 employees,



Voice-coil assembly at Sound Dynamics factory in Markham, Ontario

Speaker Corporations, is housed in a 50,000 sq. ft. plant staffed by 150 employees. Unlike most Canadian speaker makers, API produces every component part of the **Sound Dynamics** and **Energy** speaker lines themselves, from voice coils, cabinetry, and domes, to magnet assemblies, woofers, and crossovers. For the **Energy** line of speakers a special "Shadow-Ribbed" tweeter with a claimed 180 degree dispersion was developed by the plant's R & D department. Coupled to a dual-suspension passive radiator for extended bass response, **Energy** speakers are said to deliver a typical "New England sound." In contrast, the **Sound Dynamics** speakers are of high efficiency and deliver

current production averages 200 speakers a day with a raw driver production capability of 3,000 units a day. Laser is currently promoting heavily in Europe, and expects to tackle the American market in 1981.

With the increasing attention paid to the matter of damping spurious platter and disc resonances during play, it's only logical that someone should come up with a well-designed turntable mat. That's exactly what **Bromley Audio Designs** of Toronto has done; the **Roundel** Turntable Mat is molded (in Toronto) of a special propylene rubber intended to provide maximum damping effect. According to company president David Lang,

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the rubber also has an ideally sticky surface to provide intimate contact with the record.

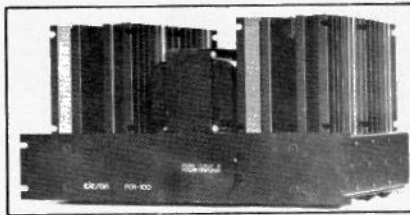
Although the Toronto and Cambridge/Kitchener regions are the centres of much of Ontario's audio manufacturing, there are a number of other companies located in smaller centres throughout the province.

The **Radius Company** in Dunnville, Ontario, has been making speakers since 1958. According to president Merle J. Knight, the Radius line is directed at a middle-of-the-road market and is distributed across Canada. Radius has the drivers made to its specs by a Canadian supplier, and the crossovers and final cabinet work are done in the Dunnville plant. Like many other manufacturers, Mr. Knight was an audio hobbyist before he took the plunge into professional speaker production.

Sarnia, Ontario, is home to **Norman Enterprises**, which in addition to making a line of domestic Norman speakers, also manufactures speakers for public address and architectural applications. The Norman systems are all three-way, bass reflex

speakers of high efficiency. Drivers are made to spec by a Canadian supplier, and final assembly and cabinet work are done in Sarnia. According to designer Paul Wooley, production of the domestic line totals about 1,000 pairs a year.

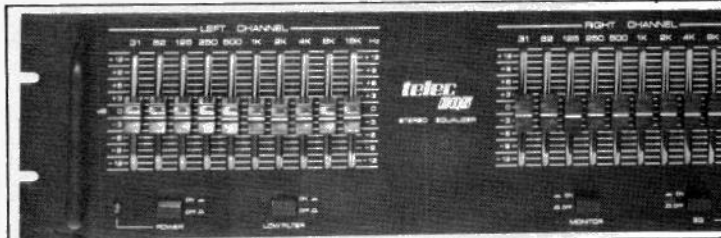
Audio-Logic, based in Concord, Ontario, has been making its own Audio-Logic line of speakers for nine years, as well as some private-label work. According to president Brian Anelevitz, the plant turns out up to 10,000 speakers per month with a staff of 35 people. Targeted at the "mid-fi" market, Anelevitz believes the secret to survival in the Canadian audio



market is "good management". Consulting engineers are responsible for Audio-Logic speaker design, and the drivers used are made to spec both in Canada and offshore.

RWR Audio, an Ottawa-based company, is responsible for the design and manufacture of a moving-coil step-up transformer. Bill Jennings, one of the partners in the three-man venture, established the specs for the unit, and Hammond supply some of the major parts. Aimed at "esoteric" audiophiles, the RWR transformer utilizes a clever switching arrangement to allow the step-up ratio to be matched to any available moving-coil phono pick-up. Current production is about 20 units a month, and distribution is mainly in the East and in Vancouver.

In Ancaster, Ontario, **Naiad Products** has been making **Profile** audio component racks and **Plateau** speaker stands for over a year. Hans Ard, president of Naiad, came from an audio marketing background and "knew what consumers



Eleson PCA 100
25-watt, pure
Class A power
amp (above left)

Telec EQ5
graphic equalizer
(above)

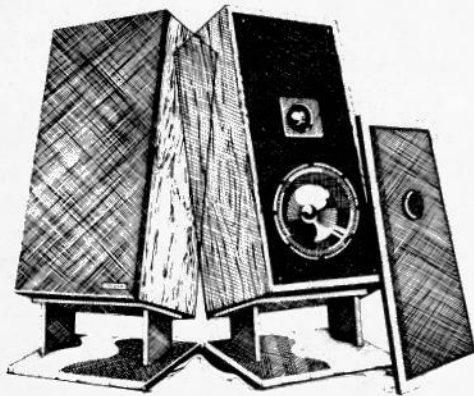
and retailers wanted. We put together a package to meet everyone's needs." The stands and racks are distributed in both Canada and the United States.

David Brown Acoustics is based in Unionville, Ontario, and produces the **Renaissance** line of speakers. Established a year ago, the company is currently making the RII, a two-way vented system with a dome tweeter, and the RIII, similar, but with an added midrange unit. Assembly of the systems is sub-contracted; drivers are made to spec in Canada except for an imported tweeter. Distribution is concentrated in Ontario with a National marketing manager soon to be appointed.

Restec, of Beeton, Ontario, manufactures an interesting line of speakers, three models of which feature transmission line loading of the enclosure. According to J.J. Alvares, president, Restec systems make use of both imported drivers and Canadian-made units built to Restec's specifications. The company began its operation six years ago in Edmonton, Alberta, and has been Ontario-based for over a year. Quality control is important at Restec; each speaker pair goes through

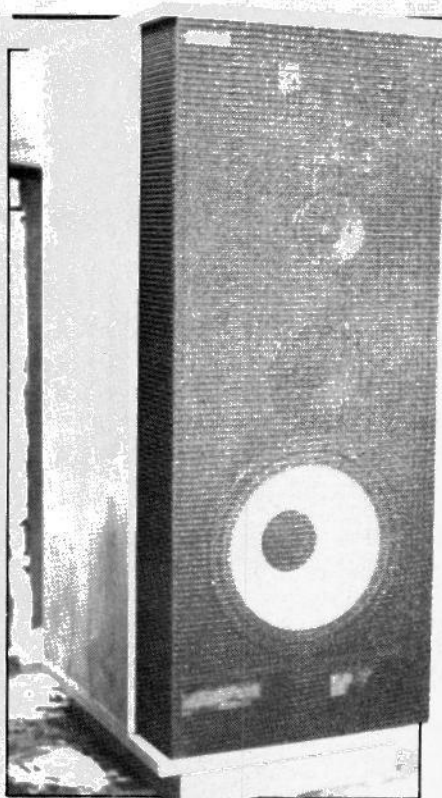
mirage SM-1

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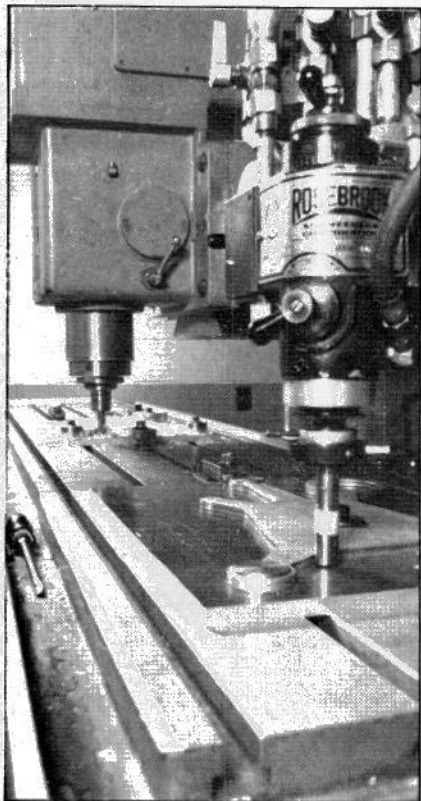
Inception Audio Ltd.,
21 Progress Avenue,
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Tel. (416) 298-3434

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Restec 200-2 speaker

Marcel Riendeau, president of Trans Audio Marketing, surrounded by his major product, Oracle turntables (right). Machining the base of an Oracle turntable (below).



a day of listening tests and technical measurements before it's shipped. "We're a manufacturer who likes to sell a consumer a pair of speakers and five years later he still thinks of us," notes Mr. Alvares.

Joseph Izsak has been researching the subject of speaker cable for several years, and his company, **Izsak Developments**, is now offering a low-inductance, low-capacitance speaker cable. For best results, Izsak believes the two conductors in speaker cable should be separated; consequently his cable is coaxial with a #11-gauge, solid, centre-core conductor, foam dielectric, and braided shield. The Izsak cable is claimed to provide "tighter bass" and extended high-frequency response.

Quebec has always been a hotbed of esoteric audiophilia, so it is no surprise at all that Canada's first high-end audiophile turntable should be developed there. **Trans Audio Marketing**, under chief engineer and president Marcel Riendeau, is manufacturing the stunning-looking and beautifully designed **Oracle** turntable. Though barely a year old, the \$1,000 Oracle is already represented by 30 dealers in Canada, 45 dealers in the



United States and distributors in Europe, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Unquestionably helping sales is a rave review of the turntable in one of the American "underground" journals. Current output of the Sherbrooke, Quebec, plant is 300 turntables a month, with production expected to increase to 400 a month by January 1981.

According to Eugène Cazalais, chief engineer of **Telec**, about 50% of the company's output of power amplifiers, mixers, equalizers, and preamplifiers are sold under private-label names. All engineering of Telec products is done in-house, and 15 employees of the St. Laurent, Quebec, company produce about

500 units per month. Distribution so far has been largely concentrated in Ontario and Quebec.

Eleson is a new, Montreal-based company producing a pure Class A power amplifier conservatively rated at 25 watts per channel. Engineer Dave Reich prefers designing "high-quality products aimed at high-end audiophiles," and expects Eleson will next introduce a moving-coil pre-preamp. Distribution of the Eleson Class A amp is so far limited to Ontario and Quebec.

Dave Lang, president of **Artech Electronics** in Dorval, Quebec, designs a line of speaker stands under the Artech name; the stands are then made for him by a Montreal metal-working company. Artech stands are available throughout Canada.

"I have better acceptance of my amplifiers in the States than I do in my own country — which is sick," says **Proximity** president Kai Voight. Whatever the reason, Proximity, based in Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Quebec, exports about 60% of its annual production of 1,400 amplifiers to the United States. In operation for three years, Proximity also manufactures a preamp-mixer, domestic hi-fi speakers, and speakers for sound reinforcement. About 35% of Proximity's output is for private-labels — mostly in the American market. Speaker design is done by Voight, but a full-time engineer does the electronics design. Drivers are made to spec for Proximity, but Voight is currently tooling up to manufacture a new horn-loaded, compression driver "as soon as the magnetometer arrives". Proximity's 12 employees currently make about 10,000 speakers a year.

That the Canadian audio industry is flourishing is surely evident: from 24 to 50 companies in four years represents pretty impressive growth. And this rather exhaustive list doesn't include those foreign manufacturers who have Canadian assembly operations.

More significant than just sheer numbers though, is the emergence of a growing number of companies that are developing products that are not only uniquely Canadian in design and conception — a very healthy trend — but are competitive on an international level with the very best in electronic, speaker, and turntable design. It's an auspicious start for the decade; with 1980, the Canadian audio industry has truly come of age.