

OVER LAKE GENEVA

A memorable day at the Potter's

On the initiative of JPN Audio, Nagra reseller in the French-speaking region of Switzerland, and the support of Stephen and Kerstin Potter, the internationally accredited classical guitarist Maurizio Grandinetti and Nagra created a cultural project with innovative technology. It involved recording of a concert, partly using a guitar built by Maurice Ottiger, a renowned local luthier, and its reinfusion in the same space - in a dream house situated in the commune of Glion, just above the famous Montreux station on the side of Lake Geneva.

by
Jean-Pierre Denyset,
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THE ROOM

The room chosen for the recording is situated on the top floor of the house, and offers a large 250 m² arena covered with parquet flooring. The walls of the loft are sloping, giving an interesting acoustic effect. The solid wood parquet enriches the sound with a natural tympani with a lot of early reflection and the rest of the room reacts very favourably with very little parasitic interference, and no echo flutter. The large dimensions of the room limits the problems of low frequency standing waves.

Finally the most critical problem comes from outside, the passing of high altitude aircraft, and the odd mountain rescue helicopter – which remind us that we are at the foot of the Alps – and a subsidiary one being the rumble of the water in the central heating!

The sound pick-up was made up of Neumann and Schoeps microphones, a Nagra D-II at 48 kHz 4 channel (when this recording was made the NAGRA VI was not entirely finished). Nevertheless for the transmission of the concert in 2009, it was naturally used as the source.

THE CONCERT

For the event, Consuela, the wife of Maurizio, harpist and professional singer, joined her husband to play in solo and

duo certain pieces. It was an opportunity for some local audiophiles and enthusiasts to listen to a concert in an intimate yet different environment.

EDITING AND MASTERING

Maurizio Grandinetti is familiar with digital editing techniques and does it himself. The editing of the pieces was done on a Digidesign Protools system. Matthieu Latour, Commercial Sales Manager of Nagra's Hi-Fi division, but above all, a sound engineer, mixed the different tracks, aligned the timings of the different microphones and made a slight mastering to harmonize the levels. The treatment was minimal, specifically without adding any artificial reverberation.

THE TRANSMISSION

In December 2009, the Potter's once again offered us their hospitality so as to playback the recordings. About twenty lucky people were able to benefit from the experience. For the event a Nagra and Verity Audio system was installed in the same room where the initial recordings were made. This posed a few acoustic problems notably the increase in the acoustic signature of the room, present during both the recording and the playback of the pieces. In any case the result was enthusiastically received by the participants who "Re-experienced" the initial concert over and over again.



Maurizio Grandinetti on the guitar and his wife Consuela playing the harp

Below: Stephen Potter introducing the concert



View on the Lake Geneva from the Potter's house

THE PROGRAM

Maurizio Grandinetti prepared several varied pieces:

- **Giovanni Zamboni Romano, From Sonata I:**
Allemande
Courante
- **Elliott Carter:**
Changes for guitar
- **Mario Castelnuovo - Tedesco:**
Tonadilla in the name of André Segovia
- **Elliott Sharp:**
Seek

THE SYSTEM

The NAGRA VI as a playback source, drove a Nagra PL-L pre-amplifier, and in turn a pair of VPA tube monoblock amplifiers. The speakers were Parsifal Ovation from the Quebec manufacturer Verity. Despite the size and volume of the room the 50 watts of the VPA's easily filled the room with a very natural sound which demonstrated again how the notion of power is purely subjective.

The evening finished by listening to old master recordings of the Montreux Jazz Festival – for which Nagra has been a technical and strategic partner for many



A short break on the terrasse of Potter's dreamhouse



Top: The vast room transformed for the concert

Bellow: The Nagra team prepares for the recording. From left to right: Jean Coquel, Jean-Pascal Panchard, Matthieu Latour

years – until late into the night. These included recordings of Ella Fitzgerald and Nina Simone dating from 1969 to tracks recorded in 2009, only a few kilometers below the house, and completed a memorable evening. ■

To follow Maurizio Grandinetti:
www.mauriziograndinetti.net

Special thanks to Maurizio and Consuela Grandinetti as well to Kerstin and Stephen Potter.

Photos
JPN AUDIO – Jean-Pierre Denyset