

For The Holiday Season A Guide To Buying Stereos

by Jay Shannon
Collegian Staff Writer

With the Christmas season fast approaching many students may be hoping for that special gift of a stereo or may be in the market for one if they have some extra Christmas cash. This article has been included in The Collegian to provide a few basic buying tips for anyone who may not be quite as informed about stereo equipment as they would like to be.

In recent years, the home stereo industry has expanded in leaps and bounds as more and more people have realized how enjoyable and worthwhile quality sound reproduction can be. One of the major markets for stereo equipment has been that of young adults and college students, to which we all belong. As we were growing up during the 60's and 70's, music became increasingly important to the point where nearly all of us have some interest in music of one form or another. This phenomenon has produced a generation of extremely discriminating equipment and recording consumers.

The variety of equipment now available is mind-boggling. It ranges from the very simplest of stereos in the \$100-\$150 range to multi-component systems costing several thousand dollars. But since the average college student

can hardly afford to spend \$1,000 on a stereo, this article will deal with equipment in the \$400-\$500 range.

If you are the least bit concerned about the quality of sound that your system produces, the first type of equipment, up to the \$200 range, should definitely be avoided. These compact stereos generally provide poor sound and tend to damage records so that if you should eventually purchase higher quality components, the sound could be very distorted. If, however, all you want is something to just play records and don't care much about their sound, then a stereo of this type might suit your purpose.

If you are interested in clear sound, then the time it would take to save the extra money for a better system would be worth it. A component system costing \$300-\$400 would consist of a small AM-FM stereo receiver which would produce 8-12 watts of power, a belt-driven turntable, and a 6-8 inch speaker system. These small systems have become very popular for providing quality sound for the person on a low budget. Of course tape players or more expensive equipment can be added on later.

Even though most compact stereos do not provide very good sound, there have been some recently released models which

now use some of the technology employed in better systems to give a sound close to some inexpensive component stereos. These systems also tend not to damage records terribly and are moderately priced in the area of \$275-\$325. A stereo of this type might be a good alternative for those with serious money problems or a limit on space for their equipment.

This article is not intended to be very technical, but here are a few things to look for which might be helpful in comparison shopping.

The power output of a receiver isn't really very important in picking a quality system, but it must be considered in picking a system which suits your needs. A small receiver putting out 10-20 watts per channel is adequate power for any dorm room or small apartment situation and will range in price from \$200-\$250.

The amount of total harmonic distortion produced by a receiver refers to the tonal accuracy of the

note being reproduced and is usually given as a percentage. The lower the distortion the better it will sound. Some of the best receivers available have a THD level as low as .08 per cent. If the distortion level is 1.0 per cent or higher, the distortion could be rather noticeable, especially when the volume is turned up. These figures will at least give you some basis for comparison.

When buying a turntable it is important to know if you prefer a manual, automatic, or semi-automatic, model. A manual requires that you do all the work. You must put the tone arm on the record and you must pick the arm up at the end of it. A fully automatic turntable will play through the record and return the tone arm after it is over with just the flick of a switch. A semi-automatic requires that you put the tonearm on the record but will return it after the record has played. If price is a major concern, you should stick to the manual or semi-automatic models since they are generally a little cheaper. A typical low-priced turntable will range from \$80-\$125. Another important item to remember when turntable

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Basketball Underway

by John Blimmel
Sports Editor

Another basketball season is underway and compared to last season, it has already been a success for the Behrend Cubs basketball team. Four games into the season, the Cubs have already matched last year's victory total of two. Behrend suffered through a 2-20 campaign last year. But much more is expected this year. Behrend plays in District 18 and in an area composed of the Big Five: Behrend, Gannon, Edinboro, Mercyhurst, and Alliance. While not predicting any championships, second year Coach Leon Wright thinks that his team can be competitive this year. Speed is the Cubs' forte, as they play a running game and have a fine fast break against those who feel they lack the height to be competitive (only one player stands above 6'4"), Coach Wright argues that Behrend's size is comparable to that of most other teams. He says that there are many players on the team who play taller than they actually are. Depth may also help this year's

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