

HAGERMAN TECHNOLOGY FRYBABY

Part one

WWW.AUDIOPULS.HR



text: Marko Pecotic, July 2007

Introduction

Yet today I can still see how many audiophiles don't take burn in process for serious. I can still hear some of them saying that burn-in as such does not exist. I can also hear some say that burn-in process is not a lie, but only up to 100 hours is more than enough, which could, but doesn't have to be truth – that depends on the individual case and on the audio component that is being burn-in. Some people say that amplifiers and cables absolutely need no burn-in, that burn-in as a term is a lie that came from greedy audio industry, and that speakers are the only audio component that needs some burn in because is has «moving parts». From my personal experience, I can say that burn-in is not myth. There are no myths, voodoo or science

fiction in hi-fi – either you hear the difference or the opposite. And from my experience, I can say that differences can be huge. But there's no universal formula. I can confirm that the more expensive the audio component is, the differences in sound after burn in will be bigger. I suggest that you visit a nice web site which gives many answers on the burn-in topic, it's at www.hagtech.com/burn.html.

Here's some of my experience on cables burn-in. A brand new cable with zero working hours will usually sound very good... but that period usually lasts for say 30 minutes to 1 hour. After that, sound of the cable would usually become awful. How, where and why did the the cable lose that good sound – I dont know. And than it usually takes say 100-300 working hours for a cable to burn in. I remember the LAT IC-300 Signature interconnect which began to sound good after cca 100 working hours, but only after cca 400 hours it began to play like it does today. Pure siler cables are specially tough to burn in. I'll mention one manufacture of high end silver cables who says that his cables very often need up to 1.000 hours to start playing. So I'm talking about patience, and so often audiophiles dont have it. Unfortunately, very often it happens that an audiophile buys a new audio component, brings it home, listens to it, he's not happy with the sound, and in a couple of days he decides to sell it. More than once, we've received in our ADS section an ad that goes like this : »xy speakers on sale, brand new, bought them 7 days ago at xy store«. In those 7 days, that guy did not have enough time time get familiar with the sound of those speakers, didn't have enough time and patince to wait untill they are burned in, nor did he try to find the right postition for his speakers in the room.

Hagerman Technology

Hagerman technology is a small american company based at Hawaii, owned by Jim Hagerman (Jim is a passionate trumpet player – picture on the right).

The company is specialized in the design of high quality audio components that don't cost too much, but give audiophile quality sound.

All products are hand made in America and

come with a 10 year warranty. Among many different and interesting

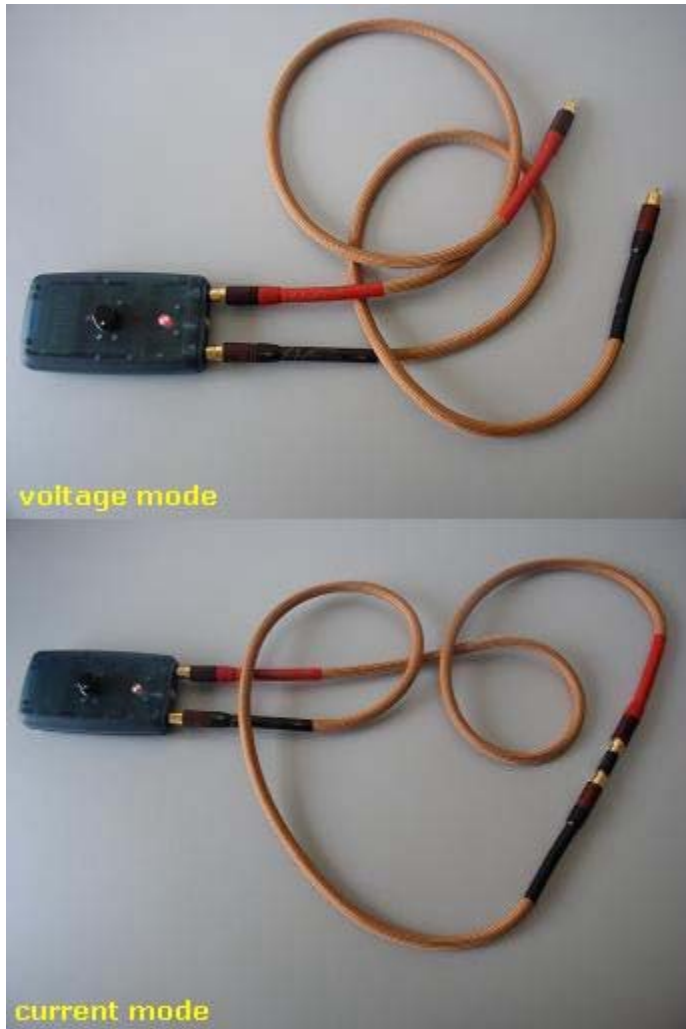


products from the Hagerman catalogue, we could mention say tube phono preamp, DAC's, phono clamps, amplifiers, phono preamp power supplies, CD player clocks etc. All of that and more can be ordered directly at their web site which is at www.hagtech.com. Object of this review is their product called FRYBABY which costs 250 USD and can be ordered directly at their web site.

FryBaby

FryBaby is a little box with which you can burn in various audio components, and it has been out on the market since April 2006. It works either with one 9V battery or with a wall wart supply. Along with FryBaby you will also receive an audio disc, various adapters, wall wart supply and a manual.

Fry Baby itself does not need any burn in, just in case you were wondering. When burning-in a cable, there are two steps – 1st step, 24 hours for a voltage mode, and 2nd step – 48 hours for a current mode. On the picture below, you can see the difference between these two steps. Don't neglect the direction of a cable!



Connecting and burning in

You can burn-in various cables (digital, interconnect, AC and speaker) with FryBaby, as well as phonostages and (pre)amplifiers. If you want to burn-in a CD player or a CD transport, you need to use the audio disc, number 1 on the disc should be played on repeat for 24 hours.

As for the speakers, FryBaby is not designed to burn them. Although we could use that FryBaby audio disc, and let the number 1 on the disc play on repeat. Amplifier should be powered on, and the signal from the disc will go to the speakers – that signal could burn-in internal wiring and coils, but not the drivers. From his own experience, Jim Hagerman says that the best way to burn in speakers is to play an extremely loud drum recording.

CD player burn in

I started the review with the Fry Baby audio disc. At the beginning, I was shocked. Because, when we use the term "burn-in", we usually expect to burn-in a brand new component. I was curious, and without any expectations, I used that audio disc to burn in my CD player. Which certainly is not new, by today it has been working for say 1500-2000 hours. I chose three songs (Shostakovich, D. Krall and Bizet), I



I listened to them two times each, turned off my amplifier, put the FryBaby audio disc in my CD player, and let the number 1 on the disc play on repeat for next 48 hours (twice longer than what is recommended in the manual).

48 hours later, I powered my amplifier on, waited for 15 minutes till it warmed up. I was in a shock, that was my first reaction. This is one of the best tweaks I've ever tried. It's better than SID (Sound improvement disc) and Bedini together. These are my impressions: Shostakovich: fuller tones; more refined in treble; bigger/deeper stage; instruments with a bigger body; more air; better sustain of instruments; no changes in bass.

D. Krall: bass now sounds more fresh; vocal is positioned deeper into the soundstage; third dimension of 3D sound (height) is improved.

Bizet: only after two of three seconds, it's so obvious that bass got more breath and freshness; bigger, deeper, wider and richer soundstage; more breath and body in bass; richer in the middle; warmer vocal; better sustain; you can feel and touch the singer who is here in my room.

Conclusion

Very often audiophiles describe small changes and small improvements in sound, they often describe it as a big improvement. In this case, this was not an improvement that was noticed with focused or concentrated listening, the difference was SO obvious and audible. I've also listened to some other recordings beside these three, the impressions were very similar. At this moment, I'll stop my review, I'm not ready to move on to the next step, which would be say, amplifier or cable burn-in, my ears need some time to adjust to this new sound of the system. Technical description of Fry Baby, although it is described in few sentences at the Hagerman web site, I didn't cover it this time. In the next part, a fellow Robert Kocijan will write about his impression on this, I believe a brilliant product. And now I'm gone to the seaside to refresh and cool myself in the Adriatic sea, and to prepare myself for this autumn's Multimedia hifi show at the Movie hotel & pub... and to cool my thoughts from everything that FryBaby did to me.