

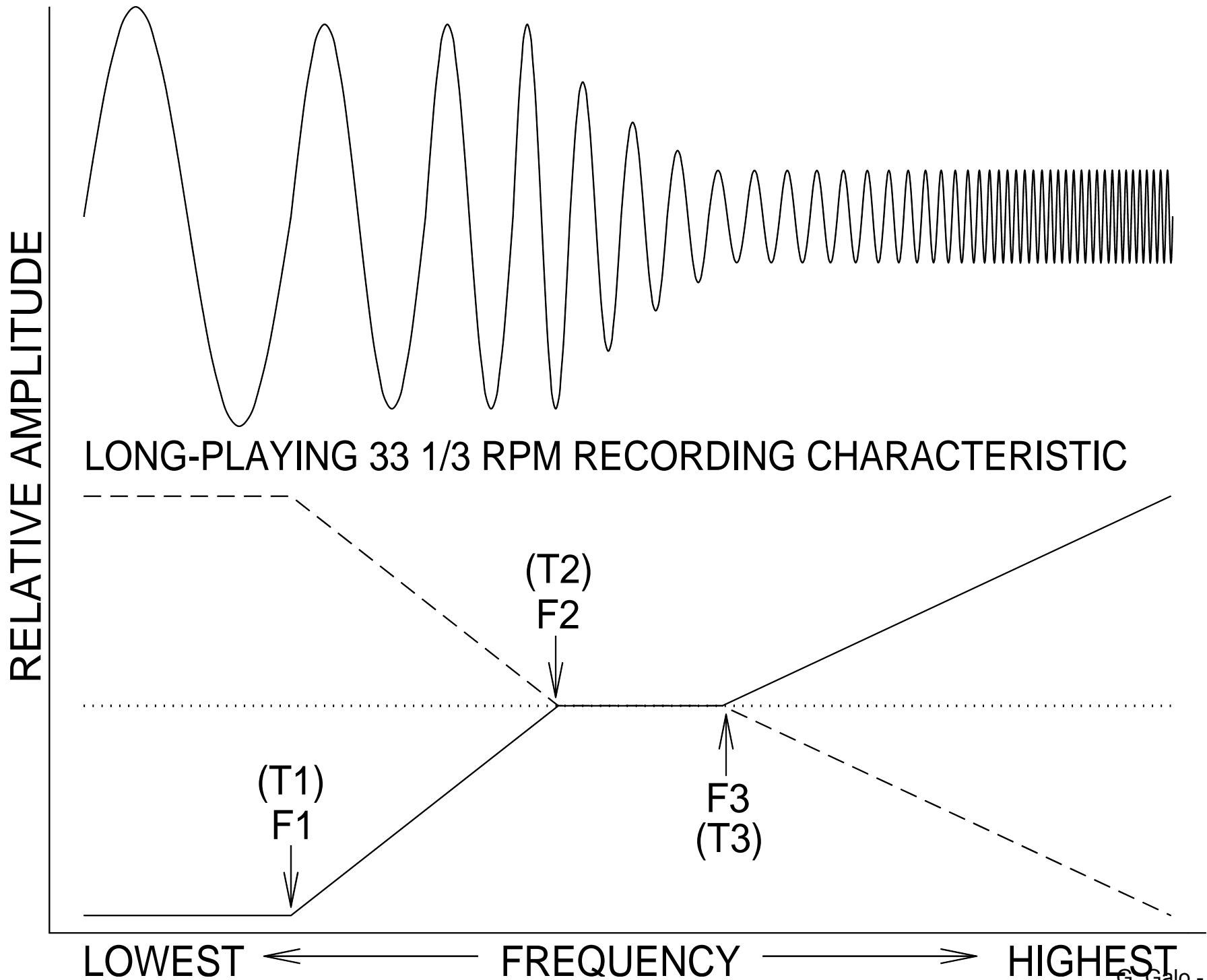
**THE  
COLUMBIA Lp\*  
EQUALIZATION  
CURVE**

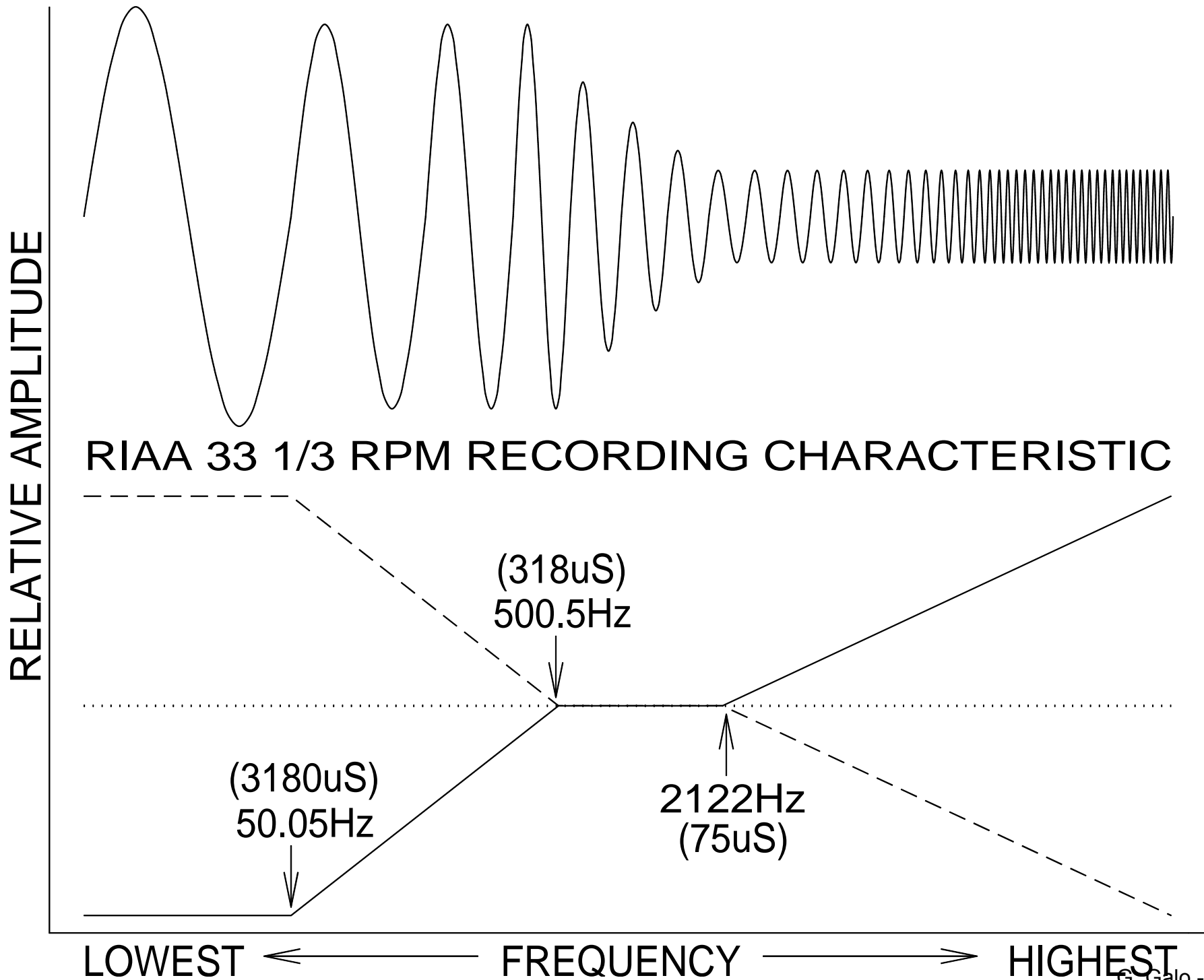
Band No. 1: Overture  
Band No. 2: Menuet  
Band No. 3: Fencing master  
Band No. 4: Entrance and dance of  
the tailors  
Band No. 6: Courante

**Presented by**

**Gary A. Galo**  
**ARSC Conference**

**March 29, 2008**





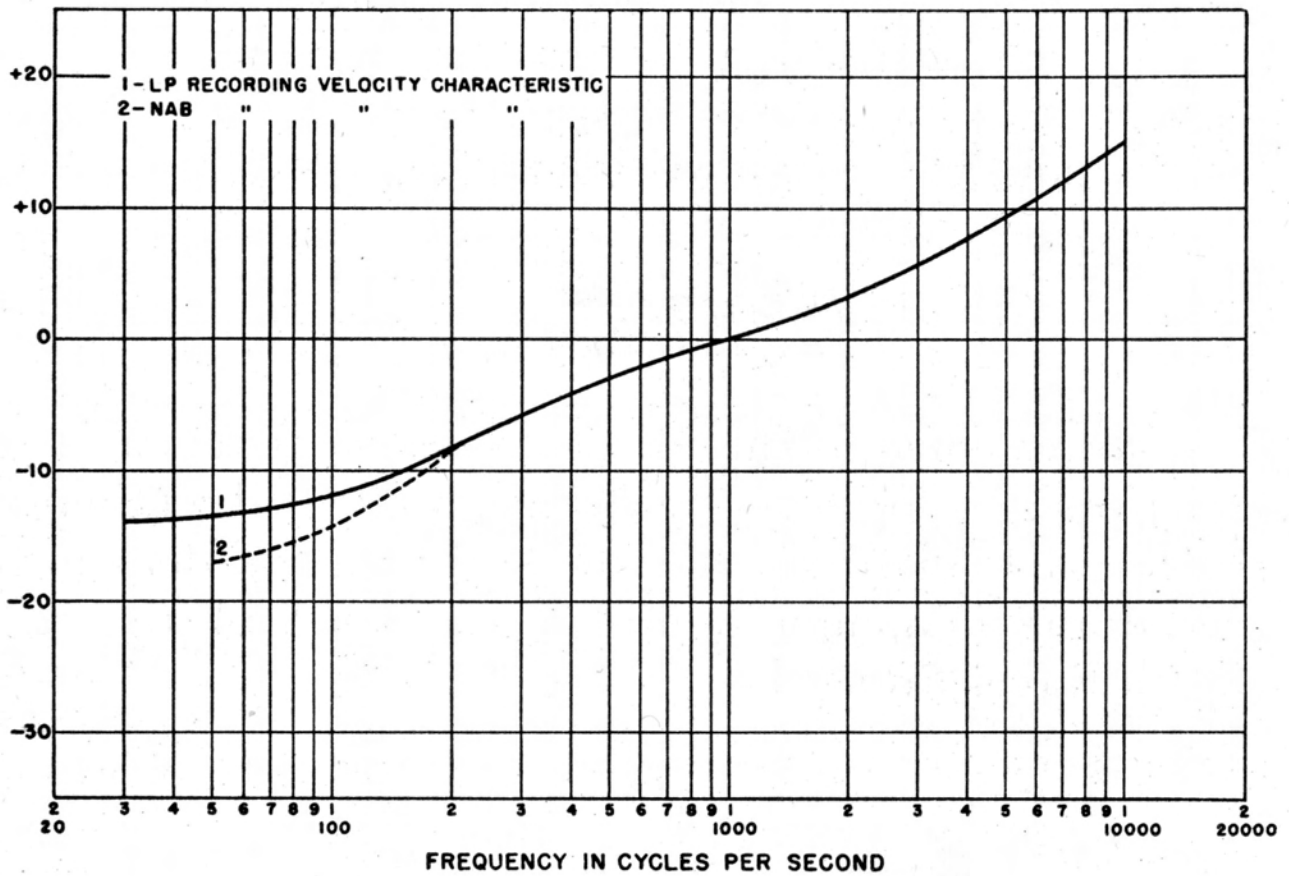
# The Columbia Lp Equalization Curve: Conflicting Opinions

Note: F = Turnover Frequency and T = Time Constant  
 $T = 1 / 2\pi F$  and  $F = 1 / 2\pi T$

1. KAB Souvenir EQS MK12 Manual:  
F1 = 50Hz (T1 = 3180 $\mu$ S)  
F2 = 500Hz (T2 = 318 $\mu$ S)  
F3 = 1590Hz (T3 = 100  $\mu$ S or +/- 16dB at 10kHz)
2. Tremaine  
F1 not specified  
F2 = 300Hz  
F3 not specified
3. Copeland:  
T1 = 1590 $\mu$ S (F1 = 100Hz)  
T2 = 400 $\mu$ S (F2 = 398Hz)  
T3 = 100 $\mu$ S (F3 = 1590 Hz or +/- 16dB at 10kHz)
4. Copeland's interpretation of Langford-Smith's Fig. 17.15:  
T1 = 1590 $\mu$ S (F1 = 100Hz)  
T2 = 350 $\mu$ S (F2 = 455Hz)  
T3 = 100 $\mu$ S (F3 = 1590 Hz or +/- 16dB at 10kHz)
5. McIntosh C-8 Equalization Chart (12/20/1956, S.N. 10600 and up):  
F1 not specified  
F2 = 750 Hz (with Bass control set at -2)  
F3 = +/- 16dB at 10kHz (1590Hz; T3 = 100 $\mu$ S)
6. Powell, High Fidelity Magazine (Sept. 1955), Rek-O-Kut (Esoteric)  
Re-Equalizer II Operating Manual, and others:  
F1 not specified  
F2 = 500Hz (modified NAB) (T2 = 318 $\mu$ S)  
F3 = +/- 16dB at 10kHz (NAB) (1590Hz; T3 = 100 $\mu$ S)
7. Eargle and others:  
F1 = 100Hz (T1 = 1590 $\mu$ S)  
F2 = 500Hz (T2 = 318 $\mu$ S)  
F3 = 1590Hz (T3 = 100 $\mu$ S or +/- 16dB at 10kHz)

# The Columbia Long-Playing Microgroove Recording System\*

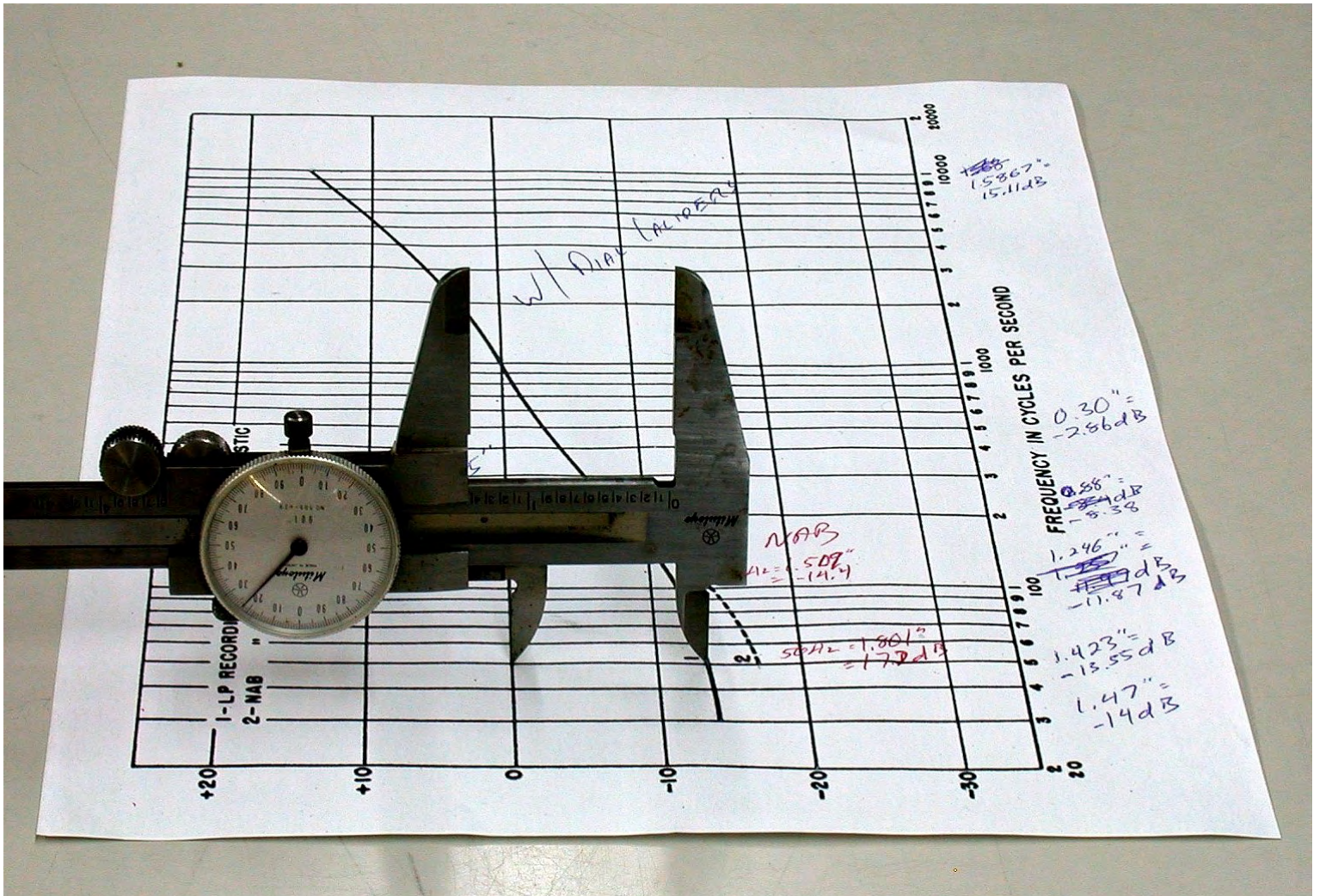
PETER C. GOLDMARK†, FELLOW, IRE, RENÉ SNEPVANGERS†, AND  
WILLIAM S. BACHMAN‡, MEMBER, IRE



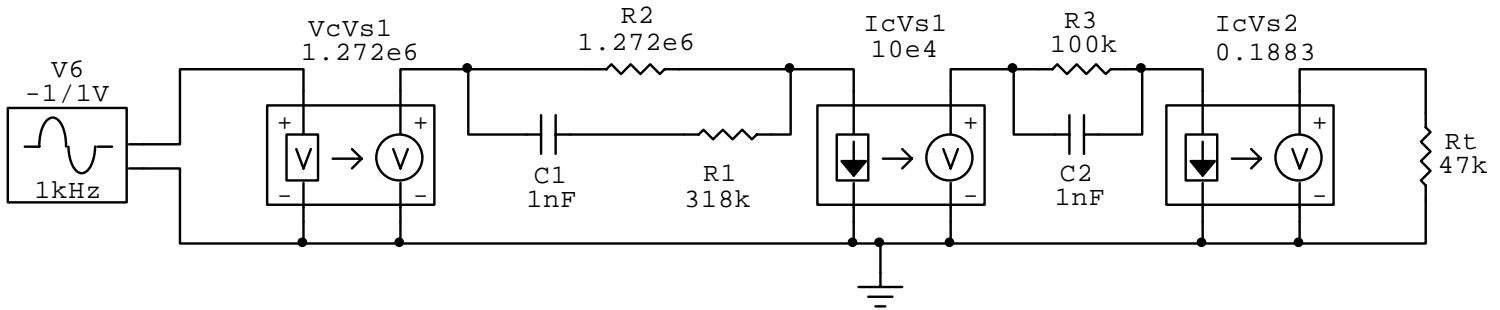
**BELOW 200Hz: TOP CURVE IS COLUMBIA; LOWER CURVE IS NAB**

30Hz	-14.00dB
50Hz	-13.55dB
100Hz	-11.87dB
200Hz	-8.38dB
500Hz	-2.86dB

# MEASUREMENT OF SNEPVANGERS GRAPH USING DIAL CALIPERS WITH RESOLUTION TO 0.001 INCH



## SIMULATION MODEL



Emphasis Network: 100Hz/500Hz/1590Hz (16dB @ 10kHz)

1. Determine the F3 frequency from the playback attenuation at 10kHz:

$$F3 = 10000 / (\sqrt{(1/((10^{(-dB/20)})^2)-1))})$$

where "F" is the -3dB frequency and "-dB" is the 10kHz attenuation entered as a negative number (see table on next page).

2. If the three time constants are known, proceed to step 4.
3. Calculate the time constants for each of the three turnover frequencies:

$$T = 1 / 2\pi F \quad (\text{note also that } F = 1 / 2\pi T)$$

$$\text{For } F1: T = 1 / 2\pi * 100 = 1590\mu\text{S}$$

$$\text{For } F2: T = 1 / 2\pi * 500 = 318\mu\text{S}$$

$$\text{For } F3: T = 1 / 2\pi * 1590 = 100\mu\text{S}$$

4. Calculate the resistor values for R1, R2 and R3:

$$T = RC, \text{ so:}$$

$$T1 = (R1 + R2) * C1$$

$$T2 = R1 * C1$$

$$T3 = R3 * C2$$

$$R = T / C \text{ and } C = 1\text{nF}$$

$$R1 = 318\mu\text{S} / 1\text{nF} = 318\text{k}$$

$$R2 = (1590\mu\text{S} / 1\text{nF}) - 318\text{k} = 1.272\text{M}$$

$$R3 = 100\mu\text{S} / 1\text{nF} = 100\text{k}$$

5. Adjust scaling of IcVs2 so 1kHz is at 0dB on the resulting graph.

# Treble Transition Frequencies for Common 10kHz Playback Attenuation Levels

10kHz Attenuation	Transition Frequency (& Time Constant)
-5dB	6800Hz (23.41 $\mu$ S)
-8.5dB	4056Hz (39.24 $\mu$ S)
-10dB	3333Hz (47.75 $\mu$ S)
-10.5	3128Hz (50.88 $\mu$ S)
-12dB (AES)	2595Hz (61.33 $\mu$ S)
-13.73dB (RIAA)	2122Hz (75 $\mu$ S)
-14dB	2036Hz (78.17 $\mu$ S)
-15dB	1807Hz (88.08 $\mu$ S)
-16dB (NAB and Columbia LP)	1591.55Hz (100.0 $\mu$ S)
-20dB	1005Hz (158.36 $\mu$ S)

(The formula for converting  $-dB$  at 10kHz to the  $-3dB$  frequency was generously provided by *audioXpress* Regular Contributor G.R. Koonce.)

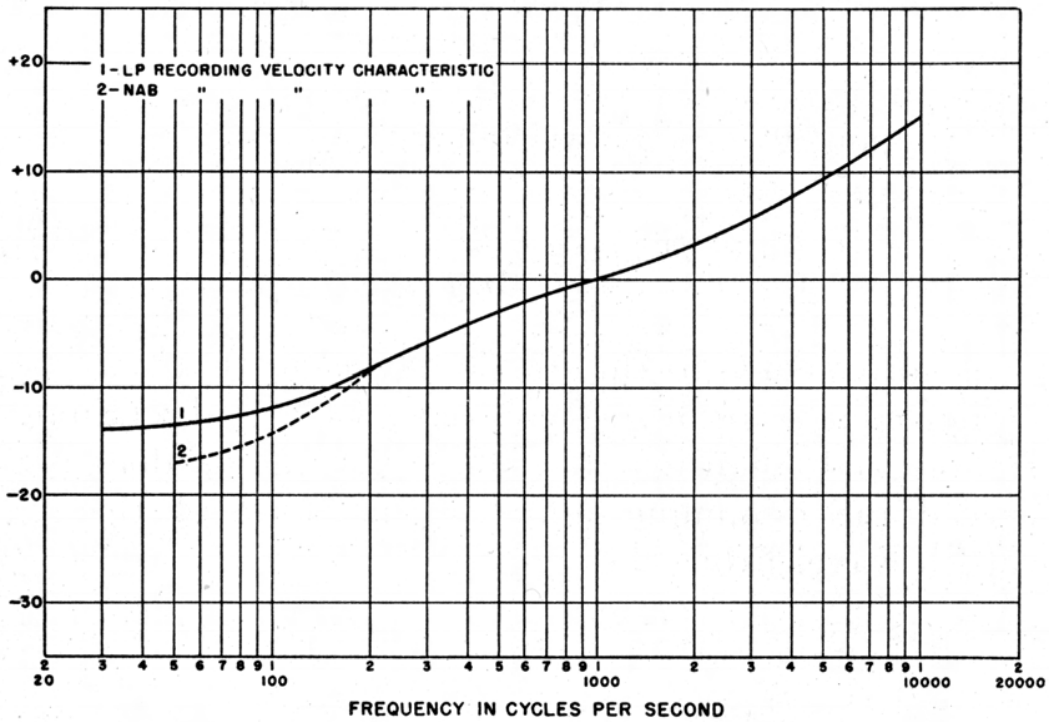
© 2004 by Gary A. Galo

**NOTE: THE TREBLE BOOST (IN RECORD) OR ROLLOFF (IN PLAYBACK) CAN BE SPECIFIED 3 DIFFERENT WAYS:**

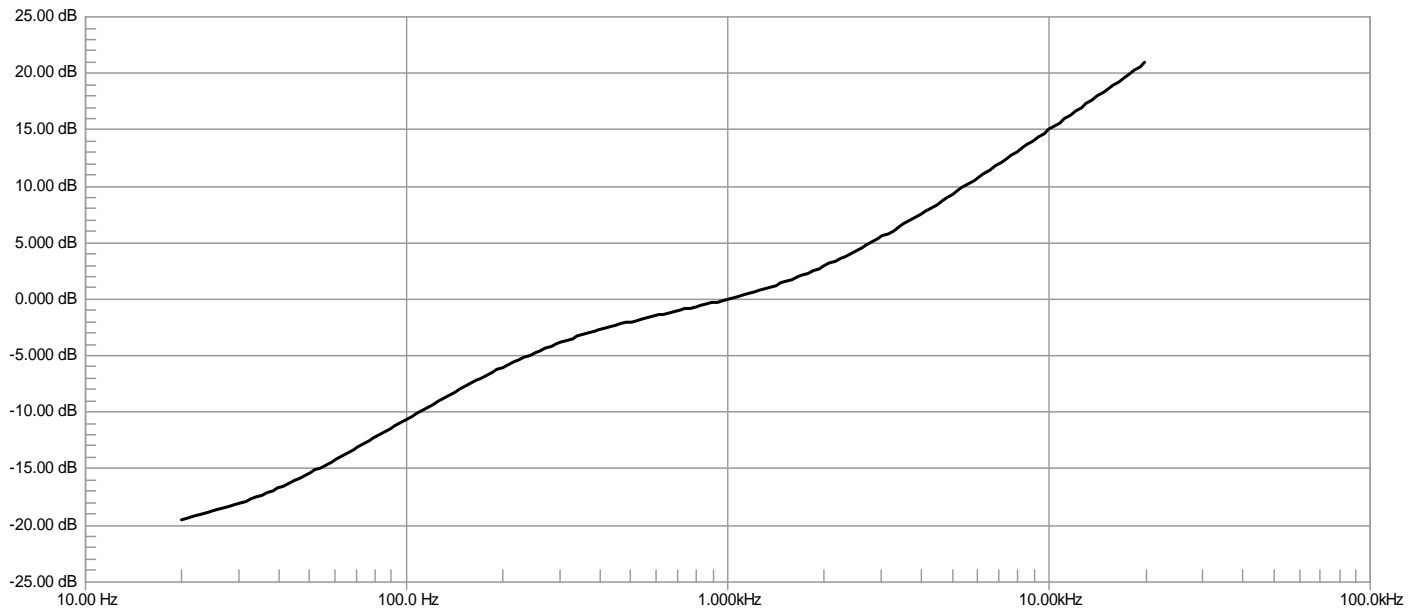
1. + (RECORD) OR  $-$  dB (PLAYBACK) AT 10kHz.
2. THE ACTUAL TRANSITION FREQUENCY (+/-3dB FREQUENCY).
3. THE TIME CONSTANT ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSITION FREQUENCY.



SIMULATION: 30Hz / 300Hz / 1590Hz  
(5305 $\mu$ S / 530.5 $\mu$ S / 100 $\mu$ S)

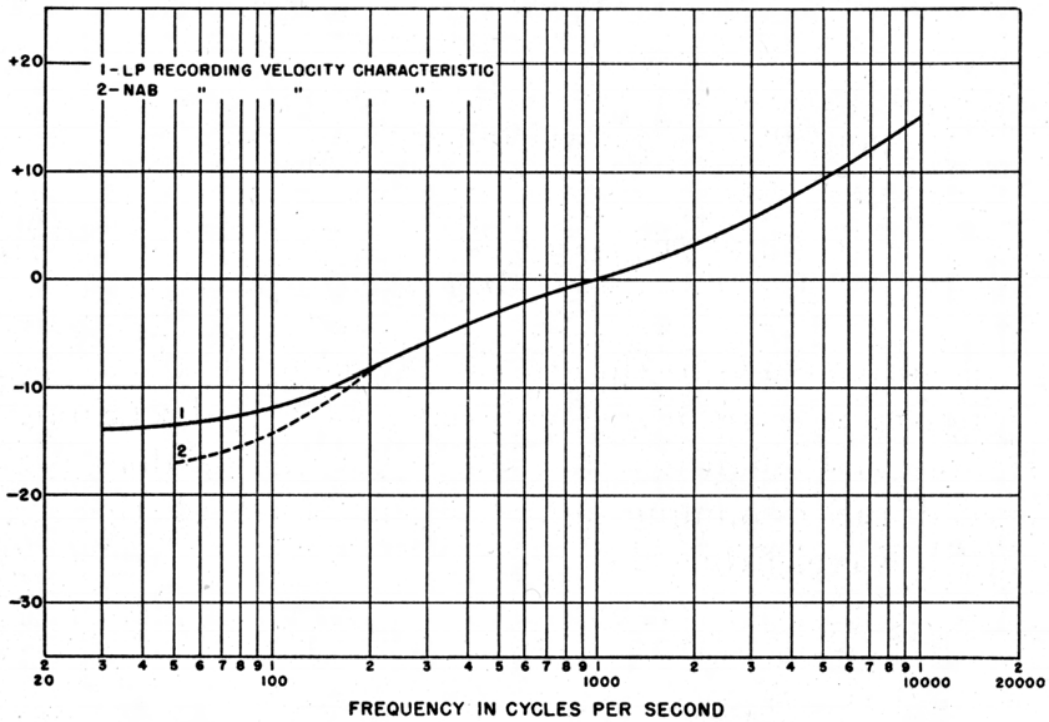


A: icvs2\_3

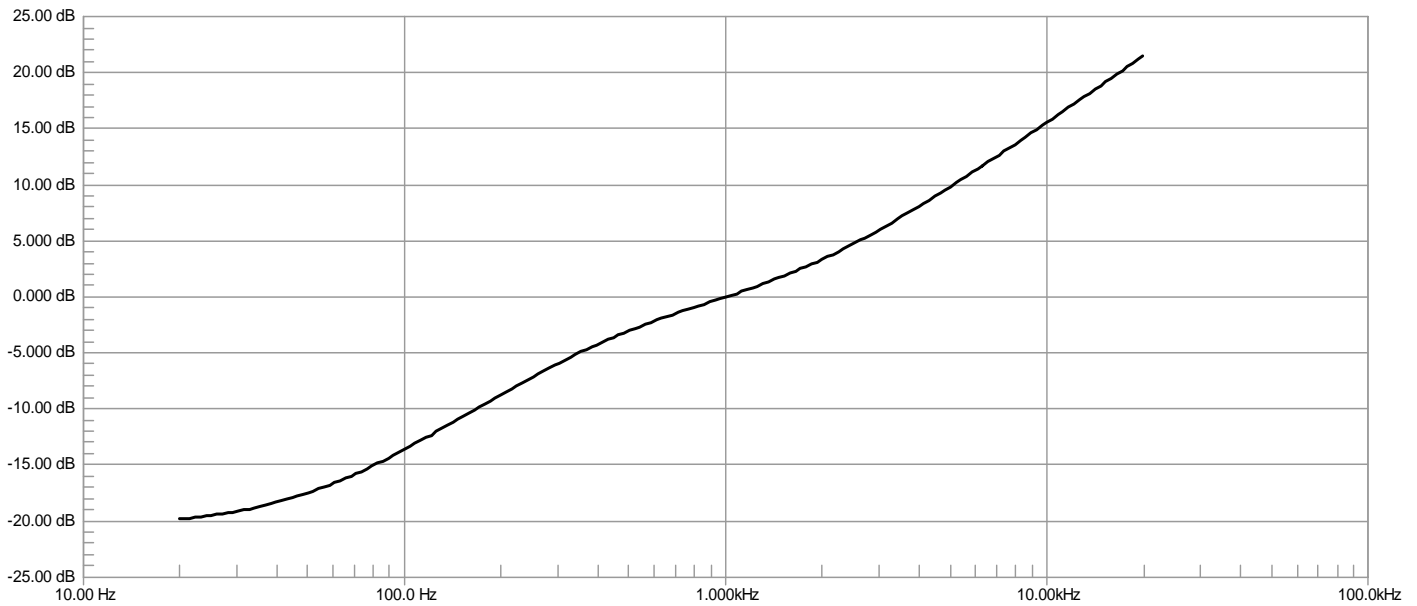


	SNEPVANGERS et al.	THIS SIMULATION	ERROR
30Hz	-14.00dB	-18.1dB	4.10dB
50Hz	-13.55dB	-15.4dB	1.85dB
100Hz	-11.87dB	-10.7dB	1.17dB
200Hz	-8.38dB	-6.0dB	2.38dB
500Hz	-2.86dB	-2.0dB	0.86dB

SIMULATION: 50Hz / 500Hz / 1590Hz  
(3180 $\mu$ S / 318 $\mu$ S / 100 $\mu$ S)

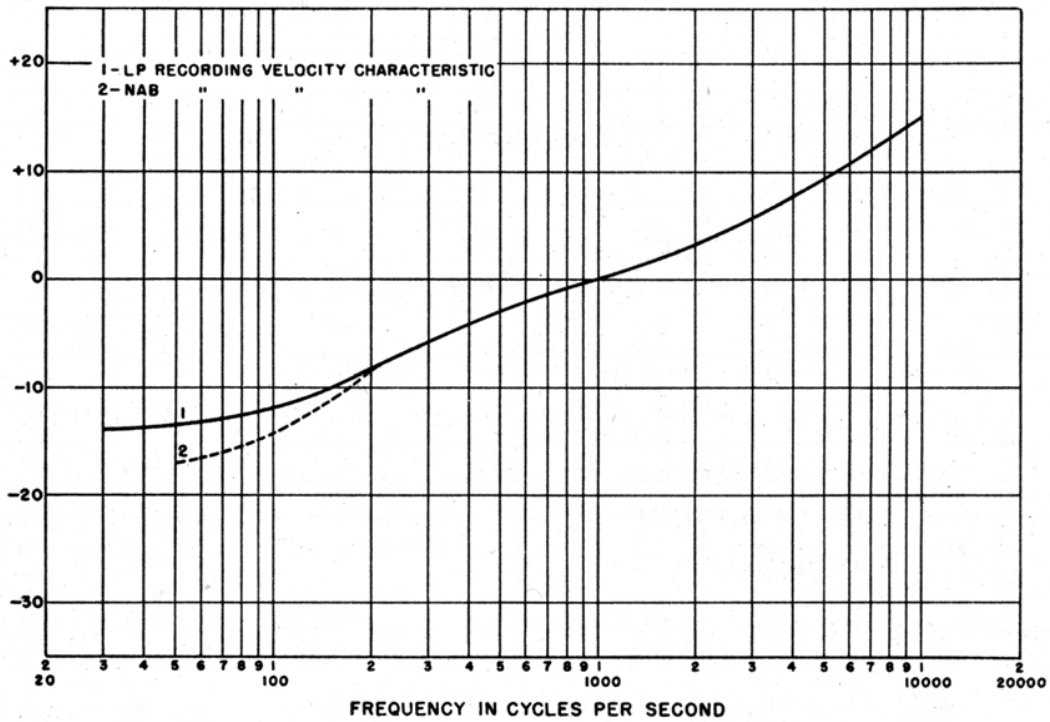


A: icvs2\_3

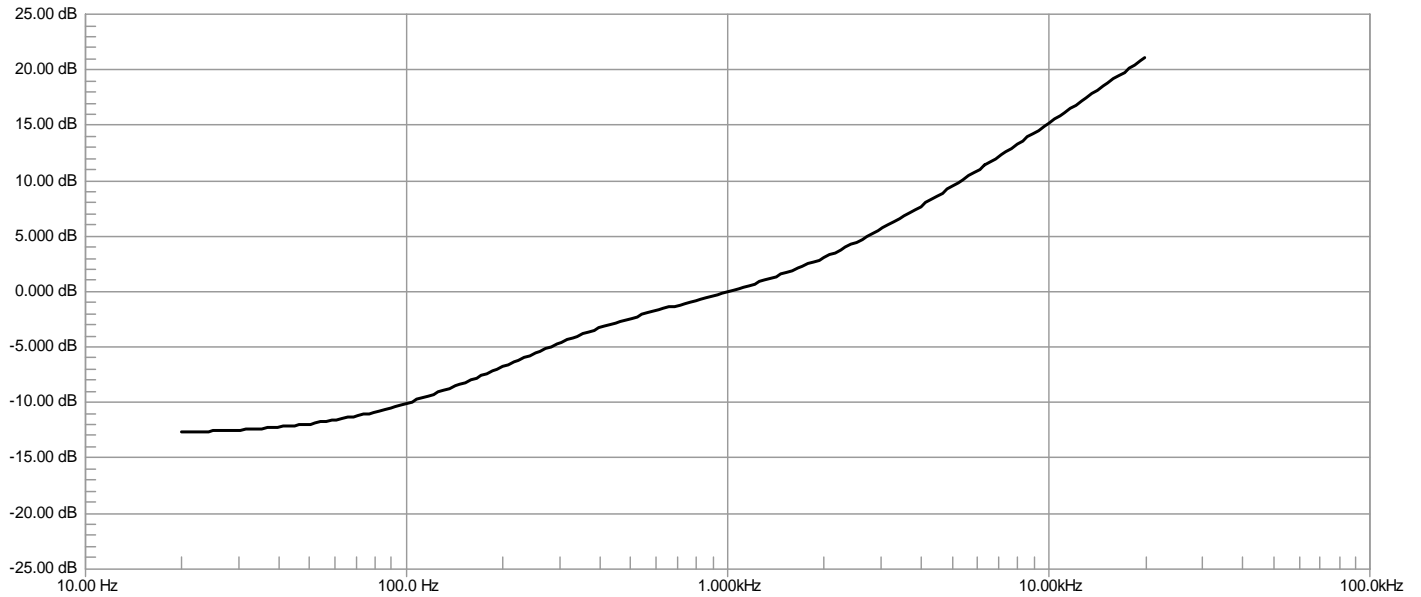


	SNEPVANGERS et al.	THIS SIMULATION	ERROR
30Hz	-14.00dB	-19.2dB	5.20dB
50Hz	-13.55dB	-17.5dB	3.95dB
100Hz	-11.87dB	-13.7dB	1.83dB
200Hz	-8.38dB	-8.8dB	0.42dB
500Hz	-2.86dB	-3.0dB	0.14dB

SIMULATION: 100Hz / 398Hz / 1590Hz  
(Copeland 1590 $\mu$ S / 400 $\mu$ S / 100 $\mu$ S)

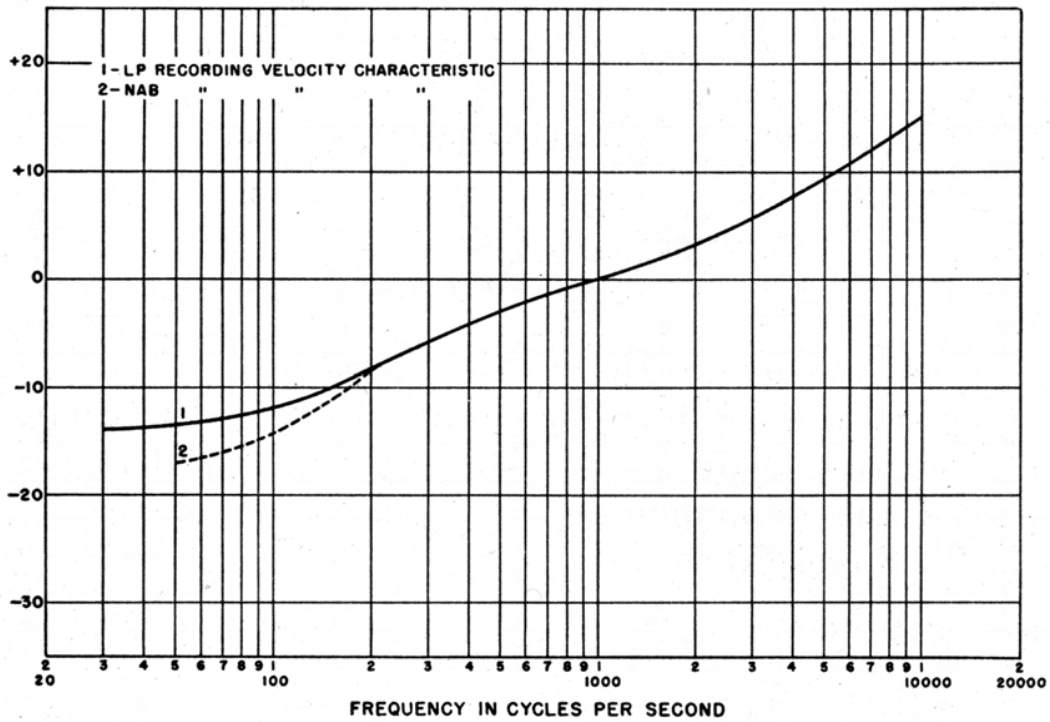


A: icvs2\_3

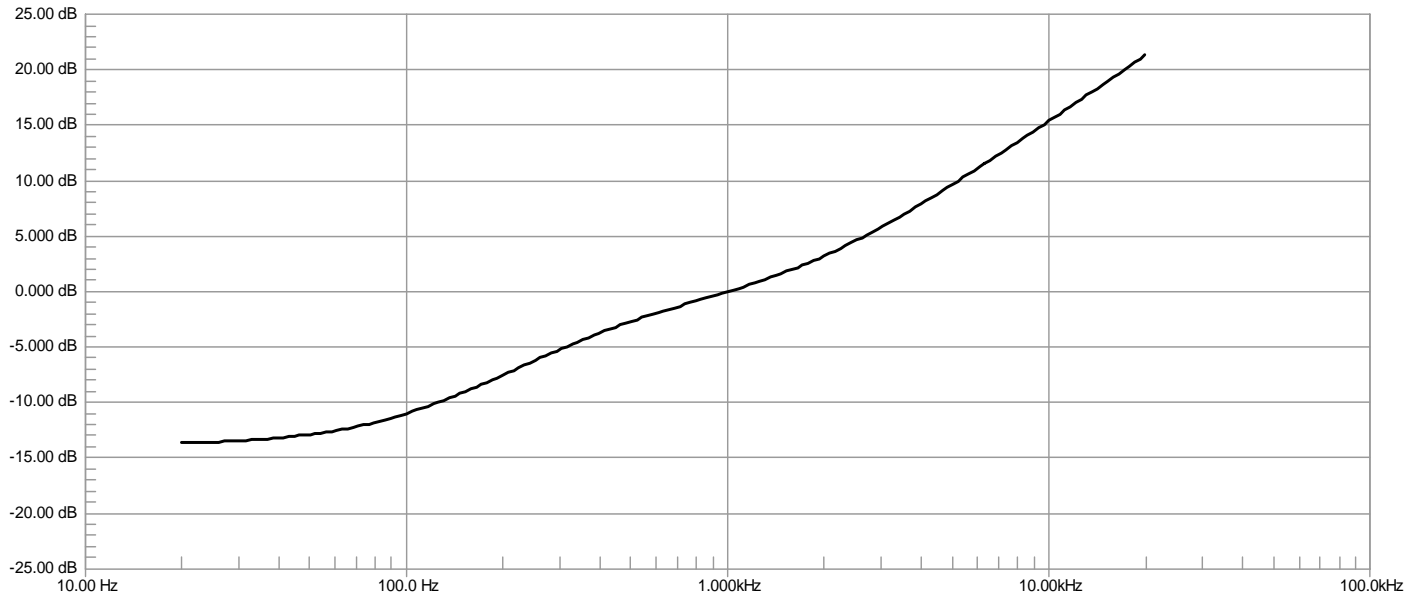


	SNEPVANGERS et al.	THIS SIMULATION	ERROR
30Hz	-14.00dB	-12.5dB	1.50dB
50Hz	-13.55dB	-11.9dB	1.65dB
100Hz	-11.87dB	-10.1dB	1.77dB
200Hz	-8.38dB	-6.8dB	1.58dB
500Hz	-2.86dB	-2.4dB	0.46dB

SIMULATION: 100Hz / 455Hz / 1590Hz  
(Copeland 1590 $\mu$ S / 350 $\mu$ S / 100 $\mu$ S)

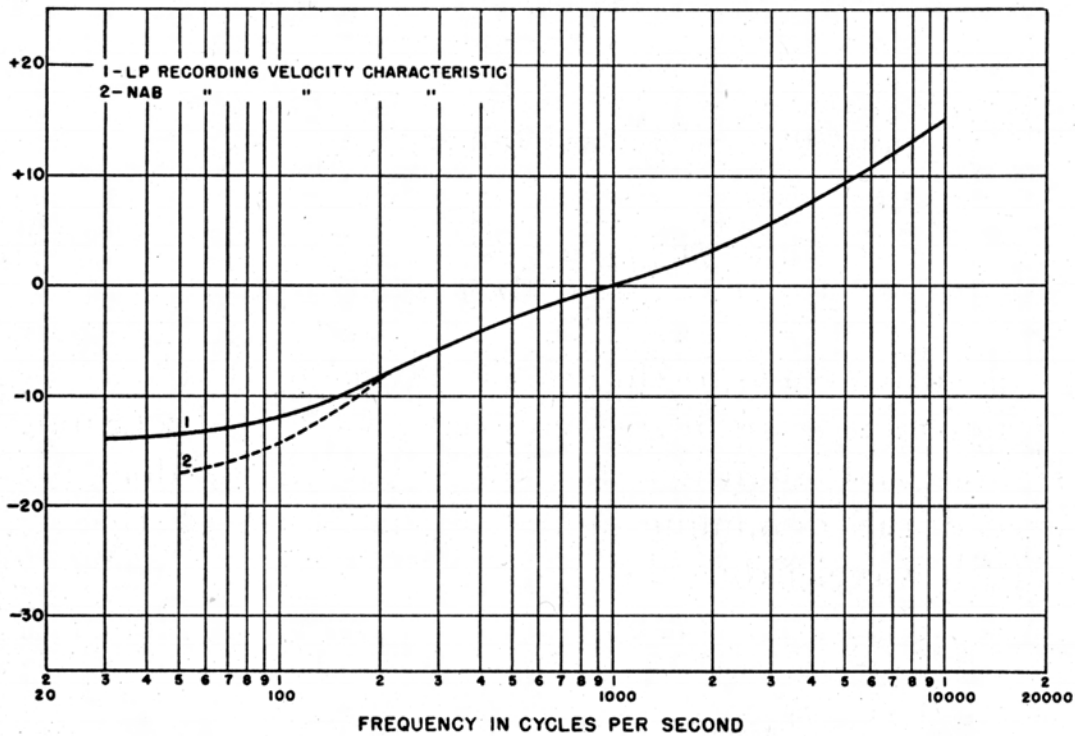


A: icvs2\_3



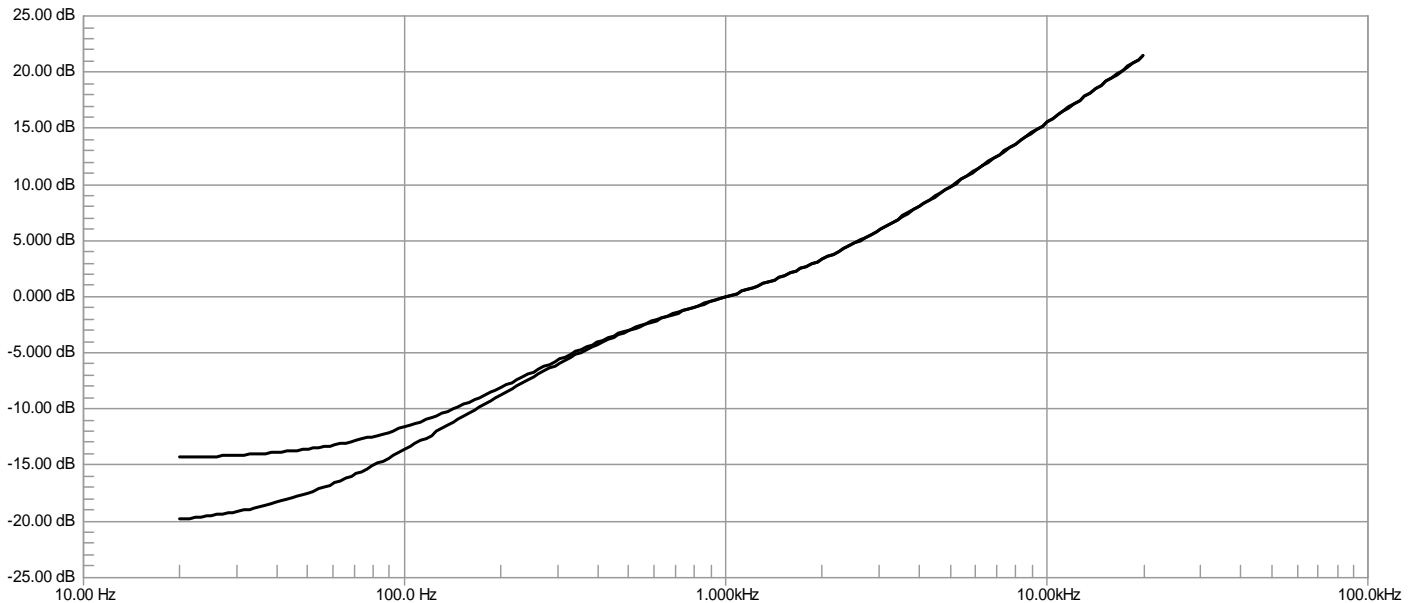
	SNEPVANGERS et al.	THIS SIMULATION	ERROR
30Hz	-14.00dB	-13.5dB	0.50dB
50Hz	-13.55dB	-12.9dB	0.65dB
100Hz	-11.87dB	-11.0dB	0.87dB
200Hz	-8.38dB	-7.5dB	0.88dB
500Hz	-2.86dB	-2.7dB	0.16dB

SIMULATION: 100Hz / 500Hz / 1590Hz  
 (50Hz / 500Hz / 16dB @ 10kHz for NAB)



**BELOW 200Hz: TOP CURVE IS COLUMBIA; LOWER CURVE IS NAB**

A: icvs1\_3  
 B: icvs4\_3



	SNEPVANGERS et al.	THIS SIMULATION	ERROR
30Hz	-14.00dB	-14.1dB	0.10dB
50Hz	-13.55dB	-13.6dB	0.05dB
100Hz	-11.87dB	-11.6dB	0.27dB
200Hz	-8.38dB	-8.1dB	0.28dB
500Hz	-2.86dB	-2.9dB	0.04dB

## SNEPVANGERS, et al. NAB CURVE

70.7Hz / 500Hz / 1590Hz  
(2250 $\mu$ S / 318 $\mu$ S / 100  $\mu$ S) (Refs. 14 & 15)

	SNEPVANGERS et al.	THIS SIMULATION	ERROR
30Hz	N/A	-16.8dB	N/A
50Hz	-17.2dB	-15.8dB	1.4dB
100Hz	-14.4dB	-12.9dB	1.5dB

62.5Hz / 500Hz / 1590Hz  
(2545 $\mu$ S / 318 $\mu$ S / 100 $\mu$ S) (Ref. 14)

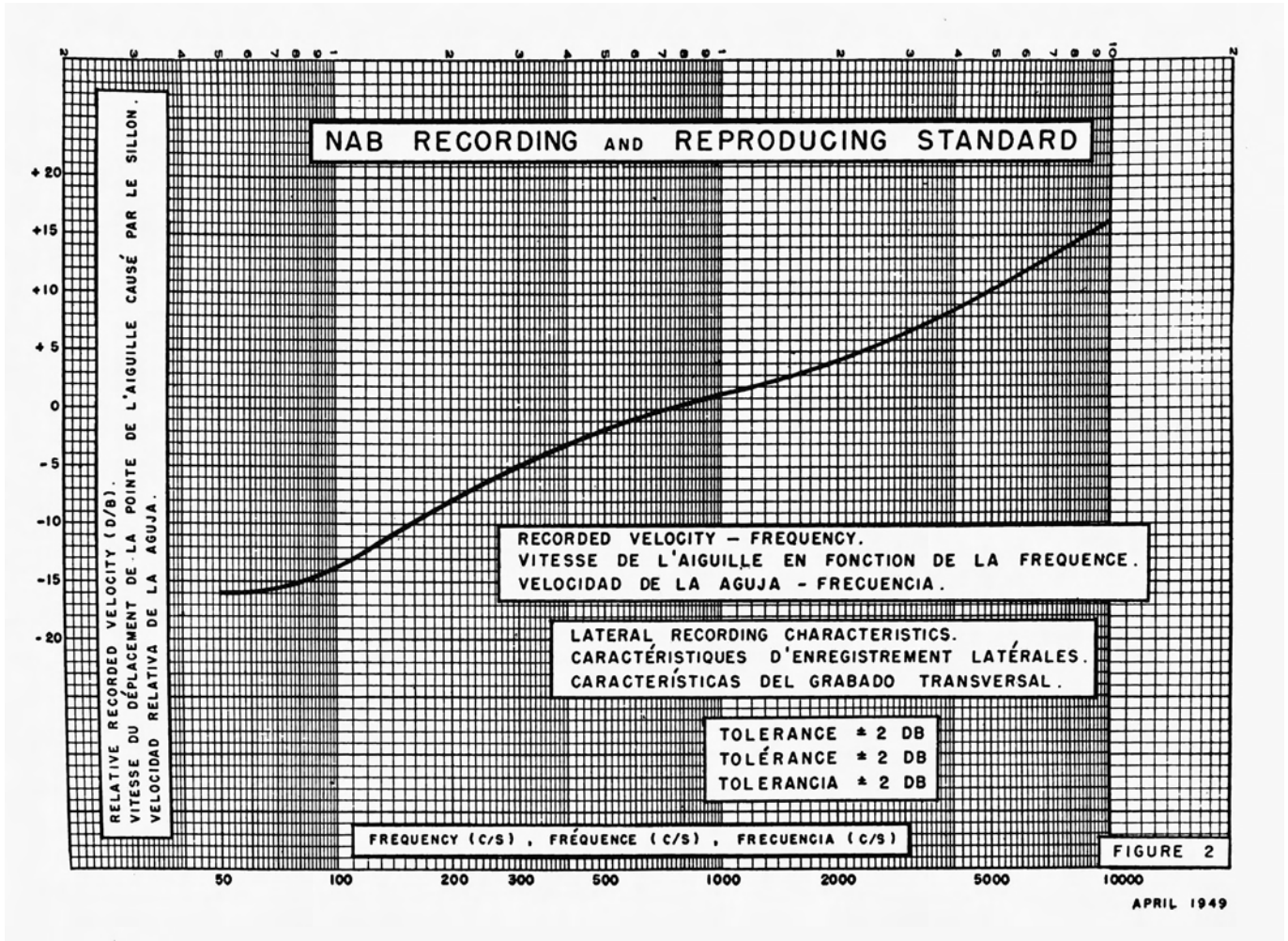
	SNEPVANGERS et al.	THIS SIMULATION	ERROR
30Hz	N/A	-17.7dB	N/A
50Hz	-17.2dB	-16.4dB	0.8dB
100Hz	-14.4dB	-13.2dB	1.2dB

50Hz / 500Hz / 1590Hz  
(3180 $\mu$ S / 318 $\mu$ S / 100 $\mu$ S)

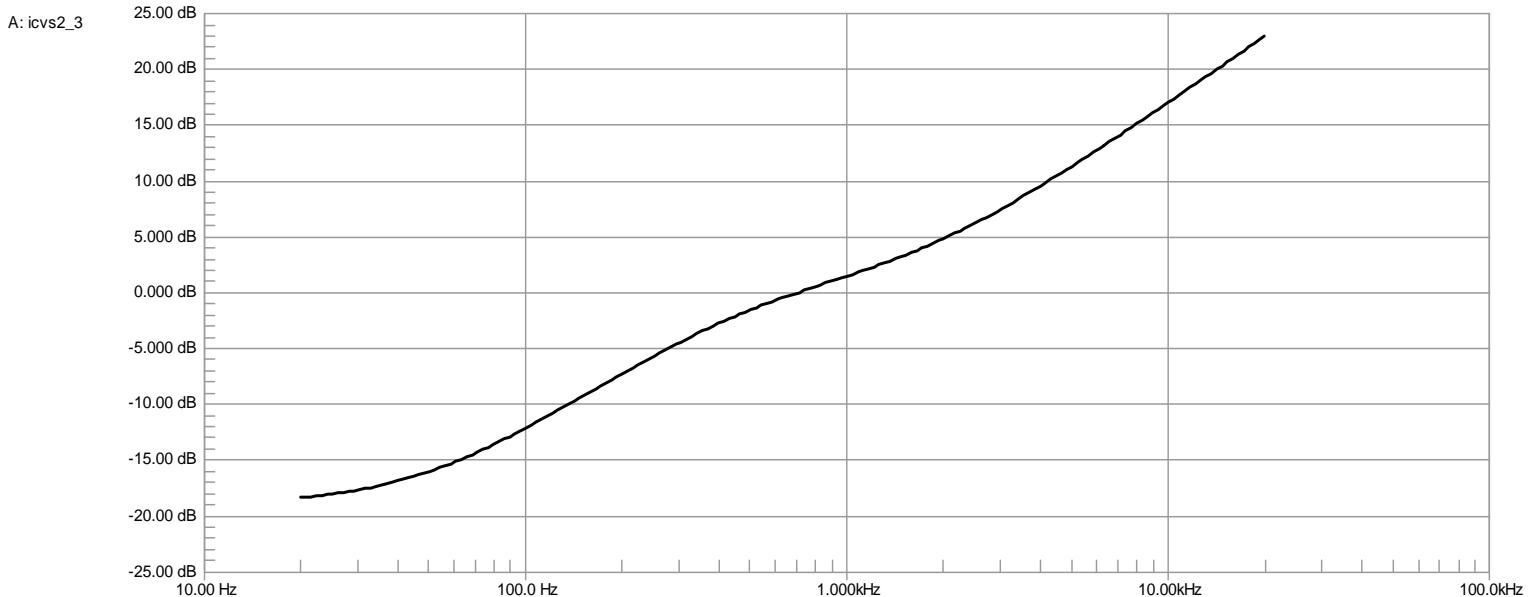
	SNEPVANGERS et al.	THIS SIMULATION	ERROR
30Hz	N/A	-19.2dB	N/A
50Hz	-17.2dB	-17.5dB	0.3dB
100Hz	-14.4dB	-13.7dB	0.7dB

# NAB CURVE (Reed P. 242)

0dB Reference = 700Hz



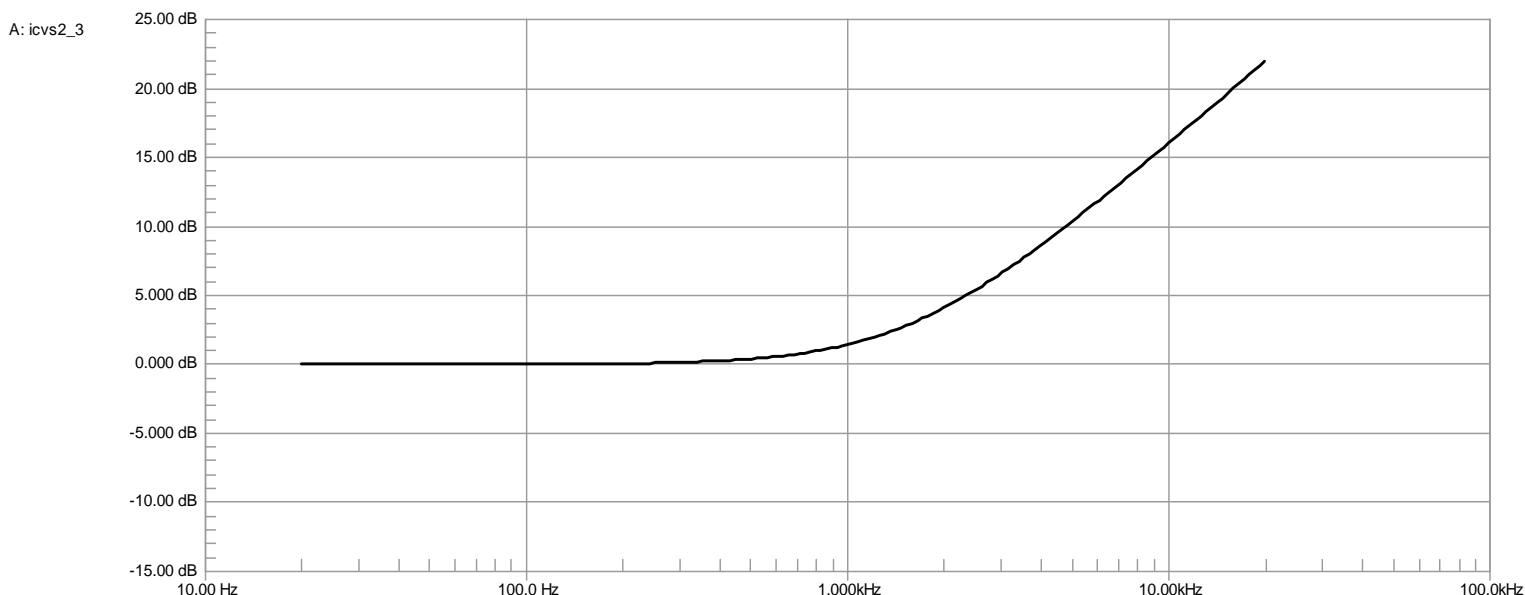
SIMULATION: 3180 $\mu$ S / 318 $\mu$ S / 100 $\mu$ S with 0dB Ref. @ 700Hz  
(Snepvangers 50Hz / 500Hz / 1590Hz)



+16dB at 10kHz:  
RELATIVE TO WHAT?

## HIGH-FREQUENCY PRE-EMPHASIS SIMULATION:

100 $\mu$ s  
+3dB @ 1590Hz  
+16dB @ 10kHz



### NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

1. +16dB @ 10kHz IS RELATIVE TO THE LOW END OF THE AUDIO SPECTRUM (20Hz), *NOT* 1kHz!!
2. 1kHz IS AT +1.4dB RELATIVE TO 20Hz.
3. WHEN THIS FILTER IS COMBINED WITH THE BASS PORTION OF THE CURVE, 10kHz OFTEN WON'T BE AT +16dB RELATIVE TO 1kHz.
4. EDUCATED GUESS: NAB MOVED THE 0dB REFERENCE TO 700Hz TO PUT 10kHz AT +16dB ON THE GRAPH, CAUSING UNTOLD CONFUSION EVER SINCE!



# NAB CURVE SIMULATIONS

0dB Reference = 700Hz

**#1** = COPELAND: 2250 $\mu$ S / 275 $\mu$ s / 100 $\mu$ S  
(70.7Hz / 578.7Hz / 1590Hz)

**#2** = SNEPVANGERS: 3180 $\mu$ S / 318 $\mu$ S / 100 $\mu$ S  
(50Hz / 500Hz / 1590Hz)

**#3** = 2545 $\mu$ S / 318 $\mu$ S / 100 $\mu$ S  
(62.5Hz / 500Hz / 1590Hz) (Ref. 14)

**#4** = 2250 $\mu$ S / 318 $\mu$ S / 100  $\mu$ S  
(70.7Hz / 500Hz / 1590Hz) (Refs. 14 & 15)

DEVIATIONS FROM NAB GRAPH FOR **#1, #2, #3 & #4**  
ARE IN PARENTHESES (X.XXdB)

NAB GRAPH		#1	#2
50Hz	-15.99dB	-15.08dB (0.91dB)	-16.03dB (0.04dB)
80Hz	-15.04dB	-13.30dB (1.74dB)	-13.58dB (1.46dB)
100Hz	-13.79dB	-12.15dB (1.64dB)	-12.17dB (1.62dB)
200Hz	-7.97dB	-7.69dB (0.28dB)	-7.28dB (0.69dB)
500Hz	-1.85dB	-1.74dB (0.11dB)	-1.56dB (0.29dB)
700Hz (Ref)	0.00dB	0.00dB	0.00dB
1kHz	+1.28dB	+1.66dB (0.38dB)	+1.49dB (0.21dB)
2kHz	+4.16dB	+5.22dB (1.06dB)	+4.85dB (0.69dB)
5kHz	+10.23dB	+11.76dB (1.53dB)	+11.34dB (1.11dB)
10kHz	+16.15dB	+17.51dB (1.36dB)	+17.06dB (0.91dB)
		(Avg. Error = 0.9dB)	(Avg. Error = 0.7dB)

NAB GRAPH		#3	#4
50Hz	-15.99dB	-14.97dB (1.02dB)	-14.29dB (1.70dB)
80Hz	-15.04dB	-12.96dB (2.08dB)	-12.54dB (2.50dB)
100Hz	-13.79dB	-11.71dB (2.08dB)	-11.40dB (2.39dB)
200Hz	-7.97dB	-7.14dB (0.83dB)	-7.05dB (0.92dB)
500Hz	-1.85dB	-1.55dB (0.30dB)	-1.54dB (0.31dB)
700Hz (Ref)	0.00dB	0.00dB	0.00dB
1kHz	+1.28dB	+1.48dB (0.2dB)	+1.48dB (0.2dB)
2kHz	+4.16dB	+4.84dB (0.68dB)	+4.84dB (0.68dB)
5kHz	+10.23dB	+11.32dB (1.09dB)	+11.31dB (1.08dB)
10kHz	+16.15dB	+17.05dB (0.9dB)	+17.05dB (0.9dB)

# Dialing Your Disks

Records are made with the treble range boosted to mask surface noise, and the bass range reduced in volume to conserve groove space and reduce distortion. When the

records are played, therefore, treble must be reduced and bass increased to restore the original balance. Control positions on equalizers are identified in different ways, but equivalent markings are listed at the top of each column in the table below. This table covers most of the records sold in

America during the past few years, with the emphasis on LP. Some older LPs and 78s required 800-cycle turnover; some foreign 78s are recorded with 300-cycle turnover and zero or 5-db treble boost. One-knob equalizers should be set for proper turnover, and the treble tone control used for further correction if required. In all cases, the proper settings of controls are those that sound best.

RECORD LABEL	TURNOVER			ROLLOFF AT 10KC.	
	400	500	500 (MOD.)	10.5-13.5 db	16 db
	AES (old)	AES (new)	LON	AES NARTB RCA ORTHO RIAA LON	NAB(old) COL LP ORIG. LP
Allied		●		●	
Angel		●		●	
Atlantic* <sup>1</sup>		●			●
Amer. Rec. Soc.*		●		●	
Bartok		●			●
Blue Note Jazz*	●			●	
Boston*			●		●
Caedmon		●		●	
Canyon*	●			●	
Capitol*	●			●	
Capitol-Cetra	●			●	
Cetra-Soria			●		●
Colosseum*			●		●
<b>Columbia*</b>			●		●
Concert Hall*	●			●	
Contemporary*	●			●	
Cook (SOOT) <sup>1</sup>		●		●	
Decca*	●		●		●
EMS*	●			●	
Elektra		●			●
Epic*			●		●
Esoteric		●		●	
Folkways (most)		●			●
Good-Time Jazz*	●			●	
Haydn Soc.*			●		●
L'Oiseau-Lyre*			●	●	
London*			●	●	
Lyrichord, new* <sup>2</sup>		●			●
Mercury*	●			●	
MGM		●		●	
Montilla		●		●	
Oceanic*		●			●
Pacific Jazz		●		●	
Philharmonia*	●			●	
Polymusic* <sup>1</sup>		●			●
RCA Victor		●		●	
Remington*		●			●
Riverside		●		●	
Romany		●		●	
Savoy		●		●	
Tempo		●		●	
Urania, most*		●			●
Urania, some	●			●	
Vanguard*			●		●
Bach Guild*			●		●
Vox*			●		●
Walden		●		●	
Westminster		●			●

\*Beginning sometime in 1954, records made from new masters require RIAA equalization for both bass and treble.

<sup>1</sup>Binational records produced on this label are recorded to NARTB standards on the outside band. On the inside band, NARTB is used for low frequencies but the treble is recorded flat, without pre-emphasis.

<sup>2</sup>Some older releases used the old Columbia curve, others old AES.

## Dialing Your Disks

All LP disks are recorded with treble boost and bass cut, the amount of which often varies from one manufacturer to another. To play a disk, the bass below a certain turnover frequency must be boosted, and the treble must be rolled off a certain number of decibels at 10,000 cycles. Recommended control settings to accomplish this are listed for each manufacturer. Equalizer control panel markings correspond to the

following values in the table below: ROLL-OFF—10.5: LON, FFRR. 12: AES, RCA, Old RCA. 13.7: RIAA, RCA, New RCA, New AES, NARTB, ORTHOphonic. 16: NAB, LP, COL, COL LP, ORTHOacoustic. TURNOVER—400: AES, RCA. 500C: LP, COL, COL LP, Mod NAB, LON, FFRR. 500R: RIAA, ORTHOphonic, NARTB, New AES. 500: NAB: 630: BRS. 800: Old RCA.

RECORD LABEL	NEW		OLD
	Turnover	Rolloff	Record No. or Date: Turnover, Rolloff
Allied	500	16	
Amer. Rec. Soc.	400	12	
Angel	500R	13.7	
Arizona	500R	13.7	To 1955: 400, 12.7
†Atlantic	500R	13.7	
Audiophile	500	12	
Bach Guild	500R	13.7	No. 501-529: 500, 16
*Bartok	500R	13.7	No. 901-905, 308, 310, 311: 500R, 13.7 No. 906-920, 301-307, 309: 630, 16
Bethlehem	500R	13.7	
Blue Note Jazz	500R	13.7	To 1955: 400, 12
Boston	500C	16	
*Caedmon	500R	13.7	No. 1001-1022: 630, 16
Canyon	400	12	
Capitol	500R	13.7	To 1955: 400, 12.7
Capitol-Cetra	500R	13.7	To 1955: 400, 12.7
Cetra-Soria	500C	16	
Classic Editions	500R	13.7	
Colosseum	500R	13.7	To January 1954: 500, 16
*Columbia	500R	13.7	To 1955: 500C, 16.
Concert Hall	500R	10.5	To 1954: 500C, 16.
*Contemporary	500R	13.7	No. 3501, 2501, 2502, 2505, 2507, 2001, 2002: 400, 12. No. 2504: 500, 16
†Cook (SOOT)*	500	12-15	
Coral	500	16	
Decca	500	16	
Elektra	500R	13.7	No. 2-15, 18-20, 24-26: 630, 16. No. 17, 22: 400, 12. No. 16, 21, 23, 24: 500R, 13.7
EMS	500R	13.7	
Epic	500R	13.7	
Esoteric	500R	13.7	No. ES 500, 517, EST 5, 6: 400, 12
Folkways	500C	16	
*Good-Time Jazz	500R	13.7	No. 1, 5-8: 500, 16. No. 3, 9-19: 400, 12
Haydn Society	500C	16	
HMV	500R	16	
Kapp	500R	13.7	No. 100-103, 1000-1001: 800, 16
Kendall	500	16	
*London	500R	13.7	To No. 846: 500C, 10.5
Lyrichord	500	16	
McIntosh	500R	13.7	
*Mercury	500R	13.7	To October 1954: 400, 12
MGM	500	12	
Montilla	500R	13.7	
New Jazz	500R	13.7	
Nocturne	500R	13.7	No. LP 1-3, 5, XP1-10: 400, 12
Oceanic	500C	16	
L'Oiseau-Lyre	500R	13.7	To 1954: 500C, 10.5
Overtone	500R	13.7	No. 1-3: 500, 16
Oxford	500C	16	
Pacific Jazz	500R	13.7	No. 1-13: 400, 12
Philharmonia	400	12	
†Polymusic	500	16	
Prestige	500R	13.7	
RCA Victor	500R	13.7	To 1953: 800, 12. To 1954: 400, 12
Remington	500	16	
Rivenside	500R	13.7	To 1955: 400, 12
Romany	500R	13.7	
Savoy	500R	13.7	
Tempo	500	16	
Transradio	500C	16	
Urania	500	16	No. 7059, 224, 7066, 7063, 7065, 603, 7069: 400, 12
Vanguard	500R	13.7	No. 411-442, 6000-6018, 7001-7011, 8001-8004: 500, 16
Wax	500R	13.7	To October 1954: 500, 16
Walden	500R	13.7	
Westminster	500C	16	If AES specified: 400, 12

\*Currently re-recording old masters for RIAA curve.

†Binaural records produced on this label have no treble boost on the inside band, which should be played without any rolloff.



COLUMBIA BLUE LABEL: 1948-1955  
(OTHER COLORS INCLUDED GREEN FOR  
LIGHTER CLASSICAL MATERIAL;  
RED, GRAY AND WHITE FOR POPULAR)

OLD COLUMBIA CURVE: CATALOG ML 4895, MATRIX XLP 3200  
RIAA: AFTER MATRIX XLP 3200 (ESOTERIC SOUND)



COLUMBIA GRAY "6-EYES" LABEL: INTRODUCED IN 1955  
(MOST POPULAR LABELS WERE RED)

**ALL SHOULD BE RIAA**

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The Columbia Lp Curve used Time Constants of  $1590\mu\text{S}$ ,  $318\mu\text{S}$  and  $100\mu\text{S}$ , corresponding to turnover frequencies of 100Hz, 500Hz and 1590Hz (+/-16dB @ 10kHz).

This is the only combination that produces a graph matching Goldmark, Snepvangers & Bachman.

2. The closest fit to the published NAB graph is  $3180\mu\text{S}$ ,  $318\mu\text{S}$  and  $100\mu\text{S}$ , Corresponding to turnover frequencies of 50Hz, 500Hz and 1590Hz (+/-16dB @ 10kHz).

The only difference between the NAB curve and the Columbia Lp Curve is the low-bass turnover point, F1.

NAB's decision to put the 0dB reference at 700Hz rather than 1kHz is irrelevant.

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