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ULTRA HI-FI SPECIALISTS

MAY 2009 Equipment Feature

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Boulder

When you think of Boulder products, many things may cross your mind, worlds best solid state, superlative sound quality, reliability, outstanding service. Oh yes and the other thing that will often crop up is affordability because the best is never the cheapest!

Well Boulder is trying to change that, don't expect i-pod pricing however. If you have a semi-normal sized room and speakers that were not designed to be driven by an arc-welder of an amplifier then you may just get a lot of the boulder magic without the second mortgage.

Have they been successful? Well we think so, the build quality is still there the company support is outstanding as always; the quality is thankfully still there in abundance.

The 865 Integrated amplifier is capable of 150 watts per channel, the 865 Integrated punches its way through the most spirited and demanding passages, while gracefully revealing the subtle details that make music astonishingly spacious and infinitely involving. Rugged binding posts require no tools for tightening and provide a secure, low-impedance connection for optimal power transfer. A precise bias control system monitors the output section and keeps the amplifier within its ideal operating range. Finally, the 865 is safeguarded by thermal limiting and over-current sensing circuitry which provide it with rock solid reliability without the slightest effect on sound quality. The days where you had to go to a separate pre and power amplifier to get this level of quality have well and truly seen their demise.



810 Preamplifier



850 Mono Power Amplifier

The 810 and 850s were always a musical combination. This setup was always very dynamic and really lent itself to reproducing drums and percussion with the necessary attack to sound very lifelike. I found the combination of the 810 and 850's exhilarating to listen to on a number of levels. It's hard to believe that these are their entry level pieces, possessing the same level of quality and attention to details as their flagship electronics. You can tell that they want to keep you as a customer for life. The 810 and 850s are an example of American high technology at its finest. Jeff Dorgay, Tone Audio issue 6

To complete the line up we have with the release of the 860 Stereo Amplifier, they have completed a range of power amplifiers unrivalled anywhere in the world. Each was created with the same goal in mind—the most accurate and neutral audio reproduction possible, so that your cherished music and cinema collections sound exactly as their creators intended. The Boulder 860 also accomplishes this goal.



There is the usual tube vs. solid state debate but the Boulder's are unique in that they do sound transistor-ish at all. This is backed up by all the reviews. We know that this may be hard for some people to believe but it is in fact true, The ultimate in reliability from supremely designed circuits, but totally without the typical transistor amp downfalls. Keep the best aspects of drive and dynamics allied to that sweet clean midrange. You can hear deeper into a recording and the recorded acoustic space as you will find that a complete layer of grain has disappeared from the sonic landscape.

The Boulder 850 Mono Power Amplifiers was the first to be released from the new 800 Series. The 850 Mono Amplifier is essentially one-half of one channel of the acclaimed 1060 Stereo Amplifier. Distortion and noise are exceptionally low while sonic performance and bandwidth are exceptionally high.

Gregg Toland's (Citizen Kane) cinematography revolutionized cinema forever. Where Toland achieved his "deep focus" effects by using lens setting and illumination, the Boulder amps achieve theirs through remarkable details, dynamics and resolution. Indeed the 850's resolution was really its outstanding attribute, because when an amp is able to preserve low-level detail, all aspects of the performance are enhanced. Overall the 850's were simply very musical. I really enjoyed the Boulder 850 amps. they brought a new level of realism to my system. And while they are not cheap at US\$10000, they are certainly worth considering if you're shopping in this price range. Max Shepherd, TAS, Issue 166.

We use Boulder equipment in our reference system, and when you look at the range of brands that we carry you just know that it is something very special indeed just to justify its shelf space. There are many things that a Boulder amplifier does really well. Perhaps more importantly is the fact that it does them all consistently.

finite elemente

We will be the first to admit that this is a crazy world, a world where a cable or stand or equipment support can make a rather large difference to the quality of music coming from your components. Even very expensive components benefit from a good foundation. We have all at one point been in a car where the suspension is badly setup or worn out, likewise we have all been in a car where the suspension is not only new but setup and it makes a world of difference. In hifi you have the delicate operations of tracing a diamond through a fairly small groove, or in the case of CD a laser reading data from a spinning and vibrating surface. During which time the loudspeakers are doing their very best to vibrate everything in the room at a wide range of frequencies.

In addition the transformers inside the equipment will be happily vibrating away as will your turntable motor, the bearing even the vinyl itself will be vibrating as a result of the stylus. The CD vibrates, the motor vibrates etc. electronics are sensitive to vibration so it makes perfect sense to deal with these vibrations in as fast a transfer as possible.

The clear advantage: no resonance build-up, no overdamping, no loss of deflection. The CERA technology improves the sound wherever sound-impairing resonance restricts the musicality.

The best place to start is the ceraball's or cerapuc's depending on the weight of your equipment. We have never had any returned by customers so we can safely assume that they work in almost all systems. In fact many people start with the ceraballs then they upgrade their rack to get the full benefit.

"Do they actually work?"

The Pagode Master Reference HD07 rack really did work—at least with components that had an onboard power supply. Each such component I tried, from the lightest line stage to massive, two-chassis CD players, sounded better sitting on the FE rack than on my Bright Star or Merrill stand. Their focus, resolution, and dynamic precision were all slightly but consistently improved; my listening comments were peppered with such phrases as "faster, cleaner dynamics" and "sharper, more dimensional images." ...

...installing a set of Ceraball or Cerapuc feet under a component was a huge, jaw-dropping change. The differences were the same—improved focus, transparency, resolution, and dynamic precision—but their magnitude was much larger. Slipping a trio of Ceraballs under the VTL TL-7.5 wasn't like demagnetizing a cartridge; it was like upgrading to a really good moving-coil. And dressing cables? Forget it—this improvement was like replacing all of my freebie and Home Depot wire with a good set of high-end cables." - Stereophile Brian Damkroger, February, 2006 Read Review

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finite elemente

Onto the finite racks, first the Pagode Signature follows the style of the pagode Master Reference, but dispenses with the costly "resonator technology". Solid wood frames with resonance-optimized sandwich shelves ensure excellent sound quality and high stability thanks to the innovative four-point bolt connection concept.



High-quality materials such as solid Canadian maple wood and solid aluminum combined with the tried-and-tested pagode® resonance damping technology that the pagode® Signature represents excellent product quality. And that it represents excellent value for money goes without saying.



For those wanting the best on offer there is the splendid pagode Master Reference stands out with its well thoughtout design based on solid wooden frames in Canadian maple, highly damped absorber shelves and the tried-and-tested pagode sidespike technology. A new dimension in music reproduction can however be truly experienced thanks to the revolutionary Resonator Technology, exclusively applied in the audio furniture sector by finite elemente and developed in co-operation with Prof. Dr. Borchert of the University of Applied Sciences in Dortmund. Precision in detail, transparency in the dynamics and an incomparable vivid musicality are the impressive results of this consistent research.

"The resulting Sound is refreshingly neutral and is typified by a smooth, clearly defined sleekness. A great tip for both the eyes and the ears!"
[Image HiFi, Germany]

The sound of the finite elemente rack is big, smooth and coherent. It delivers music with a stable deep foundation and real presence and substance. It allows melodic lines to flow and easily tracks shifts in level. It's a presentation that is especially effective on piano music with its emphasis on the precise weight and placement of notes. Large scale orchestral crescendoes build convincingly, with no sense of a glass ceiling limiting the scale and power available. Dynamic range is wide, and dynamic discrimination excellent, easily differentiating subtle shifts in energy levels and instrumental densities. At the same time, the smooth top and natural, warm balance helps to curb digital glare and exaggerated sibilance. The rack's combination of virtues makes it a powerful tool when it comes enjoyable long term listening. If natural tonality and a real sense of musical sweep and scale are important to you, then the Pagode Signature should be high on your list of possible supports.

"Which brings us to our benchmark, Finite Elements' HD-03. Used in its standard guise with spiked feet and no coupling, it remained the best performer in terms of natural tonality, acoustic retrieval and soundstaging and the natural, expressive ebb and flow in music. Of course, Finite Elemente offer their own couplers in the shape of CeraPucs and CereBase feet, which lift dynamic range, transparency and levels of detail." - Roy Gregory, hi-fi + issue 46

"With the pagode rack you can't help asking yourself how much music you have been missing until now." [AUDIOPHILE, Germany]

The pagode hi-fi rack system harmoniously combines unadulterated music reproduction and functionality. The ever-present problem of sound-influencing resonances has been solved without compromise using specially selected materials, efficient design and measuring engineering investigations.

Spike, absorber and resonator technologies ensure a neutral resonance environment, where the audio components can demonstrate their sound capabilities without any restriction.



featured used product

This month we are featuring the dps 2 turntable which we think is the best high end turntable in a small no mess no fuss package.

It is so easy to recommend this turntable because it does many things well, nothing badly and is exceptionally good in some areas. Value for money at full retail is exceptional, on the ex-display model it is somewhat of a bargain to say the least.

It is a pleasure when you get an excellent engineer and a master craftsman combining to make an exquisite product. the dps sonically outperforms many more expensive turntables. The dps turntable exhibits exceptional performance but small and compact in size.

dps - "der Plattenspieler" ("The Turntable") is the brainchild of Mr. Willibald Bauer of Germany. The dps was conceived as a culmination of his long experience in using and setting up several other turntable brands. For example, Willi adopted the high torque design.

The dps is a suspended turntable, without springs, but with proprietary damping that provides a spring-effect.

"The dps turntable looks stylish and compact but performs like a high mass turntable while preserving the life and speed of a small platter. Stable and musical, Willi applies silent high-friction bearing in combination with a very powerful motor (free standing)."

"The dps turntable has a light platter for low energy storage, the system motor - bearing - platter form as a mass - with a "spring-effect" system that, in this case has utmost rotational stability on the top of its priority list. The bearing has a lot of drag without creating noise, so the cartridge drag becomes a negligible factor in the energy loss equation that determines dynamic behavior under running conditions (cart in modulated groove)."



"The dps with Schroeder No. 2 succeeds in offering both a good visual appeal and perfect sound. In terms of sound, it is as stable as a mass device, but also as agile as a good subchassis turntable on top of it. It will set the standard in its price range." Rated World-Class by Audiophile, a German magazine, January 2004

"So I insist: Extending beyond its price range, the dps is a very hot tip for a turntable, and every analogue-fan should listen to it at least once." - Dalibor Beric

Stereoplay, Germany, Feb 2005 - dps Turntable with dps 250 tonearm (modified Rega)

* 8 points for sound (out of 10) - and that's with only a modified Rega 250 tonearm *

"Previously, only vinyl playback insiders were aware of this turntable. Now, the record player from Munich is enjoying huge popularity because of its outstanding technical performance and design, its aesthetic simple beauty, and extraordinary sound. It places instruments accurately outlined into the soundstage area and draws a deep as well as exact bass, just like much larger turntables systems do."

* Soundscape Note: The dps is a small turntable - 17.7" x 13.8" x 7.1 inch (with lid) *

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Recent Vinyl Releases

RYAN ADAMS "EASY TIGER"	23.06.2007
BEE GEES "The Studio Albums 1967-1968" 6LP SET	23.06.2007
NORAH JONES "NOT TOO LATE" STANDARD PRESSING	23.06.2007
BARRY DRANSFIELD REISSUE IN STOCK	21.06.2007
CHERRY GHOST "THIRST FOR ROMANCE"	19.06.2007
LUCINDA WILLIAMS "WORLD WITHOUT TEARS" REPRESS	18.06.2007
RYAN ADAMS REISSUES	18.06.2007
FLEETWOOD MAC "PIOUS BIRD OF GOOD OMEN"	18.06.2007
WHITE STRIPES "ICKY THUMP"	18.06.2007
PAUL McCARTNEY "MEMORY ALMOST FULL" DELAYED	16.06.2007
BJORK "VOLTA" DELAYED	14.06.2007
FELIX BALOY "BAILA MI SON"	14.06.2007
SARAH K "WATERFALLS"	14.06.2007
JETHRO TULL "AQUALUNG" IN THE BUILDING!	12.06.2007
KINGS OF LEON "BECAUSE OF THE TIMES"	06.06.2007
RICHARD THOMPSON "SWEET WARRIOR" ON DIVERSE RECORDS	06.06.2007
STEELY DAN/BLIND FAITH JAPANESE LPS	05.06.2007
MEG BAIRD "DEAR COMPANION"	05.06.2007
NATALIE MERCHANT "TIGERLILY"	05.06.2007
BOB DYLAN "NASHVILLE SKYLINE"	04.06.2007
Bonnie Prince Billy/Palace Bros Restocks	04.06.2007
JOHN CALE - THE CLASSIC "PARIS 1919"	04.06.2007
SHELLAC "EXCELLENT ITALIAN GREYHOUND"	04.06.2007
MINNIE RIPERTON "PERFECT ANGEL"	04.06.2007
PATTI SMITH - TWELVE	04.06.2007
NICK DRAKE - JAPANESE VINYL IN AUGUST	04.06.2007
VINYL WAREHOUSE FIND	04.06.2007
KELLY JOE PHELPS "TUNESMITH RETROFIT"	03.06.2007
RED HOT CHILIS BACK FOR AN ENCORE	02.06.2007
WILCO "SKY BLUE SKY" IN STOCK	30.05.2007
TORI AMOS - AMERICAN DOLL POSSE LP	20.05.2007
BLUE NOTE JAZZ ON CLASSIC RECORDS	18.05.2007
JOHN HEARD - JAZZ COMP SONGBOOK	18.05.2007
KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD - 10 DAYS	18.05.2007
"300" SOUNDTRACK BY TYLER BATES	12.05.2007
RUSH - SNAKES & ARROWS	09.05.2007
CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA "MA FLEUR"	03.05.2007
ELEANOR McEVOY "OUT THERE" ON DIVERSE RECORDS	14.04.2007