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Subject: comparing amplifiers

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Sat, 04 Dec 2004 16:00:15 GMT

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I have 2c's to offer here. I spent about 4 hrs. about three weeks ago listening and studying the Decware 84c with the top of the line upgrades on a pair of Dec speakers. They are Single Drivers and sound pretty good. I also own a Foreplay with all upgrades and a Seduction with all upgrades. I did a write up on the Stoetkit recently and am currently using the Tubes 4hifi el-84 rebuild of the Dyna ST 35. Why do I say all this? Well; thinking hard on this I have come to some conclusions. The original SEX kit was a great thing; there were no inexpensive SE amps anywhere to be had so it was a great way to get involved. And it sounded pretty good. Now there are innumerable kits available for under 600\$. Most of the people on this forum have heard them, Bottlehead/Consonance/TBHF/ Dec.. on and on. It's fun to build them and play with parts and join the forums. But what I am beginning to notice is a certain solid state sameness to the sound of all of them. I cannot say if that is a deliberate design decision or not but it is there and it is noticeable. Now there is a new game in town; the chip amps. They sound different but in many ways just as good as the cheapo amp kits. I now have the T-amp/Brian GT's GC and listen to them daily. This may spell the death of cheap tube amps. Not good tubes just inexpensive ones: which brings me to my point; any one of the amps mentioned sound good with reasonably efficient speakers. There is one thing though; none of them sound great. Aye' there's the rub; after playing with these units for a couple of years; a good, rebuilt to specs Eico, still trounces any of them. There is a component of very good reproduction that is definitely missing. How to define it; well like the bluesman said I know it when I hear it. I would love to say the cheap amps do the thing, I can't and I know in the end it is going to cost me money. But the real sound is out there and probably is a tube driven circuit with a big fat triode and hugely expensive transformers. The good thing is you can get 85% of the way there for a few hundred bucks. But my new opinion is buy the GC kits for 70\$ and spend the rest on your front end. The chip amps sound great with efficient speakers and you can slap them together in a day. I can hear the banshee screaming in the distance for those cheap tubes now. And you are free from the tyranny of tube sellers and their predatory pricing schemes.

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