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Subject: Re: EL156

Posted by [gofar99](#) on Thu, 10 Jun 2010 02:08:39 GMT

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Hi, I just got a quad of the EL156s for a friend who asked that I audition them before sending overseas to him. Such a deal. Physically they are a bit taller, but similar in construction to KT88s. As the designer of the OddBlock series of class A U/L push-pull amps these were an opportunity to push the envelope a bit for free. For comparison, I normally use JJ Blue Glass KT88s and for lower power JJ Blue Glass EL34s. I have tried many brands and types - but these seem to suit me best. The rest of the system is a modified Marantz CD5001 player, a preamp that I designed that will operate as active (tube) or passive, the OddBlocks, and Martin Logan Vista ESLs. For vinyl, a Dual 701 with Grado Prestige cartridge and a modified transistor preamp (I have a tube one in the works now). So back to the sound. I ran the EL156s at the same power level as the KT88s (450 B+ and 180 ma per pair at idle). The 156s are considerably more sensitive than the KT88s (expected if you look at the bias settings). The sound was powerful, very solid bass, almost too much, mids and highs very crisp. The sound was right in your face. Good sound stage width, good detail. Things like cymbals and bells were well sounded. Generally a great set of tubes for rock music. By comparison the JJ Blues are much more polite. Well rounded, not quite as much bottom end, very lush sound while maintaining the detail and separation well. The 156s could easily been pushed about 25% for more power if needed and I would expect the sound to be pretty much the same. Overall, a pretty good tube if you like your music crisp and powerful.

BTW I have a quad of matched KT120s coming next week. They could be really killers if they sound decent.

Hope this helps,

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