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Subject: Tweaking the ARC LS-1

Posted by [Bill Epstein](#) on Tue, 17 Jul 2007 08:53:10 GMT

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I was very happy with the lack of sound from my recently acquired LS-1 but knew it could be less. Replaced the 20 year old coupling and output caps, removing all the by-passes as well. Copper case Obbligatos for the .47uF couplers and 4.7uF Obbligato oil 'n film for outputs. Resulted in an even lower noise floor and a slightly richer tone of instruments and voices. The Alps Blue pot bothered me, too. I knew from replacing one in my Ella, first with a Black Beauty and then a TKD that the TKD had a much airier presentation and a wider, deeper soundstage. Better low-level channel balance, too. Clipped the solder leads off the TKD and ran short pieces of silver wire from the eyelets to the board, a 1 hour job, 45 minutes of which was removing the Blue and the solder!! also replaced the stock feet with EAR L-021 feet, the 15lb. load blue ones. They made a big difference in the sound of a phono pre-amp I just finished reviewing. Finally, placed a sheet of EAR Isodamp constrained layer damping between the power transformer and the case. First impression was that ARC knew what they were doing voicing the LS-1 with the Blue Alps and I had blown it. I was hearing an edgy treble. Damnation! 5 or 6 hours later, tho' the edginess was gone and the combination of tweaks has taken this 20 year-old pre-amp waaay up in performance. Credit Matt Anker of SACDMods.com for the ideas based on his ARC mod service. You can pick-up an LS-1 or LS-2 for \$500 to \$800 and do this or have Matt do it for you quite reasonably. The LS-1/Simple 45 combo now sounds even better than what I wrote in my recently published review: Simple 45

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Subject: Re: Tweaking the ARC LS-1

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 17 Jul 2007 15:49:45 GMT

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Looks nice, Bill. Thanks for the write-up. I've found that one of the things I listen for in a good tube amp is its noise floor. It's not necessarily something I do on purpose, as a critique, but more it's just a show stopper for me. If I hear any hum, it reminds me of a guitar amp or an old low-fi tube console system from the 50's. It ruins the experience for me. Tube amps can have a rich full midrange that's hard to beat. But they can also have a deep black dead silent quiet between passages. That's important to me. It enhances the impression of realism.

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