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Subject: Re: Tube amps and SS amps may be indistinguishable!

Posted by [Martin](#) on Fri, 06 Aug 2004 00:53:15 GMT

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Hi akhilesh,"Essentially, you are saying that provided the Q of the system is kept reasonable, the difference between a tube amp and an SS amp is negligible."I am not sure I would draw that strong of a conclusion. What I am trying to say is that when the damping factor differences between tube and SS amps is removed they become much closer sonically. I would not state that one is always better the the other, I think that there will be trade-offs in every situation and even between different SS or tube amps.For example, I had a guy over at my house to show me some very expensive speaker cables he want to demo (and then sell me). We hooked them up between my 200 watt SS amp and my Fostex FE-208 Sigma ML TL speakers. I had alway found these speakers to be lacking at the very top end and was considering adding a super-tweeter. His cables made a huge difference and the highs sounded great. Much better then my own cables. Then we swapped the speakers to my Focal two way with the inverted metallic dome tweeter. His cables produced a painful high end, absolutely terrible drove us from the room. Changing cables back to mine, my cables sounded great! So who's cables are better? Depends on the rest of the system.If you buy into the arguement that a tube amp or a SS amp (with correction circuit) can be used with a Fostex or Lowther full range driver, then I have made my point. The significant advantage I see in SS is the degree of adjustability that the circuit allows to get the response just right for the speaker system, the amp, the interconnects, the room, and the listener's personal taste.One more example, my audio buddy Pete was over last night to listen and offer opinions on the Lowther ML TL. When he arrived I had the PM2A drivers installed and playing. I demomstrated the variable BSC I am using now and first shorted the BSC out of the system. No bass, Lowther shout big time, really bad sound. Then I dialed the resistance up to balance the SPL and things were much better. He liked the mid range and top end of the PM2A but felt that the mid bass was a little recessed in the ML TL. I tend to agree with him. So 15 minutes later, I swapped to the PM6A drivers and again dialed the correct series resistance and the bass and mid bass were excellent. But the very top end, the air, was not as good as the PM2A. We listened for a while and I asked him which he liked better, he liked the PM2A better because he is a sax lover and it really shined on the horns. He is not a bass lover and really listens to the mids. But the PM6A was not hard to take. A great evening! "One last question, have you ever done a listen-off between a SET and an SS on any of your speakers? If they sound essentially indistinguishable (with proper compoenations applied in each case) then you are totally right. It would be interesting to do such a listen-off. You know, take a pair of speakers, and put the relevant amp/network combos in fornt of them."I have never done this, I don't know anybody locally into tubes. It would be a great experiment and would really go a long way towards resolving the question in my own mind or maybe even raising more questions. I have been to the one or two "high end" stores locally and they don't sell tube amps. With my adjustable BSC this would be a very easy thing to do, I'll keep looking for an opportunity to run this test and report the results if I can find an tube amp. "Also, the whole 1 watt amp thing...to me it's just the usual audio hype. The fact that some vendors are "excited" about this and call it a "breakthrough"...well... i can tell you what i think they are excited about, and it begins with a D----- and is colored green."Obviously Nelson Pass is a very talented audio designer, his contributions over many years are amazing. There is hype everywhere in audio and it is interesting to see the positive response in the 6moons article and on the AA HE forum. When I have propose SS with correction circuits several times over the past few years, I usually got flamed. One of the big reasons I totally stopped participating

in several audio forums and only occasionally in others. I am definitely not one of the sheep at AA, well maybe a black sheep. Good discussion, Martin

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