Subject: Re: Which Is Better, Tube Amps or Solid-State Amps?
Posted by AudioFred on Wed, 09 Mar 2011 22:24:38 GMT
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I'm fully converted to solid state. The overwhelming disadvantage of tubes in in the cost. You can buy a new 50 watt/ch solid state integrated (NAD, Cambridge Audio, etc.) for about $500 msrp. The equivalent 50 watt/ch tube amp, with high quality transformers, etc, sells for about $1,500-$2,000. You can get a no-name Chinese amp on Ebay for less, but there will be quality control issues.

The second disadvantage is in a tube amp's reliability. Power tubes blow, and they usually take a cathode bias resistor with them, so you're looking at a repair job. I have four high quality tube amps, and right now two are out of service.

There was a time when budget priced solid state equipment sounded harsh and grainy compared to tube equipment. Solid state has improved quite a bit in the last ten years, and that $500 fifty watt amps sounds pretty good. In an effort to gain some "tube warmth" I added a tube buffer to the system that includes a $170 Oppo player and a $500 Cambridge Audio Azur integrated. I gained a very slight warmth but lost a very slight amount of resolution, and decided I prefer the system without the extra component in the signal path.