Subject: Akhilesh, you gotta tell 'em...
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 05 Feb 2004 23:40:29 GMT
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...about your Antique Electronics K502 tube amp kit. It's the best value I've seen out there. $140.00 and no hum at all, none, not even on 105dB Klipschorns. Sounds as sweet as the high dollar rigs too. Some might think I jest or exaggerate, but I'm not kidding - These are the best kept secret in the DIY tube hobby.Note 1. Don't read into this that I'm discounting my Bottlehead stuff or the Zen's or anything else. The good comments about the Antique Electronics kit are not meant as a comparison, even if I did mention "high dollar rigs" and "best kept secrets." I just think that the little Antique Electronics kit is a good value, that's all.Note 2. Sorry to Akhilesh to jump in there and make a mention of your stuff before you did. Didn't mean to steal your fire. It's just that I was very impressed with that little kit.

Subject: Re: Akhilesh, you gotta tell 'em...
Posted by Manualblock on Sat, 07 Feb 2004 00:53:20 GMT
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Short and befuddled;Wayne: The AES amp seems nice. I have somewhat perplexed perspective. When I bought and built the theater PI 4's I did so blind because your website seemed logical, knowledgable and fairly priced. So I took a chance. At the risk of appearing ingratiating I am impressed to all hell by the sound. Here is my rant. I listen to the Pi's on the EAR 859 SE amp which is a decent amp and sometimes I use the Stereo 70 I modded long ago. In this forumn I see you have used several decent amps; Bottleheads ,Zen Homebrews. Last weekend I heard the 4's on a Korneff 45. Knocked my socks off. Bass like we never heard, like a drug it was. Here is my query, I notice you tend to promote amps of very low price more so than more dear units yet my experience is the Pi's resolve beautifully with hi-res gear, almost like a different speaker. Obviously it's great to find a pig in a poke but are you really exploring the limits of the speakers capabilities, and after all isn't that why we are here? Once you become accustomed to that sound it's hard to drop down 5 notches on the resolution scale. Tell me of a nice 211 triode PP interstage transformer coupled amp, thats interesting! Thanks for listening. J.R.

Subject: Re: Akhilesh, you gotta tell 'em...
Posted by akhilesh on Sat, 07 Feb 2004 01:29:19 GMT
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HI Wayne,Thanx for mentioning the amp. Well, I like it a lot! It compares to the Zen, thought the ZEN is a little bit mellower. ALso, the K502 amp is a bit more sensitive to loads, and is at its best at loads of 8 ohms or less. It is a push-pull. In terms of clarity, resolution, it compares to the zen and that is saying something. Of course, right now I am using a mid fi source (Sony xa20ES) with

highend cables (transparent plus) , so maybe I can;t really tell yet. I'll wait till I upgrade my source and then let you know. Some folks may prefer the softer SETs like the 45, but i tend to prefer a slightly more "analytical tube" (there's an oxymoron for you!).For those who think low priced tube amps don't sound good, I would suggest you listen to them and compare for yourself. Often times the hum in low priced amps is just construction errors...in the K502 case i believe the filament is on DC so the hum is nonexistent, unless there is poor grounding. I would say for $140 the K502 is an amazing bang for the buck deal, and I frankly don't dislike its sound one bit. ALso, it;s a great way to learn....it's my first amp, and has given me confidence. Also, thanx to Wayne for his encouragement and advice along the way...he is a good friend and a great source of experience. -akhilesh

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Subject: Korneff 45
Posted by Wayne Parham on Sat, 07 Feb 2004 05:40:16 GMT
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Point well taken. I've made lots of references to low-price tube amps but none that were truly high-end. I think that should be remedied, and so I'll investigate that in the months to come.Please take the lead when you can. The mention you made is an excellent example - If the Korneff 45 is impressive to you, chances are it will be welcome news to others too. Can you direct me to a link for more information about this amp?

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by Manualblock on Sat, 07 Feb 2004 13:03:40 GMT
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Sure just type Jeff Korneff Audio and that should get you there. The amp seems to retail for about 1700$ SE tube rectified with 6sn7 drivers. 2 watts. Looks rather industrial but in a good way.

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by Wayne Parham on Sat, 07 Feb 2004 18:45:22 GMT
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I found some links, thanks! I don't think he has a web presence, but there are some fine pictures of his amps at the site below:
Jeff Korneff Amps

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by Manualblock on Sat, 07 Feb 2004 19:11:27 GMT
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Funny but after hearing the amp last week I searched and found a site that clearly belonged to him with examples of two different pre-amps along with the 45. Now however I can't seem to find the site, odd? The guy that brought over the amp gave me a number if anyone is interested.

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by akhilesh on Sat, 07 Feb 2004 19:39:32 GMT
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I haven;t heard any real high end tube amps myself (wel lexcept for a really expensive mcintosh in a hi fi store). SO i am extremely curious also to know of people's opinions regarding the higher cost tube amps, and how they compare to the lower priced amps like the zen. I heard a home brewed 2a3 loftin white setup recenlty by some one local here in tulsa, and i liked it, though its treble was a bit mellow. SO far, the $499 zen se84C is still my "reference" amp if you will. Once finances permit, I will build a 300B amp i think, but that is probably a year or so away. In the meantime, if anyone has heard a zen se84C and can compare it to some other amps I wold be interested. I talked at length with Steve Deckert (the main guy at decware that make the zen amps) and he has heard pretty much everything out there. He sells a version of the zen called the zen select with premium parts. He didn;t think there was that much of a difference between the select and the regular. A lot of the older more experienced folk i talk to don;t really buy the lien that all the high end components will get you better sound ...they say it will get you different sound, but not necessarily more detailed or better. ANyway, i am interested to read of people's informed opinions on different amps. -akhilesh

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by Manualblock on Sun, 08 Feb 2004 09:53:03 GMT
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Akhilesh; boutique parts don't really seem to add unless the circuit is properly designed in the first place. I personally and this is only one mans opinion believe that many are stuck in a rut with circuit design, 20db neg feedbak,cathode follower, large coupling caps etc. I think you only really have a hand full of realisable designs being promoted and as such the defining factor becomes transformer quality tube type, good execution so within those paremeters there really isn't huge differences between amps. When designers who have a different vision, run tubes outside the established safe zones, change plate loads run them hot, transformer coupling, I am not an engineer so leave it up to the talented ones but I do remmember an article in sound practices written by Frank Reps where he builds a copy of the Audio Note Ongaku using all silver wound transformers, That is the only difference with the design yet he claims without it the amp sounds

just like every other SE amp using 300b's. I have extensively modded a stereo 70 over the years and to be truthful the original sounds as good in many ways as the modded version. So I think unless you are willing to try 211's or other radical tubes and new topologies, you probably won't be impressed. As far as the Korneff I don't know much about the circuit but it really does sound different than the norm. There is something there because the Pi4's became a different sounding speaker. And my E.A.R is no slouch. . What I hear between the E.A.R. and Paramours is a depth and authority in the music and with the paras, what I can only term "artifacts" which is a term I made up but it seems to describe what I hear. The big amp seems uncluttered compared to the Paramours and remmember this is an unfair comparison since the E.A.R. runs 3700$ to 500$ for Paras. The output trannies on the E are huge maybe that is it. The quality is there;Yoshino custom wound, I have never heard Decs but assume they are detailed but that type of detail seems etched and doesn't flow. Hope this helps at all. I do know that when I get around to building I am convinced to spend most of the budget on trannies and use average decent caps,resistors etc.

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by Bill Martinelli on Sun, 08 Feb 2004 16:22:22 GMT
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I have a Link to a Korneff page at the bottom here. I have heard the 45 amp with a few different speakers and in most cases this is a great amp and sounds wonderful. Very well build. I did here the 45 with a Theater Pi4 and thought the bass was too heavy and unrealistic. Just a bad match in my opinion. I think a premium stage Pi4 would have sounded a little tighter. For high end amps, who knows? Its all about prefferanc since there are so many circuit designs and good parts that need to be configured to a delicate match. I have a Audio Note 300B amp and although I have not listened head to head against a Korneff 45, I am happy with what I have for sure. Jeff does great work and if you have speakers sensitive enough to play modestly with a 45 tube, its a sweet tube to work with. I think I may pick up one of those ASL kits! I love building electronic kits and some day everything in my system will be hand buildBill
http://groups.msn.com/korneffvacuumtube

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by akhilesh on Sun, 08 Feb 2004 17:44:27 GMT
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I agree with you, it seems that output trannies are the ONE thng that can really add bass....for example i was talking to LArry at s5electronis (an experienced guy who has sold the K502 for many years) and I told him i would like more bass with the k502s, and he said the only way is to add significantly mor eexpensive output trannies. Anyways, the bass is fine, esp since i am running a pretty low ohm load on them. I also asked him if changing hte output caps to auricap or hovland would make a diff, and he said none at all.. i would just be wasting money. Yet, if you read some "reviews" on the net, and esp. if you listen to the hypeof some "modders" they extol

these fance caps like they will conpletely alter your system. I am not sure if they do. BTW, you really MUST hear the zen se84C ...in my mind it's still the best tube amp i have ever heard, and it;s detail is not fatiguing at all...in fact it strikes a great balance between detail & musicality.

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by Manualblock on Sun, 08 Feb 2004 17:54:09 GMT
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The most difficult defining personal preferences and what constitutes what to an individual, especially when the interactions are so interdependant between sources and envirnmental issues. I find that most comparisons among set-ups to be less than informative, where one hears musical bass another doesn't but where are the variables in the equation, properly terminated and set-up cartridges very rare, low output MC's so tempermental, cart-arm interface; Cd's with high output impedances, impedance issues between pre and amp. Back EMF messing with the feedback loop. What I hear applies to my set-up in my room with my source and that is the only thing we know. Gather people together agree on sound then go home and listen it's completley different, Cest La Vie'. Certain absolutes and that is why Waynes site is needed, usable-controlled variables and accurate measurements. Now we need that level of continuity applied to source, which is after all the determining factor. I would love to hear input from those who have tried something different before I commit to an amp topology as I think everyone would prefer to self design their system but don't want to trod that same-old.

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by Manualblock on Sun, 08 Feb 2004 19:11:01 GMT
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You have a point I would likwe to hear the 84's. Are you using PI4's?

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by Bill Martinelli on Sun, 08 Feb 2004 22:15:47 GMT
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I agree, though the for instance I'm speaking of was a room with 8 or 10 people and the front end and Korneff 45 remained a constant. We switched in a few different speakers to see how they would sound with that amp. This is also why testing should be done after a device is made. Programs and simulators are a necessity for design work. As is the importance of measuring after the build to confirm the intent. Lastly, personal listening is necessary because as you can see with speakers for example. Various manufacturers all produce a speaker with a flat line or performance

similar to others. Yet the sounds are different. There are a lot of things that measurements do not expose, and still, we hear something different.Bill

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Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by Manualblock on Sun, 08 Feb 2004 22:24:52 GMT
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Absolutely!

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by akhilesh on Mon, 09 Feb 2004 15:50:11 GMT
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NO, I use either a) my own homemade speakers (about 98 db sensitivity) or b) a pair of Klipschorns from 1978 (104 db sensitivity)thanx-akhilesh

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Subject: Re: Akhilesh, you gotta tell 'em...
Posted by elektratig on Sat, 14 Feb 2004 21:28:31 GMT
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The K502 is indeed "an amazing bang for the buck deal." I have one hooked up to a pair of Fostex FE208 Sigma speakers in Martin King design enclosures. I guarantee you, there are systems out there costing many, many times more that don't sound half as good. (Don't feel bad Wayne, that does NOT include my Welborne-Pi Theater 4 system!)
K502 + Fostex

Subject: Re: Korneff 45
Posted by hurdy_gurdyman on Fri, 20 Feb 2004 15:09:50 GMT
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Good way of putting it. We need measurements in the design process to help figuring out what is going on, and confirming it, but in the end, it's all about what we hear coming out of a component. Measurements still can't quite predict just what something will sound like. Maybe someday...Dave :^)
