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Subject: What's good about tubes?

Posted by [Shader](#) on Mon, 18 Oct 2004 22:18:48 GMT

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Why would a person want to use tubes these days?

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Subject: Re: What's good about tubes?

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Mon, 18 Oct 2004 22:39:52 GMT

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They are masochists. You have to go forth and listen and observe in person; it cannot be explained. Its like trying to explain what chocolate tastes like to someone who never tried it. It is all in the music and tubes still do it best.

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Subject: "A Taste of Tubes"

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 19 Oct 2004 04:16:06 GMT

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I understand your reservations. Semiconductors do have a lot of advantages, including reliability, longevity, size and power. On the other hand, there are some applications where tubes are more robust, so they aren't always made obsolete by solid state devices. Many people prefer tubes for audio circuits. Guitarists have long championed tube amps and shunned transistors. I can remember thinking they were crazy when I was young. I thought they were simply contrarians, just enjoying being rebels. But it seems like the very high end audiophiles have embraced vacuum tubes again, and the guys that hung on for so long can say "I told you so." I must tell you that I've heard some really nice tube amps. Like Manualblock said, it's like trying to describe the taste of chocolate. One thing to consider while you're thinking about it is to drop your reservations about what amp is more accurate. That was always my thing, and you can get into a big mental debate about it. There are plenty of guys here that will enter into a debate with you as well. Here's something to consider. No amp is accurate. Some amps might be said to be "more accurate" than others, but then that means all amps are inaccurate. The best one can achieve is to create a convincing illusion. That is something Siegfried Linkwitz says that stuck in my mind. When I came to that realization, I was more willing to investigate alternatives. I don't say that to minimize engineering efforts at all. I'm still more the slide rule kind of guy than the cognac and cables type. I'm more comfortable with machines having well-defined properties than cutting and trying, hoping to find "something special." But that said, there are some real benefits and interesting properties of tubes, so be sure to investigate them when you can.

A Taste of Tubes

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Subject: Re: "A Taste of Tubes"  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Tue, 19 Oct 2004 06:54:26 GMT  
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Hi Wayne; So... does that make me a "Cognac and Cables Type"? Not that I don't enjoy the occasional "Remy' Martin". Never had it with cables though. I can't help but think some of these tube questions might be tongue in cheek. If a person is lurking on this site, you should be aware of the controversy. Have you read the Klienhorn articles in AudioeXpress? Nelson actually admits quite frankly that tubes sound better on his single driver speakers and he says he can't explain why... they just do. The individual with the tube question; If you can show me a SS set-up that is more musical than a tube set-up I will with great joy and tremendous relief toss every piece of tube gear right into the bay and provide a nice artificial reef for the homeless fish. Tubes are a pain in the rear; hot expensive heavy nasty to work with, please help us to rid our selves of these boat anchors.

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Subject: Re: "A Taste of Tubes"  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 19 Oct 2004 07:10:39 GMT  
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Hi John, What I really meant by the "slide rule types" or "cognac and cables types" is really what some people call right brained and left brained. One prefers thinking analytically, and the other prefers thinking artistically. But now that I look at that comment, one of the two groups is definitely having more fun than the other by the way I worded it. I've seen analytical types that favored tubes and I've seen artistic types that favored solid state. I've seen lots of designers that were the other way around. Same with speakers, I know one guy that designs single driver speakers that is decidedly engineer and another that is most definitely artist. Just two ways of looking at the picture, I suppose. Kind of yin and yang or something. Wayne

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Subject: Re: "A Taste of Tubes"  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Tue, 19 Oct 2004 12:25:14 GMT  
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Wayne; In the words of our late lamented ex-president Reagan; "There you go again", subtly aligning my position with the foggy headed subjectivists by suggesting the yin and yang thing. The right brain left brain thing, a very easily invoked diagnoses that in reality is extremely complicated theoretically; another one of those urban myths that were pre-empted by the media into one word descriptions of barely understood phenomena. Sorta like audio measurements. I think Taste of Tubes was a mole. A Plant. Someone looking to foment discord. Whatta you think?  
J.R.

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Subject: Re: "A Taste of Tubes"

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 19 Oct 2004 20:51:32 GMT

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I just thought it was cool that I got to plug that "Taste of Tubes" book. I think that's a cool little booklet. And speaking of cool booklets, I wonder what's the news on the latest Vacuum Tube Valley issue, number 21 I think it'll be.

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Subject: Re: "A Taste of Tubes"

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Tue, 19 Oct 2004 23:26:37 GMT

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Good way to get Eric back in the game; Wayne. I guess he's busy with all the shows going on. Lately it's been hit and run with him.

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Subject: Re: What's good about tubes?

Posted by [Steve](#) on Fri, 22 Oct 2004 22:56:44 GMT

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Dear Shader, I think there are many differences that could, not necessarily will, account for the sonic differences. The list presented are some of the ones not discussed much. They are in no particular order. The comments are general in nature, with exceptions certainly possible. They are theoretical in nature, but I think are practical reasons too. 1) Triodes have inherently low order, even order distortions. SS is typically odd order and higher orders being present. 2) SS components usually use more parts, and even the number of stages. The more parts and stages, the more the possibility of sonic degradation. 3) SS components usually use many inferior sounding parts. For instance, a SS amp uses large electrolytic caps, and smaller ones too, in the power supply for different stages. This one aspect profoundly influences the sound, especially spacially, and not to the good. 4) Some SS devices have an inherent problem with high junction capacitance. For instance, an IRFfet may have a junction capacitance as high as .0015uf. There is also the problem of higher "miller" capacitance. 5) SS devices have much worse DA and DF factors. The DA and DF become particularly critical as: A.) The DA is very high, much higher than the poly's or tube's DA. B.) A portion of the conducting mechanism in series with the capacitance is silicone, which is a poor conductor, hence its designation - semi conductor, poor DF. As mentioned above, I mention the less understood problems that could (not necessarily all or will) cause sonic differences between components and the devices themselves. Certainly something to think about. Take care and have a good weekend. Steve

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