Subject: tube or circuit?
Posted by tanders on Sat, 30 Oct 2004 20:54:03 GMT
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What do you think has the most impact on sound - the tube or the rest of the circuit? Say there were two amps with basically the same parts but one has 45 and the other has 2A3. Two amps with 2A3 but different wiring? What about the sonic signature of the rest of the parts? What do you think matters most? Cheers, Tony

Subject: Both...
Posted by j rodney on Tue, 16 Nov 2004 17:26:48 GMT
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If you have the same circuit, say a SE amp, and substitute tubes (given propper operating points, filament voltage, ect...) you will hear differences. Yet, the circuit itself will influence the sound of the same output tube, ie... direct coupled VS R/C coupled. Moreover, the coupling caps will also affect the sound. And obviously the output tranformers will affect sound of a given tube and circuit. It all matters. I personally feel that certain attributes are really dependent on the circuit such as gain, linearity, frequency extension, distortion and that others are affected by tubes, tonal balance, clarity, and other more subjective criterea like airiness.Rodney

Subject: Re: Both...
Posted by Thermionic on Sat, 27 Nov 2004 19:10:52 GMT
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I agree completely with j rodney. EVERYTHING has an effect, good or bad. A truly top notch sounding amp is a synergous combination of truly top notch ingredients, all correctly executed in a design tailored for the specific application.IMO, the most often overlooked facet of tube amp design is the power supply. An amp with a power supply exhibiting good regulation, very low impedance, fast response without overshoot and oscillation, and plenty of current reserve will sound COMPLETELY night and day different from the exact identical amp circuit with a poor power supply. My personal experience has been that the power supply is responsible for about 50% of the amp's overall character and presentation. The power supply can make or break such things such as soundstaging and imaging ability, bass weight, slam, and speed, and mid/high coherency and focus. The other half is up to proper amplifier section design, the quality of the output transformers and componentry, and the tubes themselves.As j rodney stated, the componentry used in the amp circuit, especially the signal path, has a huge bearing as well. For example, using carbon composition resistors and paper in oil caps in the signal path will sway the signature in the direction of warm, full, and rich. Using metal film resistors and Teflon/tin foil caps will lean towards clean, transparent, and analytical sounding. Of course, the output iron's gotta be

the good stuff, too. All in all, you can build a better sounding amp with "everyday" tubes and a humdinger circuit, componentry, power supply, and output transformers, than you can with the trendiest boutique power triodes or NOS sweep tubes and crummy stuff. I guess that maybe gave away my personal answer, the circuit matters more, IMO.Thermionic