Subject: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by Seeker on Wed, 11 Feb 2004 19:15:54 GMT
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I asked about the Electro-Harmonix 2A3 tubes at the 'other place' and heard all about Sovteks, Valve Art, TJ mesh plates.....My amps have really old Sovteks in them and it's time to re-tube. Does anyone have experience with the new Electro-Harmonix 2A3's & 6SN7's? How do they sound compared to the Sovteks?

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 12 Feb 2004 04:40:30 GMT
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What's the price tag on those, if you don't mind my asking? I could use a new pair of 2A3's too. To tell the truth, I don't know the price breakdowns on any of the brands. Just haven't shopped them.

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by Seeker on Thu, 12 Feb 2004 14:27:31 GMT
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Hi Wayne, a matched pair of EH 2A3 tubes is $89.95. I received them yesterday and they sound very articulate in my Moondog amps. They don't sound bass heavy as the Sovteks can, but they have plenty of bass and sound good through out the frequencies, a very even and smooth sound. They just sound like real music according to my friend who plays in the Austin Symphony - he thinks they are way better than the Sovteks. The EH 6SN7's, are 11.95 each, $5.00 each for tube matcing, and may have something to do with the the bass - not sure.These are new tubes for EH and I'm quite pleased. I do intend to get a new pair of the Sovteks and see how they compare....old tubes vs. new tubes isn't a good comparison. Comparing tubes is a bit easier with mono amps.I did listen to the Valve Art tubes and just didn't like them. I'm still amazed at the articulation of the EH tubes. Hopefully they will sound even better after they get about 500 hours on them.If you get the EH 2A3's, let me know how they sound in your system.

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 12 Feb 2004 15:24:13 GMT
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Thanks for the tip. I'll order a pair of Electro-Harmonix 2A3's and give 'em a listen.I have a brand-new pair of Valve Art tubes, and they sound OK but have a very peculiar symptom. One sounds fine but the other makes intermittent pops, like a Geiger counter sound. If you rotate the tube 90o so that it lays horizontally, it becomes quiet. But stand it up and it starts popping again.This is a consistent symptom, and is perfectly repeatable. Give it some signal and run it about a half hour and the popping goes away. Not fully, but the popping is reduced a great deal. You won't notice it when there is something playing, but in between passages, it's there again.So I need to do something else. I probably should have sent this one defective tube back, but I didn't. It has maybe a couple hundred hours on it now, so I wouldn't feel right sending it back. I had hoped it would go away, but it hasn't. So I'll make it "go away" by buying new tubes.I have a question. Do all 2A3's have a gas that glows blue inside? Or is it just Valve Art tubes? That's probably a very naive question, but I never noticed it on other 2A3 tubes and so I was wondering if maybe I just didn't pay attention.

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by Seeker on Thu, 12 Feb 2004 18:55:54 GMT
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Hi Wayne, I got a very technical answer to your question about the 'blue gas' from Audio Electronics (Cary), but I really didn't understand what he was talking about. I've had Sovteks do this, but not all tubes do. The Electro-Harmonix I just received do not do this. It isn't anything to be concerned with, just an oddity relative to the materials used.

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by kyle on Thu, 12 Feb 2004 22:32:45 GMT
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Wayne, I have eight valve art 2A3's and five of them make that popping or ticking to one degree or another. I also have a pair of golden dragons and two pairs of sovteks which don't. So just based on this experience I don't buy the Valve Arts now. One thing which I have noticed from reading other peoples posts and from talking to other 2A3 users is that the tonal character is very system and operating point dependent. As an example, if I use the sovteks in one amp I made, they are much brighter and more extended on the bass than the valve arts, but on another amp the top seems slightly rolled off on the sovteks. The sovteks can be run at higher operating points than most 2A3's and if you're making your own amps that does make them attractive for experimenting. One thing I'm sure of is that there are no absolutes (except that the popping noise is really annoying).

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 13 Feb 2004 06:04:12 GMT
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I kinda thought the blue glow was cool. Too bad the tubes make that clicking noise.

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 13 Feb 2004 06:11:04 GMT
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Wow, I can't believe Valve Art has such a high failure rate on their 2A3 tubes. I'd consider this noise to be a failure mode. I suppose it might be related to method of use, operating point or circuit configuration, but both you and I are getting the same symptoms.What amp(s) and circuit configuration(s) are you running them in? I've got 'em in stock Paramours, and the symptom follows the tube. What I mean is that I can swap the tubes between amps and the symptom follows the tube, not the amp.

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by kyle on Fri, 13 Feb 2004 16:52:02 GMT
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Hi Wayne, I'm using them in home brew amps - two SE's and one PP. One thing I find to be strange is how some of the tubes have a very rapid popping and some of them just click every second or so. Like yours these effects move with the tubes.

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 13 Feb 2004 18:07:46 GMT
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Valve Art is a Chinese company, isn't it? Do you know who we could talk to about this? It would be nice to hear what the manufacturer has to say about it.P.S. Seeker - Sorry to go on and on about Valve Art's 2A3. That's just exactly what you said happened at the other place. But the problem with the Valve Art 2A3 is exactly why I'm interested in the Electro-Harmonix 2A3 tube you mentioned when kicking off this thread.

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by Seeker on Mon, 16 Feb 2004 17:39:21 GMT
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Yep, Valve Art is definitely a Chinese company. When I received my Moondog amp's they had Chinese tubes in them; they didn't click or pop, but they made this weird sound I call tube farting, and that is exactly what it sounded like.My Electro-Harmonix tubes sound far better now than when I received them. For my tastes, I will use the Electro-Harmonix and Sovtek tubes, with a preference toward Electro-Harmonix. Your amp will tell you which brand will work best for your tastes. Let me know what you end up with.

Subject: Blue glow
Posted by artsybrute on Thu, 19 Feb 2004 00:15:54 GMT
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Hi Wayne,Yes, the blue halo seems to be unique to the Valve Arts. I sometimes like to fall asleep to low level classical on very quiet nights, like during snowfalls. It used to be really cool to wake up to those blue glows at the end of long passages.I switched to Sophia meshplates (2.5V 300B's), but I hear Sophia stopped making them. I've also heard that most Asian meshplates are manufactured in the same factory.From what I understand, the Valf-arts are very inexpensive tubes. The Sophia's were close to $300 a pair (yes, an impulse buy during a moment of weakness). What is surprising is that they seem to work really well in some systems.I use them after I mod my amps, just in case something leads to a blown tube. That actually happened last time and I blew one of the VA's. After switching the system off and on repeatedly too many times, one of the rectifier tubes (a Mullard no less) on my McIntosh tuner blew and overloaded the amp. POP!Regards,Len

Subject: Re: Blue glow
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 19 Feb 2004 02:13:37 GMT
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Hi Len!Where've you been? Been missing seeing you around. Whatcha been up to?The Valve Art 2A3's are inexpensive, which I think is why they're the standard tube in entry level kits. But the blue halo is nice, glowing like a flame that gently dances to the music. That alone makes it worth buying a few to find a pair that don't pop.As a replacement for Valve Art's, I think I'll try Electro-Harmonix 2A3 tubes in my Paramours. Maybe try Sovtek tubes sometime too. And one of these times, I want to swap out the transformers for better Magnequest iron and then move up to an RCA or Tung-Sol 2A3. Probably nice to build another pair of amps, so I can compare the stock build with the improved one.What do you like about the 300B as opposed to the 2A3? Do you suggest changing bias to run a 300B in Paramours?Wayne

Subject: Re: Blue glow
Posted by artsybrute on Fri, 20 Feb 2004 03:13:57 GMT
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Hey Wayne!Been really busy and expect that to continue into May. I hope to finish up my Master's this semester. Meanwhile some of the grandchildren are visiting. I really enjoy both school and the grandkids, but the combination of the two is not optimal.Oh, supposedly the blue halo is due to an imperfect vacuum in the tube, but it doesn't seem to affect performance. I hear it affects longevity. I haven't seem a post on the electro-harmonix before now, which shows you how out of it I've been.I like to fall asleep to low-level classical on really quiet nights like during snowfalls. It used to be nice to wake up at the end of long passage and see those blue glows. I still use a Valve art for testing my amps after mods. They used to be a pair of course, but during the last mod I kept restarting my system without proper cycling times in between. I kept the preamp out of the circuit for testing, going direct from my McIntosh MR71 tuner to the Paramours. Well, the stress blew a rectifier tube (a Mullard no less) in the Mac, sent a surge through the 'Mour and popped the Valve Art. The Sophias are labeled 2.5V 300B's, as are the TJ's. I heard all the Asian meshplates are manufactured in the same factory, but different labels have differing Quality Control standards. Who knows.Like both the 300B and the 2A3 they fit the UX4 socket. But unlike the 300B, they run at 2.5 volts, they only put out 3.5 watts and they follow all the 2A3 op points, so I would call them 2a3's. The bass is very nice in my modified Paramours, but again some people find them to have too much bass. The mesh also gives them great detail in my system. I think that will show up even more when I change the 'Mours to direct coupling.I believe true 300B's run at 5V and put out 8 watts, so they won't run in Paramours. I guess these meshies have a similar internal structure and maybe a similar sound to 300B meshies. But since all these DHT's produced by different manufacturers sound different, I don't know what a "true" 2A3 or 300B should sound like :-)My listening room is full of MDF for the Seven cornerhorns, almost completely cut to size (only the 45's on the doghouses left) stacked on the floor. As soon as I have a chance to breathe, they'll be built "on site". Then the direct coupling of the Paramours. Then the GM70 amps. Then...Ah, so many passions, so little time.

Subject: Re: Blue glow
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 20 Feb 2004 04:05:16 GMT
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I assumed that the blue glow was from some sort of ionized gas, but I also assumed it was there on purpose. I suspect it is one of the inert gasses, but I dunno. Sure is nice though.The Sophia tube sounds interesting. It also sounds like it is neither 300B or 2A3, but rather a third that shares some characteristics of them both. Sort of in between as far as bias and load line goes. Interesting.You've really got your hands full there. All those projects, grandkids and a Masters to defend. So I'll understand if you nod off from time to time.

Subject: Re: Moondog's need new tubes
Posted by BillEpstein on Sat, 28 Feb 2004 11:42:16 GMT
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Between the Valve Arts and the TJ Mesh 2.3 300B I found the former "easy listening" and the latter more detailed with better dynamics. I had a chance to compare the Sovteks to OS RCA (bi-plate, I think)at Speakerman's. After switching back and forth with the ASL amp we took the Sovteks out in the street and drove my truck over them:)