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Subject: SEX vs DECWARE

Posted by [DanTheMan](#) on Wed, 01 Dec 2004 19:27:38 GMT

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Has anyone heard both of these amps--SE84C + SEX. I was just curious as to how they compare?Any recomedations for a first SET amp--one that could maybe be a last SET amp?Just wondering if anyone could help since I've never heard a SET. I'm going to buy a set of Fostex to go with it.Thanks in advance.P.S. I'm going to Tokyo next week--is there any amps I should check out there?

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Subject: Re: SEX vs DECWARE

Posted by [thetubeguy1954](#) on Wed, 01 Dec 2004 19:50:06 GMT

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Boy Dan when you said "Any recomedations for a first SET amp--one that could maybe be a last SET amp?" You left a door WIDE OPEN! "If" you really want an SET that not could, but WOULD be your last SET amp, then check out the Italian designed, 150LB, Mastersound Reference 845. I have this amp (the integrated~not monobloc) and jumped off the audio upgrade path, immediately & forever! It puts out 40W ch (so you can use real-world speakers) of the sweetest SET music I've ever heard! As good as it is (and it's VERY GOOD) you can bring it's performance up quite a few notches by pulling out the stock 12AU7's and inserting Mazda "chrome-plate" EC82CC's. Then pull out the 5687's, put in Bendix 6900's and prepare to sit and listen for hours and hours, as one song turns into a whole CD and one CD turns into a marathon listening session. Ahhhhhh, errrr, excuse me. I'm sorry I guess I get took excited about audio. I just reread your question and I doubt the Mastersound would be someone's first SET. However I can promise it would be their last SET.Tom Scata (thetubeguy1954)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/singleendedtriodes/>

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Subject: Re: SEX vs DECWARE

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 01 Dec 2004 20:46:43 GMT

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Hi Dan,I've never heard the Bottlehead Single-Ended Experimenter's Kit, but it's so new there aren't many around yet. I'm not sure if it's the same as the old model or not. But I have Paramours and have heard Decware Zen and Zen select amps. In a nutshell, I think the Paramours have better bass and the Zen's have better treble.Wayne

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Subject: Re: SEX vs DECWARE  
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Wed, 01 Dec 2004 22:15:39 GMT  
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Look at the links listed at the bottom of the attached post for some "state of the art" tube gear that you might find on your trip to Japan. As far as SET, are you looking to buy or build?.....Colin  
<http://audioroundtable.com/SET/messages/242.html>

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Subject: I checked out the Mastersound Reference 845  
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Thu, 02 Dec 2004 03:09:19 GMT  
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WOW, that amp is a beast. The pictures do not do justice to it's size (15 x 22 x 10".) No kidding that would be the last SET one would ever own. My wife would kill me if I dropped that kind of change.....Colin

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Subject: Re: SEX vs DECWARE  
Posted by [Lew H](#) on Thu, 02 Dec 2004 16:33:12 GMT  
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Dan, I've been listening to the SEX amp daily for the last month. It does a very good job. You have to use high efficiency speakers with these low output amps and they have to be DEAD quiet. The SEX amp is totally quiet. I can crank all of its 2watts and hear absolute blackness when placing my ear against the driver (101db eff). Not many amps at any price are capable of providing an absolute dead quiet background. Frankly, Bottlehead's phono amp is also the quietest phono amp/stage that I've heard. I'm listening to a tweaked SEX amp that I picked up last night to listen to for a couple of days and it is better than the stock SEX amp. I don't know where Doc is on offering an upgrade to the stock SEX amp, since it is so new, but, even if the price were trippled of the stock unit, it wouldn't find much competition for price/sound. Heck, listening to it now, and it is very nice. Sorry, don't have experience with the Decware stuff--have only heard it once and that was some years ago. Regards, Lew

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Subject: Re: SEX vs DECWARE  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 02 Dec 2004 17:09:35 GMT  
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Hi Lew, My experience has been quite different. While my Bottlehead and Foreplay sound nice,

they are pretty noisy as far as hum and buzz are concerned. It isn't like an old tube radio or anything like that, but with any speakers more efficient than about 90dB/W/M, you can hear them hum when no signal is present. They also make a sort of a spitting sound, a kind of a high frequency buzz. If there was one thing I'd say bad about Bottlehead gear, it would be that it is noisy. Wayne

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Subject: Re: SEX vs DECWARE  
Posted by [Lew H](#) on Thu, 02 Dec 2004 20:22:57 GMT  
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Hi Wayne, Unfortunately, I've not heard the foreplay. I plan on using Doc's New Foreplay at the CES, but I've not used the model that is currently available. It may well be noisy, and as far as Bottlehead's other amp kits, I've not tried them. But, the SEX and Seduction are absolutely quiet--when I had the Seduction hooked directly into the SEX with no preamp in the chain. I have used the Seduction with both the Audible Illusions M3 and a Threshold and found that the Seduction was quieter than either the M3 or the Threshold's phonostages. Regards, Lew

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Subject: Re: SEX vs DECWARE  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 02 Dec 2004 22:24:26 GMT  
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Don't get me wrong, I think the Paramour and the Foreplay amplifiers are pretty decent sounding units for the money. I also have a brand new Seduction kit, still in the box. I don't think it would be difficult at all to come up with a power supply that wouldn't be as noisy as what they've been using, so maybe the folks at Bottlehead are working on it. I'd like to hear the SEX amp, so I'll have to check one out sometime. Lots of folks I trust are giving them a try, so I hope to be able to audition one sometime soon.

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Subject: Got SEX  
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Fri, 03 Dec 2004 02:46:46 GMT  
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Lew, How on earth did you get yours a month ago? I ordered mine the first day it went on sale, and it just showed up today. It seems from your post you are very happy with it. I mainly got it for my cans (AKG 240.) What upgrades have you done or are you running stock? I briefly looked through the package and noticed it came with shielded cable. Could this reduce the hum that Wayne has heard from the P'mours/Foreplay. I have a Foreplay/ParaSex combo and have not noticed any hum, but I'm not using ultra-sensitive speakers either.....Colin

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Subject: Re: Got SEX  
Posted by [Lew H](#) on Fri, 03 Dec 2004 05:33:44 GMT  
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Hi Colin,I had one for the RMAF in Denver. It actually was a prototype. Doc lent me a tricked out prototype yesterday that I suspect will be the blueprint for an upgrade kit. Yes, I like the little guy real well. Regards,LewPS, there is a Bottlehead meet in Kirkland this Sunday, and the stock SEX and the upgraded SEX will be there, sob, I'm bringing it back to Doc. I suspect the Bottlehead forum will have a lot to say about people's listening impressions after the meet.

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Subject: Re: Got SEX  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 03 Dec 2004 07:31:31 GMT  
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What tubes are in that amp? One thing I really like about the Paramours is that 2A3 blue glow.

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Subject: Re: Got SEX  
Posted by [Lew H](#) on Fri, 03 Dec 2004 12:28:45 GMT  
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Wayne, sad to say they are unglamorous, ugly little suckers--6DN7s. Two little guys sitting all my their lonesome selves, like two wannabees waiting to grow up, lol.Lew

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Subject: Re: Got SEX  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 03 Dec 2004 18:15:12 GMT  
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Ah, well, if they sound good to you, that's what really matters. One can always get a lava lamp or something.

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Subject: Did someone say lava lamp?  
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Fri, 03 Dec 2004 21:55:40 GMT  
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DON'T try this at home.....Colin  
<http://www.komotv.com/stories/34174.htm>

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Subject: Re: Did someone say lava lamp?  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sat, 04 Dec 2004 06:16:06 GMT  
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Oh my God, I can't laugh at that. It would be funny, in a Darwin Awards kind of way, if it weren't so tragic. I can see how it could happen. Lots of hobbyists here would be (or have been) unlucky in a similar fashion when pushing an electrolytic capacitor too far, either by over-voltage or reverse polarity. The wrong little piece of shrapnel in the wrong direction can do some damage. I guess that's kind of what happened to that poor guy with the lava lamp.

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Subject: Re: SEX vs DECWARE  
Posted by [Cantskienuf](#) on Mon, 27 Dec 2004 18:12:47 GMT  
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Hmmm.... I've just finished a set of Paramours, and when mated with my Foreplay they were dead quiet. Both the amps and pre-amp have the C4S mod and the pre-amp has a filament snubber. With those mods I think most folks get a very quiet system.

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Subject: Re: SEX vs DECWARE  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 27 Dec 2004 21:00:33 GMT  
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Don't get me wrong, I really enjoy my Bottlehead setup. But I can hear the hum between passages. Even without a preamp connected, the Paramours give that hint of hum, and it's pretty noticeable on speakers with greater than about 95dB sensitivity. It's not like an old tube radio or anything, but you can definitely hear it. I have Paramours and a Foreplay, both with C4S and sweet whispers on the Foreplay. The snubber pot is set for the least hum and when the C4S's kick on, it gets quieter but the hum is still noticeable. I use Electro-Harmonix 2A3's, which sound very nice and get rid of the Geiger-counter popping noise of the stock Valve Art tubes.

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