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Subject: What do vintage amps sound like?  
Posted by [GarMan](#) on Thu, 07 Jul 2005 17:39:43 GMT  
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Recently, I've become very interested in the amps put out by Sansui in the 70's, mostly because I think there's some of the prettiest amps made. I've read that Japan put out some of the best sounding solid state amps in the late 70's, during a time when product wars were based on performance, not price. I've never had a chance to spend a lot of time with any of these vintage amps and would like some comments on how they sound compared to today's offerings. Also interested in comparisons to today's tube amps. thanks, gar.

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Subject: Re: What do vintage amps sound like?  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 07 Jul 2005 19:53:58 GMT  
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G-Man. I have a Fisher 500T, the first SS amp they made I believe. It uses germanium transistors and looks almost exactly like the 500c. If that interests you I can post my opinion of the sound. Also my friend has a Sansui 3000 at home.

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Subject: Re: What do vintage amps sound like?  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 07 Jul 2005 20:12:07 GMT  
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Wow, an amp with germanium transistors! That must be even more rare than vintage tube gear.

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Subject: Re: What do vintage amps sound like?  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 07 Jul 2005 21:53:10 GMT  
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They look like G's; or did I mis-spell that? It's not Geranium; that's a plant.

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Subject: Re: What do vintage amps sound like?  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 07 Jul 2005 22:13:47 GMT  
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You are correct; the Fisher while made in 1962 thankfully does not in fact employ Germanium Transistors. Must check facts; must check fa...I really guessed at that due to the age of the unit. Thanks for the heads- up.

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Subject: Don't hold back...

Posted by [GarMan](#) on Thu, 07 Jul 2005 23:55:30 GMT

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how does it sound?Also interested on your impression of the Sansui?

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Subject: Re: Don't hold back...

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 08 Jul 2005 01:48:38 GMT

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Sure; when have you seen me hold back? The Fisher; believe it or not sounds a lot like their tube stuff. The mids are smooth and melodic, the bass is a little flabby but warm and natural sounding and the highs are very full and open but a little rounded. Not real detailed but nice and musical. They really sound very little like modern SS equipment. I guess they are tuned to have tube characteristics and if that is possible then they have succeeded. Non-fatigueing but also not strong on resolution. There is noticeable vieling through the entire frequency range; but it is not irritating. I prefer it to my Carver TFM 35 amp, thats for sure.The Sansui is a real nice piece. It sounds big/looks big. If I can make myself understood; you know how those older Pioneer SX 1250 recievers had that sense of effortless power? The Sansui has that in spades. Little ragged way up top but the bass/mids are pretty smooth and very ballsy. Other than that slight high freq thing it is Pretty even response, I don't hear any ragged response problems in the mid/bass and also pretty detailed, not as vieled as the Fisher, but not quite as smooth either. What it gives up in smooth it makes up in definition. I really don't know why some of the older SS from the early seventies sounds more alive than more recent stuff but the Sansui does have a lively presentation. On some orchestral pieces; full orchestra; it drives those Alons to the point where it sounds like the drivers are floating with the music; like they are weightless and have incredibly quick reaction to transients. It is very gratifying on massed and complicated portions of the music. My friend uses Alon speakers and the amp can rock and roll with them. It is visually staggering, big lights/big face.If I enjoyed that thunder and majesty of large orchestras and big band jazz as well as Led Zepplin played with a lot of drive and foundation I'd like the sound.Also the tuner section is pretty competent, we were able to capture some distant stations with very good results.Something about those 1970's big guns that is enjoyable; I tell you this, they make a nice combination with Wayne's Theater 4's. Everyone I bring by enjoys that system; fingers popping and smiles.When I hear people praising the songs on the Turntable I know the system is right and I get that all the time with those. They think it is the music but hey; we know better.Hope this helps.Let me know if you get the chance to audition; or maybe you already own one of those

behemoths. I'd like your perspective.

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Subject: Re: Don't hold back...

Posted by [GarMan](#) on Fri, 08 Jul 2005 12:14:44 GMT

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I don't own any yet, but those Sansui AU717 integrateds and TU717 tuners that keep popping up on ebay sure are tempting. Designed and built in the mid 70's, I believe it was a very good time for Japanese SS components. Did I mention I think they're gorgeous?

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Subject: Re: Don't hold back...

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 08 Jul 2005 17:14:57 GMT

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Well; now this is a quandry. The earliest SS gear had an easier presentation in my experience. Once you get past the early-seventies the SS designers went spec crazy and as a result they tend to sound harsh and gritty to my ears. I can't say for sure about the AU series but I personally avoid all that era when it comes to SS. Then around the late 80's/early 90's it seems people were becoming dis-satisfied with that sound and sales slipped so they turned completely around and all the SS stuff from that era sounds dull and lifeless. Go figure...

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Subject: Re: Don't hold back...

Posted by [tomt](#) on Fri, 15 Jul 2005 22:31:22 GMT

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just got a fisher 500t last week/dumpster bound-.....hope it works ok

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Subject: Re: Don't hold back...

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Wed, 20 Jul 2005 14:27:19 GMT

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I didn't see this earlier but let me warn you. Mine will pop on shut-off and it is pretty loud. I would use some expendable speakers for the initial testing phase. That being said, the receiver sounds darned good. Better to me than most of the SS stuff of today and the tuner section is first rate. I

sometimes consider getting mine re-done since it looks so nice and gets great sound and reception.

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Subject: Back to the Sansui

Posted by [MRCLASSICMAN](#) on Tue, 25 Oct 2005 09:58:16 GMT

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The early Sansui's were some of the richest sounding SS gear available. I have had a model 3000 and I currently have a 4000 and a 5000x. All are warm sounding amps that can really cook. The 5000x can have the pre detached (unstrapped) so it is easy to try tube front ends. This can be a big plus as the power can be nice but the added sound stage and warmth of the tubes really make for a wonderful combination. I now have made a complete transition to tubes and flea power. Once you let a tube into the system I think your destiny will be to go all the way. I often wonder if those great old systems , the Pioneers, Sansui's, Fishers, weren't the reason we're audiophiles today. Please don't be offended as I know I have missed some other very nice sounding systems, there are just to many to list! Terry

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