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Subject: Theater 4's w/ EL-84 at 14 Watts per  
Posted by [Garland](#) on Thu, 05 Dec 2002 09:17:36 GMT  
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Last night I finished re-wiring my Dad's old 60's Heathkit AA-111 EL-84 stereo amp and popped it into the system, displacing the Bottlehead Paramours. Everything worked fine though the sound was at first a bit thin and dry and not much depth to the soundstage. After one CD's play the sound opened up a lot and sweetened and dynamics improved considerably. I left the player on replay and watched the required West Wing with my wife, did the required Quality Time conversation prior to my wife's heading off to bed and then returned to the audio system for one last check on the sound before retiring myself. Well, boy oh boy! Heath must have used some pretty darn good iron in these baby's. the 3 hours of warming up really brought the amps up to truly great sound. The new Solen tin foil coupling caps sounded very good to my ears and I'll have to try them in other circuits. The Theater 4's really liked the extra power with startling dynamics and the RCA EL-84's have a distinct sweetness of tone which is appealing (though not the veracity of the 2A3's). So, I think I'll keep the Heath in the system for a while, build a new "Soul Sister" preamp, put together some cabinets so that Dave Cope can finally get to hear what all his mega \$\$ drivers really sound like and squeeze in a little bit of Christmas sometime in the next 3 or so weeks!Garland

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Subject: Re: Theater 4's w/ EL-84 at 14 Watts per  
Posted by [Scholl](#) on Thu, 05 Dec 2002 10:04:41 GMT  
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If you search the DIY tube forum I posted some mods I did on a AA-151. Basicly I gutted the amp removed the electrolitic power supply caps and put in Solen 47uf polies and a 6H choke. Later replaced the 6AN8 with 6H30 circuit. Sound stage goes to the moon and back. Tonal balance is a bit tward the bright side thanks to the Solens but not terribly so. MAYbe oilers will keep a warner tone. I'm also using the Angela\Solen tin foil caps. The over all sound is more Hi-Fi than musical but I like Hi-Fi, nutt'n wrong with bandwidth, dynamics and sound stage. There are several 6BQ5 and 6V6 amps that sound great. 10-20 watts is nice too.

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Subject: Re: Theater 4's w/ EL-84 at 14 Watts per  
Posted by [Garland](#) on Thu, 05 Dec 2002 11:07:11 GMT  
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I replaced the electrolytics with Solen 47uF's as well and indeed the presentation is rather forward but I feel the Theater 4's are forward leaning as opposed to layed back. The sound I'm getting with this amp so far is a bit "hifi" but I would not say un-musical in the least. There is plenty

of that emotion and nuance of the musicians coming through but maybe not as much as with the 2A3's; and then there is the punch of the woofer in control with the 14 watts that moves things along quite nicely! I added a stage of 4uF GE oil caps to my Paramour's P.S. and got a nice sense of ease, fine grain/blackness to the sonic fabric- may have to try the same with the AA-111's sometime. Now I have to decide if I want to get some new EL-84 tubes, try some cheap Ei's or go for a matched quad of NOS\$\$\$\$. Now I've got 3 60's RCA's and one GE. And then there is the 7199 to deal with. I've heard that these are not the best tube for sonics. The Mullard rectifier is nice though.

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Subject: Re: Theater 4's w/ EL-84 at 14 Watts per  
Posted by [Scholl](#) on Thu, 05 Dec 2002 12:08:03 GMT

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Oh yes, we emailed on this last month. Search for a posting I replied to a fellow looking for phase splitters for 6AQ5s. I gave a nice discription for a 6H30. This will take the amp over the edge. Also I'm running it with only 2DB NFB. I ran the amp for a week or so with no NFB. But after testing found total output losses went from 3db to 2db with no ill sonic affects. I hope to use this amp with the Pi 1 (minis) I asked about below but for now I'm using it with stock JBL L88 plus speakers. I also had it running a similer speaker to Pi 4 pros but replaced then due to Christmas decorating required smaller speakers. The Lionel train set runns behind the speakers.

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Subject: Jeez, no moss growing on you, man!  
Posted by [DRC](#) on Fri, 06 Dec 2002 01:01:20 GMT

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I've gotten the drivers as far as Brooklyn, but can't seem to cover the rest of the distance. I'll get 'em there eventually. I have two amps you'd enjoy with the Theater 4's, I think. An AN Kit 4 which is a PP 6V6 and the Soro SE which is paralleled SE 6L6's. The latter has monster iron, 18 or 20 w/ch and was a real shock to me after 2A3 amps. Dynamics up the proverbial wazoo!

Keep your ears and your mind open.

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Subject: Re: Theater 4's w/ EL-84 at 14 Watts per  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 06 Dec 2002 03:06:44 GMT

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Thanks for the review; I envy you guys playing with all that cool stuff! I've always used amps that could jump start your car or arc weld the frame, and haven't owned tube gear except for antique

up to now. And my experience is that you can't really properly evaluate a product until you've had it for quite some time and made its use a habit. It's like building a relationship, in a way. So my experience with tubes is actually quite limited, and amounts to fixing old tube radios and light engineering work with Spice. But I'm hot on your trail - Dan sent my Paramour kits today! Now I get a taste of the other side of the spectrum. So I'll be building the amps perfectly stock and bringing them to Lima with me. If I start doing the popular mods, it will be to another amp because I want to have samples of popular SET amps that are stock, so that it is an accurate representation of Bottlehead offerings. I'd also like to have some of Brian Cherry's Consonance amps, or whatever they are called after the rename. I hope to hear a representation of some other amps at Lima, and I think it's reasonable to assume I'll get that chance. :-) Are you going to make it? Grab the gang and come on, if you can!

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Subject: We got yer Consonance, right here  
Posted by [Bill Epstein](#) on Fri, 06 Dec 2002 09:04:03 GMT  
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I ordered the Ella yesterday. Apparently some parts are out of stock but should have it in a few weeks and certainly for Lima. 40 watts EL-34 or 50 with KT88/6550. But I plan to run it in Triode with about 15 watts. The 3677/Pro hybrid sounds so good with 30 vintage Fisher SS watts, I can't wait to hear them with SOTA tube watts. And of course I'll have the drivers in new Pi cabinetry for Lima, also.

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Subject: Re: We got yer Consonance, right here  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 06 Dec 2002 09:34:22 GMT  
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That's sounds great! I expect the Ella must be excellent. To tell the truth, I was shocked to find that Stanley Chu had died and also that I hadn't heard about it. He and I kept in touch, and wrote

Brian Cherry and Stanley were partners, and I'm glad that now Brian has teamed with Kevin and are promoting their amps through DIY HiFi. Just a neat bunch of guys, and I'd like to see them do well. I've been bidding on some old tube radios. I'd like to give a TransOceanic or something like that to my grandparents for Christmas - I have a real nice TransOceanic and listen to the shortwave band on it almost every day. Catch a few talk radio broadcasts on the standard broadcast AM band from time to time too. So having a nice radio like that would bring back some good memories for my grandparents, I expect. I'm anxious to see you and your new acquisitions

and creations at Lima. I think we're going to have a really nice time this year!

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Subject: Re: Jeez, no moss growing on you, man!  
Posted by [Scholl](#) on Fri, 06 Dec 2002 12:34:52 GMT  
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Let us all know if you can get the Heath ans AN together. It would be interesting to see how they compare.

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Subject: Re: Theater 4's w/ EL-84 at 14 Watts per  
Posted by [Garland](#) on Fri, 06 Dec 2002 17:19:40 GMT  
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I'm in the middle of one hell of a F\*^&(@-up "charrette" here at work, can only take a few seconds to report that during last nights listen to the Heaths after about one hour of listening there was generated these weird bubbles of awesome midrange which would develope and then quickly fade back to more normal quality. These bubbles gradually congealed into a whole consistent quality that was quite appealing. The only problem is that this effect is frequency limited to a fairly small band in the midrange and is somewhat discontinuous with the rest of the music. Hopefully more breakin will help. The amp is fun to listen to being quite lively! Wayne, can't wait to get you into the tube scene; besides the sonic character I find that with the resources on the internet and the general character of tube circuits there is an abundance of oportunity to play with the soldering iron, unlike SS circuits (to the best of my knowledge). Dave Cope, where the heck are you??? G.

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Subject: Re: Theater 4's w/ EL-84 at 14 Watts per  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 06 Dec 2002 19:23:27 GMT  
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Did you ever see the movie, "Office Space?" If not, it is imperative that you watch this movie by tomorrow morning, and write a memo about its contents, distributed in triplicate. The memo must be presented to this forum by COB, today. [grin]About the tube amps, I'm happy that I've got the Bottlehead Paramour kit now, but it probably couldn't have come at a worse time. We're coming into the holidays, and that keeps us all busy, you know. Orders are piling in, so that keeps me busy too. And I've made some design commitments that I intend to keep, even though they're "buddy deals," I still plan to make sure they happen in a relatively timely fashion. Finishing the

tube crossover is one of those - After that, I think I'll limit my work on custom jobs for a little while. Then again, after that, maybe things will slow down to a more manageable level. But I doubt it. [smile]

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Subject: Re: Theater 4's w/ EL-84 at 14 Watts per  
Posted by [Scholl](#) on Fri, 06 Dec 2002 20:46:52 GMT  
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Maybe a flakey 7199 connection or tube. Before turn on next time reseal them several times. Also maybe a flakey carbon resistor most likely in the screen grid circuit of the 7199.

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Subject: Re: Bi-amping on the way? Pi 2 Towers stacked on 4's? n/t  
Posted by [Matts](#) on Sat, 07 Dec 2002 10:21:03 GMT  
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n/t

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Subject: Re: Jeez, no moss growing on you, man!  
Posted by [DRC](#) on Sun, 08 Dec 2002 18:42:19 GMT  
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Oh, I suspect we can make that happen . . . . ;- ) And report back here!  
Keep your ears and your mind open.

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