
Subject: New Headphone Amp coming
Posted by [Shane](#) on Mon, 21 Apr 2008 19:42:22 GMT
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I'm posting this here, as the headphone section doesn't get much traffic. I'm part of a prototype group for the new Stacker II headphone amp designed by Alex Cavalli. We have been working on this amp since the end of last summer. Having built some of Alex's designs, I have great faith that this one will be very nice. Here are several links to more info if anyone is interested.
<http://headwize.com/ubb/showpage.php?fnum=3&tid=7342>
<http://www.head-fi.org/forum/s/f6/stacker-ii-next-generation-hybrid-318479/>
<http://www.cavalliaudio.com/>

Subject: Re: New Headphone Amp coming
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 21 Apr 2008 20:30:36 GMT
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That looks really cool, Shane. Any chance you could bring a preliminary version out to LSAF? Or is it too early in the game for that? You had an SOHA amp at one of the earlier meets, didn't you? The new Stacker amp is an improved SOHA, right? I scanned through the posts but thought you were probably familiar enough I could ask you the high points here. Will the new amp use op-amps driving tubes or just tubes? I see some mention of increasing plate voltage. Was the old plate voltage down too far on the load line? What other changes are being done or proposed?

Subject: Re: New Headphone Amp coming
Posted by [Shane](#) on Tue, 22 Apr 2008 01:00:34 GMT
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No, we won't even have the prototype boards for at least another 2-3 weeks. I brought the SOHA to the last meet at Tulsa. Those that listened liked it. The Stacker II is pretty much nothing like a SOHA. The SOHA had a set operating B+ of around 65V and was based to use a 12AU7 or variant. The Stacker II will have an adjustable voltage from 150-300V, and be able to handle both 6.3V and 12.6V heater requirements. It also will be modular in the sense that you can swap out the front end on it to have a SE front end biased into class A, or a PPA front end (another type of SS headamp that is run back with a servo--many people like this amp). The Stacker II will support any octal with pinouts identical to the 6SN7, and any B9A (9 pin) tube with either the 12AXX or the 6DJ8 pinout arrangements. That's right, you can roll any of these tubes into the amp along with similar tubes like 6SL7, 6H30, 6N1P, 12BH7, etc. The Stacker II buffer is self-zeroing and it does use an opamp in the servo. But the servo is not in the signal path and does not affect the audio. Moving the opamp out of the signal path was one of the main goals. And it doesn't use a differential input and there is no NFB. This is one reason that the amp ruthlessly uncovers the sound of the tube that's being used in the front end. This was another goal. I think this design will

really show the shortcomings of your source, but we'll have to wait and see. Although I had some input on the design, the majority of it was done between 2-3 people and I'm basically a guinea pig for the prototypes. Alex has had several designs "stolen", basically he put the design out there to be critiqued and improved, then someone took the schematics and started selling pcb's before a really good version could be done. I am one of only a few people that have a p2p SOHA amp because of that. This time he is holding the schematic close to the vest and will be selling the pcs through Glass Jar Audio when we've worked all the kinks out. But the design has been put through a lot of simulations and should work. If anyone is interested in building a headphone amp I have a PCB for the 2nd generation Millet with diamond buffer PCB, a Millet MAX pcb, and a CK2III PCB that I would be willing to bring and sell for what I paid for them. YOU can research the designs on Head-Fi and Headwize.

Subject: Re: New Headphone Amp coming
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 22 Apr 2008 04:59:53 GMT
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Cool stuff, Shane. Thanks for keeping us posted.

Subject: Source material?
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Wed, 23 Apr 2008 05:51:55 GMT
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I've listened to 'phones off and on over the years, but just couldn't get past the artificial "soundstage." Are the recordings from The Binaural Source any better? I would love to have a nice sounding headphone rig. Any suggestions?.....C
The Binaural Source

Subject: Re: Source material?
Posted by [Shane](#) on Wed, 23 Apr 2008 20:59:27 GMT
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I've never heard of them. What I do know is that if I have a well built crossfeed running after the amp it will take the soundstage and move it "down" and more "in front" than just having that feeling of you being in the middle of the musicians and makes it much less fatiguing to listen to over long periods.
