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Subject: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.

Posted by [Shane](#) on Wed, 15 Jun 2005 18:48:44 GMT

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After emailing with Wayne about the 2 pi towers, he has suggested looking at the Stoetkit Jr. as a good amp to drive these. I am looking at spending \$1k - \$1.2k on an amp, preamp, and phono stage (have to have the turntable-MM cart) and this is my first real foray into tubes so I'm not going to drop a big load of money to start off with. I have looked at the Nohr Se18 which has all this in one unit, Bottlehead separates, the Stoet, and several others including Jolida and such. Any suggestions from Pi users would be greatly appreciated. I realize everyone's tastes vary, so here's what I typically listen to: blues, classic and newer rock, some classical, and jazz---there, a little bit of everything!!). I've also just read the thread on possibly being able to "upgrade" the 2 pi's later on depending on how I build the cabinets. This is also one more thing in the mix. Thanks ahead of time for any suggestions...Shane

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.

Posted by [BillEpstein](#) on Wed, 15 Jun 2005 22:13:20 GMT

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Just checked the Norh. Total no-brainer if the amp section sounds as good as the SE-9 and Barnes is as clever with the fono as with the rest of his stuff. \$800 delivered from Thailand? Nice. The 2 Pi's I built sounded great with the Ella. It and many other 40 watt integrated push pulls are \$500 to \$800 and you can build the hagerman Cornet for \$300. I just ordered the board. I would trust the new Bottlehead SEX amp and Seduction to be quieter than previous ET offerings and the price is very right.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 15 Jun 2005 23:27:49 GMT

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Ask Frank over at the FSAudio forum if he'll send you the Stoetkit demo unit to try out. If he doesn't have it anymore, you might be able to talk me into shipping you mine for a trial, if you promise to be real careful with it. I'm quite fond of that little amp and find myself listening to it more than any other.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.

Posted by [Shane](#) on Thu, 16 Jun 2005 00:14:53 GMT

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I saw where Frank had an amp going around. I'll see if he still has one he's using as a demo model.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [gumby1](#) on Thu, 16 Jun 2005 05:22:21 GMT  
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I've used my 2 Pi Towers with a Dynaco ST-70, Bottlehead Paramours, Onkyo SS, and Carver amps. I prefer the Carver over all the others. Having owned both tube gear and solid state, I definitely prefer solid state. If you are interested in building a solid state amp, I would recommend Seal Electronics distributed by Brad Wilson in Canada. He can be contacted at [bradwilson@telus.net](mailto:bradwilson@telus.net)

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 16 Jun 2005 06:45:00 GMT  
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I agree with you - I've heard some really nice solid state amps too. Modern tube amps are very nice, but I sure won't turn my nose up at a good solid state system. I've heard great amps of both types.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [Shane](#) on Thu, 16 Jun 2005 13:04:04 GMT  
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I'm definitely not turning my nose up at SS. I currently am using a Carver Receiver in a second system that I got way back in the mid 80's and a vintage Kenwood Integrated amp for my main running some old Polk's. I actually prefer the Kenwood over the Carver. I've heard a few tube systems and would like to give them a try. If they don't work out, sell, and upgrade to good SS.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 16 Jun 2005 13:59:03 GMT

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I'm with you. I like some amps of both types, and of course, some I like better than others. I have several good solid state amps and several good tube amps. My solid state amps are from 15 watts to 2000 watts, and I like them a lot. My tube amps are all around 8 to 12 watts, and they're great sounding too. The thing about tube amps is that they are art as much as they are electronics.

SET amps have a lush midrange that's irresistible, but they generally lack bass control. Push-Pull tube amps are a little more like solid state, in that they have better bass control and are sometimes more tonally balanced, but they don't do vocals like SET amps do. That little Stoetkit I enjoy so much has nearly SET-like midrange with nearly solid-state-like bass, plus it looks really cool. It uses an amplifier configuration called ultra-linear, which is a push-pull type. It has sweet

and the Stoetkit, and it also has enough power to watch action movies. It has plenty of power, so you won't even push it hard in a room of a couple hundred square feet. So those are the reasons I

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.

Posted by [Shane](#) on Thu, 16 Jun 2005 14:23:24 GMT

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Wayne, what would be a suggestion for a phono stage for the Stoetkit? I was thinking of the Bottlehead if I went with an int. amp that didn't have the phono stage because of the good reviews.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 16 Jun 2005 14:58:27 GMT

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That's a good question, and I'm still looking, to tell the truth. Right now, I'm using the phono stage in a NAD C160. I have a brand-new Seduction kit with the constant current options, still in the box ready for me to assemble. So I could go that route. I've spoken to Poindexter about an AudioTropic phono stage. And I've considered homebrew. I want a phono stage that has good components and that looks good, so I'm kinda being choosy. It's a small circuit, so it shouldn't be much money to do it right. Until I've found one I'm happy with, I'm prepared to settle with what I've got. There are some very inexpensive phono stage amps you could use to get you started, while you're still looking. Who knows, your starter phono stage may be the one you end up liking best. Something like the Hagerman Bugle or even a Radio Shack phono stage would get you by while you continue your search. Be sure to look through the posts in the Turntable forum for more ideas too.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 16 Jun 2005 16:13:34 GMT  
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I use the Bottlehead Seduction with the upgrades on a pair of Theater 4's. I would be glad to answer any questions concerning my opinion of the combination. I demoed the Steotkit on those speakers also. Consider how much you listen to music and what's important to you in sound reproduction. Then think about which turntable /arm/cartridge you will be using. Then examine the room you are listening in.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [Shane](#) on Thu, 16 Jun 2005 23:42:11 GMT  
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Manualblock - I listen to music anytime I get the chance. To be honest, when I started this adventure back in high school I heard a pair of Klipsch Heresey's and that's what started the wanting and realization that I will never have enough money for what I want. I'll be using a Project Debut III, stock, and unfortunately we are renting till we buy a new house (just moved to TX not long ago). The room it would be in is a huge 25' x 20' room with 10' vaulted ceiling. Not ideal, but I am fully expecting a smaller room for this equipment to be in at some point. Shoot, the system I have now which is 20+ years old and small speakers puts out plenty of sound for me at this stage in my life. If I want extreme sound I'll break out the Les Paul and 5150 amp and peel the paint! Really, I'm in the buying stage for everything. This is something I put on hold while the kids were younger and now my wife has given me the OK, within reason. I've heard great things about the Pi speakers and am a DIY junkie on most things I've tried.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Fri, 17 Jun 2005 17:27:55 GMT  
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Hi Shane. I use Wayne's Pi 4's daily and I believe they are one of the best deals in Audio. I will also say I believe Wayne has voiced these speakers for use with solid state amps. Now that doesn't mean they don't sound good with tubes because they do; but they shine with really good class A SS amps. The Pi 2's I have not heard but am told there is a strong family resemblance so I will base my comments concerning the Seduction and Amplifier choices on the 4's. You asked about the Seduction. I use mine with a Linn LP 12 and a Denon DL 103 or the Empire MC Gold. The Seduction works very well in that combination and my suggestion; it is the best deal in phono stages and you should buy it and build it, you won't be sad. Your Project is fine, I don't know which cart you use but I would upgrade the cart before the table. Amps for the Pi's. If you like DIY then it's tubes or SS. The Pi's love solid state so for DIY I would suggest the Pass clone or the Hiraga 20 watt class A SS. I had the loan of a Threshold Stasis amp; 50 watt class A SS; it so loved the

Pi's I wanted to keep it. You can get those amps used for about 650\$. Tube Kits; this is tough. There are many available, they all sound good but they all sound different. Before I would pay over 550\$ for a kit I would think long and hard. The kit I am using is designed by Roy Mottram and uses Hammond transformers PP EL 84 circuit; it's easy to build and I like the sound on the Pi's. It runs about 400\$ and there is not an amp kit near that price that will improve on the sound. There are lots of oriental amp kits out there that run in the 600/700\$ range and don't really sound any better. If you are handy and can build a chassis; it's a no brainer, the Eiclones are unbeatable at those prices. It is however a real project; but even using expensive Magnequest transformers it's pretty easy to build and runs about 500\$ for the pair of mono-blocks. Those are in a different league than the oriental kits.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [Shane](#) on Wed, 10 Aug 2005 15:41:39 GMT  
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Wayne, what about the NAD c320Bee amp with these? It will allow you to separate the preamp and amp if wanted. The idea of a tube amp is not real high on the acceptability factor in the house right now (still trying :) ). But I thought this unit has gotten good reviews and would allow me to "eventually" swing in a decent tube pre or tube phono stage or even a tube power amp.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 11 Aug 2005 02:00:03 GMT  
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I can already hear the cries of sacrilege coming from the SET crowd. Seriously, I have a NAD C-160 preamp and it sounds very nice. NAD makes good equipment and I think you would be very happy with it. But I also think that once your wife sees the warm glow of a tube amp, that will be the part of the system she likes best. Attractive tube amps have a presence in the room sort of like a fireplace, an almost romantic appeal. What gets you in trouble are the Erector set looking amps, those don't generally get the same reaction as a good looking tube amp. But when the chassis is attractive, the warm glow of the tubes make the amp look like art with soft lighting.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.  
Posted by [Shane](#) on Thu, 11 Aug 2005 02:09:47 GMT  
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CRY,CRY!!!! I asked her about it after I posted this. She said she really likes the way they look. But, she thinks it's a lot of money to spend on something that she regards as fragile now. I told

her once she heard it she might change her mind (she has a tin ear though). I guess my main concern now is getting parts for the amp (such as tranny) if it should break. Was told that it could take anywhere from 1-3 months on major parts. That's where a US made or kit would be good I think. Heck, I don't know what to do now. I'm usually not indecisive at all, but his has thrown me for a loop. Like I said, maybe the NAD, then add the tube stuff little by little over then next year or two? I can't wait for her to hear these 2 Pi's though.

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Subject: Re: Amp selection for 2 Pi Towers.

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 11 Aug 2005 02:27:32 GMT

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I can understand your concern, but I think it's unfounded. Vacuum tubes are no more fragile than light bulbs. Remember that America went to the moon at a time when vacuum tubes were in everything. Without commenting on quality or any of the tube-verses-transistor debates, I'd say that you shouldn't worry about the fragility of a tube amp. It's just not an issue. Transformers rarely fail, and so that's not really all that much of a concern. Some tubes are expensive, but most tube amps under a few grand use tubes that aren't that expensive. UPS can damage transistor amps just as easily as they can damage tube amps. They're usually pretty good, but I've seen 'em knock stuff so hard that metal chassis parts have bent.

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