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## AURALiC VEGA Digital Audio Processor And MERAK Monoblock Power Amplifier Incredible performance from this dynamic duo! Review By Tom Lyle

I sometimes wonder how manufactures chose company, brand, or model names. Prescriptions drug manufacturers hire specialists, use focus groups and resort to other sophisticated methods while sometimes spending millions of dollars on the task, not only because a name that resembles another company's trademark will end up costing millions in the court system. Theirs is obviously a much more complex procedure than a high-end audio manufacturer, where the corporate structure may only consist of two or three people. Perhaps there is a chance that an audio company will chose a brand or model name on a whim, or better yet, use this opportunity to express their creativity. This might be the case with Xuaquian Wang and Yuan Wang, the founders of AURALiC Ltd. These days it seems as if



anything goes--so even though it is obvious that the manuals of style do not apply to trademark names, it seems as if manufacturers are pushing those limits even further every chance they get. AURALiC, with its mix of upper and lower cases is a perfect example of this, and although they've chosen to use stars and constellations as model names, using capital letters in these names is further evidence of this creative spirit.

Not long after AURALiC was founded their products started showing up in showrooms and in the systems of many audiophiles. This is especially true of the subjects of this review, their relatively new VEGA digital audio processor and the MERAK monoblock power amplifiers. They have been more than well received not only because they are unique products, but also because their performance coincides with AURALiC's claims to "provide music lovers a completely new way of enjoying music, free from the sophisticated traditional audio equipment". The VEGA can be the center of a digital audio system; serving as a five-input DSD/DXD-capable digital to analog converter with a host of features that also serves as the linestage. The MERAK monoblocks pump out 400 Watts per unit that uses a "Hybrid Analog Amplify" technology, combining a Class A output module with an efficient, space saving "high speed switching components" in its output stage. The result is a pair of rather small stylish cabinets that put out a heck of a lot of power!

### AURALiC VEGA Digital Audio Processor

The VEGA sports a "Sanctuary Audio Processor" along with other features that AURALiC claims make it "cutting edge".

Over the years I've certainly

heard a claim of being cutting edge from many manufacturers. With all of the VEGA's features, plus the fact that it upsamples all incoming PCM files to 1.5MHz with a word length of 32-bits, and has a "Femto Master Clock" which lowers jitter to an outstandingly low 82 picoseconds, I'm going



to give them the benefit of the doubt as far as being on the cutting edge. Plus, I discovered that this Femto clock is in some other very respected manufacturer's units, which by the way, cost much, much more than the VEGA. VEGA also includes the patented "ORFEO Class A module" and discrete Pure Power solution that aids in enabling the units to perform so well when decoding these higher resolution files. Beyond my scope of technical aptitude is VEGA's Sanctuary audio processor, the "heart" of the unit, which AURALiC says is based on "multi-core ARM9 architecture with calculating capability at 1000MIPS" which is, I'm told, important in the processing of high-rez multi-channel music. Plus, the VEGA uses "second generation Active USB that divides the USB PHY into discrete chips" to reduce EMI (noise) from one's computer. This enables the VEGA to process DXD (352.8kb/s and 384kb/s PCM signals in 32 bit) and DSD streams (2,8224MHz and 5,6448MHz in 32 bit) through its USB input. In regards to my indifference towards technical data, I seem to enjoy retelling this exhortation in a different form in each review when I'm provided a plethora of this type of data. This time out I will profess my respect to the great minds that design and build this fantastic audio equipment, but the truth is that I wouldn't care if a component's innards were made from elastic hair bands that were held in place with poster putty, or conversely, made from the latest technology borrowed from NASA, because if a component sounds better than the last example I've heard and is built to last, I'm totally OK with a designer using any method they deem necessary to achieve their goals. Just don't expect me to understand every detail about how they accomplish this. This certainly applies to all the technology that is impressively arranged inside the cabinet of the AURALiC VEGA.

Despite my apprehension regarding filters used in digital components, it is obvious that AURALiC has invested a great deal of time and resources into the research and development of the filters used in the VEGA. To my surprise, my uncertainty turned to admiration when using them. Yes, it invoked just a bid of *audiophile nervosa* when I spent some time searching for the best one for the listening material that was currently playing. Nevertheless, any unease quickly passed as the sound of the VEGA was excellent regardless of which filter was chosen, and I often became more and more enthralled by the music as the track progressed instead of worrying about which choice of filter I've made. AURALiC makes available on their website a white paper that discusses the filters at length, but I'm sure most would rather listen to music than read about digital filters while testing them on each track. The choice is made easier because AURALiC says that two of the filters, numbers 5 and 6, are specifically designed for the playback of DSD files, and out the remaining four AURALiC states that filter 4 is the best for most types of music, the other three resulting in the attenuation of certain frequencies. I wouldn't dare suggest to any listener what filters they might prefer as this is definitely a personal choice, but it is worth repeating that none of these filters "ruined" the sound of the VEGA, and regardless, 98% of the time I set the VEGA for filter number 4. I listened in peace, and slept well each night.

The VEGA is built with "Femto Master Clock" technology, which, as far as I can tell, is at least partially responsible for this component's vanishing low amount of jitter and low phase noise. Using an "aerospace grade crystal oscillator", an "ultra-low-noise" power supply, and "temperature compensation technology" AURALiC is able to lower the jitter to their specified amount of 82 fs. They go on to stress the importance of the low amount of phase noise since this type of noise has been shown to affect the sound quality. The customer is also able to choose between three levels of clock precision. Yes, I tried all three, but I couldn't hear much difference between them, at least not enough of a difference that would lead me to prefer one over the other, so I left the setting at its default.

What I did notice during my listening sessions was the VEGA's imaging prowess and fine detail, without ever sounding more analytical than what I would expect if playing the original master tape. Of course I've never heard the master tapes of 99.99% of the material I played through the VEGA, and even my own master tapes sound "different" if played on anything other than the machine that made the recording. But could the master clock be solely responsible for this? I'm not sure if I could answer that. Still, the designers of the VEGA created an algorithm that they have termed "Megahertz Upsampling" combined with the unit up-sampling every bit of PCM data to roughly 1.5MHz with a word length of 32 bits. I doubt that AURALiC is exaggerating when they claim that this pushes the top frequency of the digital signal way beyond not only the levels of human hearing, but above what listeners of digital devices have become accustomed to in the past. As a result of this up-sampling the bandwidth of the DAC is increased along with increasing the speed of the slew rate. AURALiC claims that their design makes the music sound more transparent, with

less distortion and less noise. This is good news to those audiophiles such as yours truly who have huge amount of resolution music files, almost all of it created from ripping CDs.

For the users convenience VEGA has on its rear panel both single ended RCA outputs and balanced XLR outputs. It



accepts a digital signal from balanced AES/EBU, two coax RCAs, TosLink, and of course USB. It has a standard IEC output for the AC cable, and an on/off switch, which allows the unit to remain on stand-by any time the power cord is plugged into the wall receptacle, so when the unit is "powered" by either the front panel or remote it goes into full operational mode. The menus on the front panel screen can be controlled either by the remote or the front panel's control knob. I really like the look of the read-out on the front panel screen. It has a large font, displaying the input, sample rate, and volume at all times, that is, unless it is dimmed or shut off. The plastic remote of the VEGA isn't the most intuitive device I've ever used, but to be fair the most important controls such as volume and on/off are easiest to locate. Every parameter of the VEGA can be controlled by the remote, including input, menu choices and display brightness.

The analog circuits of the VEGA are powered by their patented ORFEO Class A module which was inspired by the infamous Neve 8078 recording console. Even for those not familiar with the recording or pro-studio industry, this British, hand-wired soundboard that was manufactured in the 1970s is still installed in a few select studios. It is perhaps not used very often as their main soundboard as the majority of studios are ProTools-based; the "sound" of this analog board is notorious so many use it in the final stages of mastering an album. Even the parts from a Neve board change hands for quite a bit of money. AURALiC uses many of the same circuit principles in their ORFEO by paying attention to its small signal components and linear characteristics. By using a "thermal balance" procedure and biasing the transistors into Class-A, they've managed to finesse the circuits to achieve an open-loop distortion rated at less than 0.001%. They also select each module carefully, and then fine-tune each one for lower noise with increased driving capabilities. The VEGA can act as one's digital preamplifier with plenty of gain, with very, very little noise and distortion.

## AURALiC MERAK Monoblock Power Amplifier

As I said in the introduction to this review, the MERAK amplifiers use what AURALiC terms "Hybrid Analog Amplify" technology. By combining a Class A module with a



switching output stage they manage to give the music (and their customers) a compact cabinet, yet rated at a very powerful 400 Watts. As a bonus they've achieved an efficiency of 90%, but by using a linear power supply and 56k $\mu$ F capacitor array the MERAKs manages 16 Ampere peaks, so this high current allows the amps to drive any speakers one is likely to pair them with, even very large models that demand a lot of power (such as my resident Sound Labs). AURALiC goes on to claim that with this large amount of current on hand; the MERAK can be compared to amps pumping out 900 Watt per channel.

The linear component of the MERAK handles the incoming signal. It processes the voltage amplification, and AURALiC claims that it does so with adding very little noise and distortion. The low impedance, high speed switching output stage provides the muscle and is responsible for its high energy efficiency. AURALiC sources the input isolation transformers of the MERAK from Lundahl and also has some made in-house. The amount of EMI (noise) rejection the design of these transformers achieve is superb, as a result the MERAK's circuit is able to reject over a thousand times the amount of the noise a "traditional" circuit may produce. The MERAK also uses their patented ORFEO Class A module for driving the output stage; as a result, this lowers the

level of distortion to less than 0.001%. AURALiC has modified and "optimized" something called "Hypex UcD" and it powers the output stage based on mathematical models -- and also lucky for us end-users -- optimized by AURALiC's subjective impressions. What they discovered during their tests was that the nasty sounding high-order distortion ended up being suppressed by over 10 Decibels that, in plain English, made the music sound better. The output stage also ended up being able to drive various kinds of loudspeakers because of its frequency-constant output performance driving loads anywhere from 4 to 16 Ohms.

Almost anyone who has ever seriously shopped for a power amplifier is aware that audio companies tend to tout the power supplies of their



products, and in my opinion they are justified in doing so. The power supply of any component separates the great from the even greater, and the AURALiC MERAK is no exception. AURALiC's "Purer-Power Linear Power Solution" is said to be essential to provide "strong, smooth, and consistent power", especially one such as the MERAK. It also is responsible storing up to 120 Joule energy, which suppresses noise, significantly lowers the source impedance and AURALiC states that it is also responsible for the unit's outstanding transient performance. They customized the 500VA main transformer in the MERAK with "patented" low-noise, narrow-band technology from Plitron, and after that they put a 56k uF capacitor array. The Purer-Power Linear Power Solution also claims that it accounts for the MERAK's high level of transparency since it can "strongly" isolate common-mode and differential-mode interference for in and outside the audio band, as high as 90dB, which reshapes the electrical circuit to remove DC current. It also prevents current entering the circuit via the power supply that will further interfere with the stability of the circuit, and thus affects the sound of the amp.

The MERAK, like the matching VEGA, appears as it is built to very high standards. The compact cabinets, along with an almost Teutonic appearance gave me the impression that there is no way AURALiC could improve these components in the fit-and-finish department--which is fine, although it all comes back to the maxim of not caring how they achieve the sound of their components, that is, as long as they achieve the best sound possible at the same time manufacture components that are reliable and built to last.

## Sonic Demeanor

The MERAK and VEGA have a similar sonic demeanor, one that is extremely neutral. The VEGA is especially neutral; in fact I've yet to hear a more neutral DAC in my system. It seems to take any digital signal I feed it and reproduce it without adding any sound of its own, notably any digital nasties that I have seemed to become accustomed to over the years. I've made a habit of playing records I've burned at 96k/24-bit, and playing the signal back through the DAC that I'm reviewing. Yes, you most likely have read about this in DAC reviews I've written, yet I always thought this test a bit unfair, as the best I could ask for is that the record sounds like good "digital", since a reproduction of my analog system through a DAC is a pipe-dream. I'll steal an aphorism from another writer, and say converting an LP to digital and back to analog again is like trying to convert ground beef into steak. Yet through the VEGA the differences in the two were vanishingly small. When connecting the VEGA to the most revealing system components I had in-house connected to very revealing speakers, which at the time of the review were either the rather extravagant **Venture Audio Encore** or Sound Lab DynaStat electrostatic hybrids. The differences I heard were largely the inherent sounds of the processing equipment that was used to make the conversion, such as the sound of the particular brand and model of analog-to-digital converter (ADC), the interconnects that transferred the signal to the computer from the ADC, and the interconnect that transferred the signal to the VEGA.

The record I used for my test, a very clean copy of the RCA Living Stereo of Prokofiev's *Fifth Symphony* conducted by Jean Martinon is hardly flawless, that's for sure. It's a bit reticent in the lowest bass, and there is a bit of distortion in the upper treble caused either by overload or the limits of the late 1950s recording and record pressing processes. But I *know* this record, and to hear the gorgeous midrange of the strings, the huge layered soundstage, the startling dynamics

induced by the percussion battalion and everything else that makes this record not only a great performance but also a great recording as converted by the VEGA led to an outstanding listening experience. Don't tell any of the boys in the clubhouse, but sometimes I preferred listening to the record through the VEGA more than that of playing the record "live", especially after the VEGA had a bit of time to warm up. More than once during the playback of this high-resolution file of the record, I glanced towards the turntable, because I expected to see it spinning. My preference might also have a bit to do with the ability to be able to skip around the sections of the record, repeat parts, pausing, and to be able to stop and come back after a while and again listen to portions. Ah, the convenience of digital! But I digress. Don't get me wrong, if I were to really, really, listen carefully whilst wearing my reviewer's badge I thought I could rather easily tell the difference between the record and the digital playback of the record, but sometimes it's more about relaxing and enjoying the music, isn't it? During those times the differences became what I labeled vanishingly small, and at the same time became meaningless, because thanks to the VEGA the gestalt of the music was present, thanks to all the small but very important sonic cues that make music, music.

Thankfully, the time has come when comparing digital component's parameters such as frequency response and all the other audiophile qualifiers become much less of an issue, and so experienced audiophiles become more concerned with nuance. Also, a huge number of us have finally dispensed with physical digital media and instead use a host of convenient alternatives; therefore, the competence of the USB input is very important, as is the ability to play DSD files through this USB port – and the VEGA can lay claim to both of these important features. Perhaps in the not so distant future these features will be present on the most inexpensive of DACs, but for now there are only a few that can perform this feat, and even fewer that can perform this feat as well as the AURALiC VEGA. I don't think it would be fair of me to critically audition the playback prowess of the VEGA in regards to DSD, as I only have a couple of files. But I do have a large library of Red Book files; many Terabyte of FLAC, in fact over 7,000 folders in just the "rock" category alone and so it is obvious that the majority of my digital listening is of Red Book resolution, with a smattering of 96k/24-bit files. And I predict this is going to be so for the foreseeable future. I'm hardly the type of audiophile that places sound quality over performance. That I can speak of the VEGA's sound with the same descriptive terms as I do with high-resolution files says quite a bit about this component.

As I was writing this review the high-resolution, remastered versions of the first three Led Zeppelin albums were released. Finally. I'm not the only one who downloaded this material as soon as it was made available. OK, the major internet exchange sites (IXPs) of the world were probably not stressed too much, but unlike the Beatles in 2009 who focused mostly on physical media sales (CDs), Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page seems to be focusing on the high-resolution downloads as much as any other format, at least it seems that way, and I for one am thankful. I'm listening to the 96k/24-bit downloads as I'm writing this, occasionally taking breaks to spend full time and attention in the sweet spot, then again coming back to writing this, all I can say is "wow", and again, "finally". I'm sure there will be detractors, as I do hear a bit of compression along with other tweaks to the original album's tapes, but there is no doubt in my mind and my ears that the overall sound has been objectively improved. Through the VEGA I am, in general, blown away, and thankful that the review period of the VEGA coincides with the release of these three albums.

There are many audiophiles that will hear the VEGA and notice its tight bass and natural non-fatiguing treble, but after this first impression my listening notes largely focus on the LACK of sound or sounds that the VEGA has. My opinion regarding these sounds, or lack of sounds of a component is shared by many audiophiles, as the Holy Grails of just about every audiophile when placing a piece of gear into the system are, or at least should be, transparency and neutrality. So, the closer Jimmy Page's guitar on "Your Time Is Gonna Come" sounds like one is



hearing an actual slightly out-of-tune Fender 10-string acoustic guitar as recorded in Olympic Studios that was recorded by engineer Glyn Johns in 1969, the better. The fact that there are a host of other instruments recorded on that track, including John Paul Jones' organ and the explosive drums of John Bonham, the VEGA does a fine job of unraveling the vocals and instruments into an organic whole. I take that back. The VEGA does the *best* job I've ever heard in my listening room in its ability to deal with complex material and convert this material into a musically organic whole. I spent hours upon hours with this DAC, and no matter how complex the material, the only limiting factor in regards to the sound quality was the teams responsible for recording the material, not the DAC. Perhaps one day I'll be blessed with one of those mega-buck multi-component digital suites, but until then, it all comes back to the transparency and neutrality that the VEGA brings into the system, and regardless of the resolution of the digital signal it was able to transfer to its analog section and to the rest of the equipment in the system and to the speakers the best sounding digitally sourced *music* I've heard in my listening room. And that the VEGA can do this for \$3500 is quite an accomplishment.

Of course, there is always the case that I might be painting myself into a corner, as I'm wont to do when faced with such an extraordinary product at a reasonable price. Therefore, if one year from now I'm sent a processor with the same functionality, in other words, upsamples all material to DSD, can handle a DSD signal through its USB, etc. and sounds even better than the AURALiC VEGA, don't be surprised if I again fall all over myself proclaiming it to be the bees knees. Digital design moves at quite a fast pace. And anyway, any audiophile that tries to keep up with the latest advances with any of their components might be faced with this same conundrum. It's the nature of the beast. But I don't think I'd be going out on a limb if I say that the VEGA is likely to stay in one's system for quite a long, long time, or perhaps forever, without ever worrying if one can do better.

Lastly, is the use of the VEGA as one's preamplifier in my system. The VEGA spent a good deal of time in my second system located in a common space on the first floor of my home I used the MERAK amps to power a pair of EgglestonWorks two-way floor standing speakers in an all-digital system. The sources were an Oppo BDP-83 Special Edition universal disc player and a Logitech Squeezebox Touch that read FLAC files over my home network. Both the Oppo and Touch were connected to the VEGA, and the VEGA was connected directly to the MERAK though its balanced outputs. Switching between sources using either the remote or the front panel of the VEGA became second nature. I admit, though, the rather large front panel volume control was the way in which I controlled the systems volume the majority of the time, only because half the time I didn't feel like searching for the remote! But this was not a big deal, in that I was closer to the unit to see the volume readout, and I kind of liked the "feel" of the volume control over the light, plastic remotes buttons. Sonically, the VEGA matched with the MERAK amps was able to perform the duties of preamplifier is a near perfect match of convenience and transparency. Upstairs in my main system using the far more accomplished front end and speakers actually sounded better using a tube preamplifier, most notably the newly installed Balanced Audio Technologies VK-33 (review forthcoming). This not only had more gain, but added a brilliant lifelike patina to the proceedings that made the music sound at the same time more tangible, and created a larger, more realistically scaled soundstage, especially if the recording was of real instruments and voices recorded in a real space. Mind you, the VEGA never sounded *bad*, but when using it as a preamplifier in this monster of system it just fell slightly short when judged against this dedicated preamplifier.

## The Sound

The sound of the MERAK monoblock amps was tight, muscular, and musically involving. Even though technically the MERAK is not a Class D amplifier, the terms "switching components" in the description of its output stage left a bad taste in my mouth, as my distaste for Class D amplifiers is well documented. One quick listen to the MERAK was proof enough that this amp shared little with the horrible listening experiences I had endured with Class D amps. On one hand I feel as if I shouldn't have even raised the subject, on the other hand some readers might have had the same reaction I had when reading the word "switching" in the technical description of the amplifiers. In fact, I might have even found the upper frequencies of the MERAK a bit sweeter only because they did *not* resemble these amps whatsoever. In fact, AURALiC president and CEO Wang

Xuanqian explained to me that the only similarity between the MERAK and a Class D amp is that they both use a switching output stage, everything else is completely different. This is especially true of the input stage, which can make a huge difference in the sound of an amplifier. On the basis of my long listening sessions with the MERAK I totally agree. No, the sound of the MERAK is not likely to be mistaken for a tube amplifier, its extended, muscular and tight bass, detailed and ultra-transparent midrange, and super-extended treble will make sure of that – nor could it ever, ever be confused with a Class D amplifier. Its sound is too neutral, its highs too extended, realistic sounding and less fatiguing for it to be grouped in that category.

The sound of the MERAK pair was made so, so evident on the Miles Davis box set *The Complete On The Corner Sessions*. Detractors of this period of Mr. Davis' career have plenty of ammunition when presented with this box set of the sessions that produced his "blasphemous" *On The Corner* album. I suppose since I represent the "younger" (ahem) Miles fan, I am simply blown away by not only the musicianship, but creativity exhibited on each of the six CDs in this set. On the third disc there is a workout that is entitled *Mr. Foster*, no doubt in honor of the drummer Al Foster who appears on much of the album that was released from the edited tapes of the sessions, which could be used as a MERAK demonstration disc. It brings to the fore a few of the many assets of the MERAK amplifiers. The line-up on this track is exceptional, although it takes a detailed road map to navigate the personnel that was in the studio with Miles during the 1972-74 period in which these sessions took place. Still, I assume that most likely the musicians included Al Foster on drums, James "Mtume" Foreman on percussion, Pete Cosey and Reggie Lucas on electric guitar, Michael Henderson on bass guitar, Dave Liebman on soprano saxophone, and Miles Davis not only on trumpet but on organ. Some think that either the organ or trumpet were laid down as overdubs, but it was not rare for him to play both at the same time, holding and playing the trumpet with one hand, and playing the organ with the other (and thus producing more ammo for the detractors of this album). Nevertheless, I love every second of this groundbreaking album, and was elated when the box set arrived in stores. The MERAK was able to translate this music into many enjoyable listening sessions due to many factors, which included the fact that the MERAK has plenty of power on hand. Some might think too much power.

































But this amount of power is definitely an asset when it comes to producing a sound that can take advantage of the headroom that this type of power amp possesses. The MERAK is also blessed with a sonic characteristic that I hear in only the finest audio equipment, the ability not only to separate the individual instruments and groups of instruments into separate areas within a soundstage, but the ability to separate two instruments playing simultaneously at different volumes into separate areas within the same plane of the soundstage, which I sometimes call "dynamic distance". Yes, Miles trumpet is often front and center. He would have it no other way. The rest of his band comps behind him, and is spread across the rest of the huge soundstage that the MERAK produces that is drawn to the man-made scale that was produced in the control room of Columbia Studios in New York City. Each instrument's frequency and amplitude overlaps each other, yet each is separated by a plumb of air in its own space, this air a combination of the room in which it was recorded and again, man-made with reverb added in the mix-down. The entire mix sounds perfect in an early-1970s chic, downtown bachelor pad kind-of way, but at the same time each instrument sounds like a real instrument recorded in the not-so-real space. I could put this 15 minute track on repeat all night, no problem.

## Stellar Performers

The AURALiC VEGA and MERAK are so good looking that I suppose there might be audiophiles that purchase them based on appearance alone. Perhaps that's a stretch--but what is not stretch is that the VEGA and MERAK monoblocks are stellar performers, and even if purchased without an audition these audiophiles are not likely to be disappointed. I often end my reviews stating that some gear is able to match some systems better than others. One could certainly make a case that the VEGA digital audio processor would only be at home in systems with digital sources, but that's not necessarily true. In my main system that had a mix of analog and digital, it was quite at home. Sure, I would have liked if the VEGA had a fixed/variable switch for its output, but what I did was simply set the volume of its output on full when using a dedicated preamplifier. Its performance as a DAC is simply the best I've heard anywhere near its price, and by anywhere I mean any DAC that is priced less than \$20,000 and can also handle a DSD/DXD stream, which

eliminates quite a few models from quite a few manufacturers. I could say the same for the MERAK monoblocks when it comes to system matching. 400 Watts at 8 Ohms that doubles when the resistance is halved is an awful lot of power to have on hand. Even if one has a small room using small speakers I wouldn't count this pair of monoblocks out. Because of these monoblocks vast amount of headroom combined with their transparent, muscular sound, they are likely to bring out the best in any sized speaker. And did I mention that both the VEGA and MERAK pair are attractive looking pieces of gear? They are. Recommended? You bet!

**Ratings:** (Please keep in mind that my ratings are similar to stars in restaurant reviews, in other words, conservative. So 0 notes is poor to satisfactory, 1 is good, 2 very good, 3 excellent, 4 extraordinary, and 5 is equivalent to the best I've ever heard).

	VEGA	MERAK
Tonality		
Sub-bass (10Hz - 60Hz)		
Mid-bass (80Hz - 200Hz)		
Midrange (200Hz - 3,000Hz)		
High Frequencies (3,000Hz On Up)		
Attack		
Decay		
Inner Resolution		
Soundscape Width Front		
Soundscape Width Rear		
Soundscape Depth Behind Speakers		
Soundscape Extension Into Room		
Imaging		
Fit And Finish		
Self Noise		
Value For The Money		



## Specifications

### AURALIC VEGA Digital Processor

Frequency response: 20 Hz to 20 kHz (+/- 0.1dB)  
THD+N: <0.00015%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz at 0dBFS  
Dynamic Range: 130dB, 20Hz-20KHz, A-weighted  
Digital Inputs: AES/EBU, two Coaxial, TosLink, and USB 2.0 buffered by Active USB  
Analog Outputs: Balanced XLR and single-ended RCA  
Supported Digital Formats: All PCM from 44.1kb/s to 384kb/s in 32Bit  
DSD64 (2.8224MHz) and DSD128 (5.6448MHz)  
Output Voltage: 4Vrms at Max. with dynamic-loss-free digital volume  
User Interface: AURALiC RC-1 remote control, 512x64 pixels OLED Display  
Dimensions: 11" x 9" x 2.6" (WxDxH)  
Weight: 7.5 lbs.  
Price: \$3499

### MERAK Monoblock Power Amplifier

Continuous Output Power: 200W / 400W (8 Ohm / 4 Ohm)  
Peak Current Output: >16 Amp (40 ms)  
Frequency Response: 20 Hz to 20 kHz (+/- 0.5dB)  
THD+N: <0.01%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz @ 1W  
IMD: <0.01%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz @ 1W  
Residual Noise: <50uV, 20Hz-20KHz, A-weighted  
Input Ports: XLR, Sensitivity: 2.2Vrms(RCA input requires adapter)  
Input Impedance: 10 kOhm  
Output Ports: XLR invert output (for BTL mode), Cardas patented CE binding post  
Damping Factors: >800, 8 Ohm @ 1 kHz  
Optimized Loads: 2 Ohm to 16 Ohm  
Dimensions: 11" x 11" x 2.75 (WxDxH)  
Weight: 18.7 lbs.  
Price: \$2499 each

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