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JULY 2014

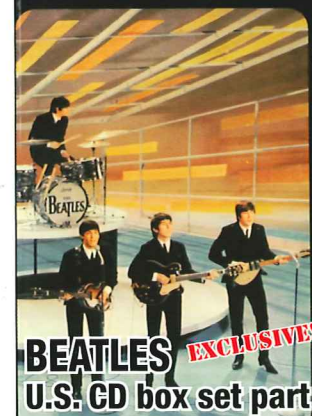
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8 PAGES OF LETTERS - THE BEST WINS A PAIR OF KEF Q100 LOUDSPEAKERS! (UK ONLY)

Good enough to EAT...

Tony Bolton finds himself seduced by an elegantly styled phonostage from the Czech Republic.

Based in Prague in the Czech Republic, the European Audio Team (EAT) have built up a business manufacturing high-quality turntables, an arm and a cartridge as well as valves. At last year's High End Show in Munich they introduced the E-Glo phonostage, which we now have for this review.

As befits a product that retails at £5300, the visual first impressions of this two-box phonostage are commensurate with that price point. The power supply is housed in a brushed alloy case that measures 435 x 85 x 280mm (hwxwd). At the back

is the IEC mains input, alongside the power switch and a tethered lead that connects it to the phonostage.

The front contains two nicely subdued LEDs, one of which indicates that power is present, the other glowing when current is flowing into the phonostage.

Inside the PSU is a custom made toroidal transformer which features double shielding between the primary and secondary windings. This is claimed to stop the intrusion of RFI and to act as a mains filter. EAT have fitted special diodes with noise suppressing resistors to the rectifying circuitry, along with high-quality electrolytic capacitors, followed by

a voltage regulator with capacitor multiplier. The power component is an FET transistor. Separate power supplies for each channel then feed into the phonostage.

This is housed in a case of similar dimensions that has some striking styling touches. The ends are covered in highly-polished wooden fillets that have a pleasingly retro appearance to them, while the top contains two large, round, layered discs mounted to resemble the reels on an open reel tape recorder. These are the heat sinks for the two ECC83 and one ECC88 valves on each channel that provide the amplification. The valves are encased in valve coolers which



Gain 1	2	5	10	20	40	80	150	300	Ohm
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Gain 2	10	20	40	80	150	300	600	1200	Ohm
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
	50	150	270	370	520	620	740	640	pF



The red rings around the valves are valve coolers which also help reduce any tendency for the valves to pick up and amplify spurious vibrations.

should also stop any microphonic intrusions into the audio spectrum.

Internally there is a fully balanced input stage fitted with a Lundahl step up transformer with an amorphous core. The unit's gain is 45dB plus the voltage gain of the step up transformer. The equalisation section of the 'stage is fully passive without any global negative feedback loop. The output capacitor is a Mundorf and all others are supplied by WIMA. The connectors are also by Mundorf and Teflon insulation is specified throughout.

The front of the phono stage contains rows of LEDs that display impedance settings. These are chosen by the rotary switch on the top of the casework. Beside this is another, matching dial which controls the capacitance settings for use with MM cartridges.

The selection between MM and MC is carried out by a switch on the top right of the case, which sits alongside the subsonic filter control and a muting switch. The back contains dip switches to set the choice of gain and a selection of phono sockets for MM and MC input and line level output.

Having connected it up to my downstairs system I started listening with the classic Stone Roses 1989 eponymously named LP. My first reaction was to lower the volume control a couple of notches from its customary position since the music barreled out of the loudspeakers at

a considerably louder volume than I was expecting.

The second thing that I noticed was the punch of the drums. The attack was lightning fast and the introduction of the guitars seemed to have a quite vivid energy about the way in which they were portrayed. Ian Brown's laid back vocal style stood in contrast to this, making for

played to do anything else.

A day or two later, with my listening schedule thrown out of the window, I had got to the classical section of my record collection and got lost in 'Scheherazade'. I like this 1958 Beecham recording of it. He conducted the RPO with a focus on the rhythm that helped the music conjure up images of Eastern

"the sound was so enjoyable that it almost seemed discourteous to the music being played to do anything else."

a very involving listening experience.

Having discovered that the E-Glo seemed to transmit rhythmic energy in a powerful way I moved onto Massive Attack's 1994 opus 'Protection'. The loping flow of 'Karmacoma' was a delight to listen to, and impossible not to find involving. Tricky's voice held centre stage some way in front of the speakers and I found myself listening to a performance taking place on a quite expansively deep soundstage. This mixture of electronica, guitars and drums seemed to have a naturally rolling gait that was both relaxing and totally involving and instead of wandering on to other tracks I found myself settling in for the entire LP.

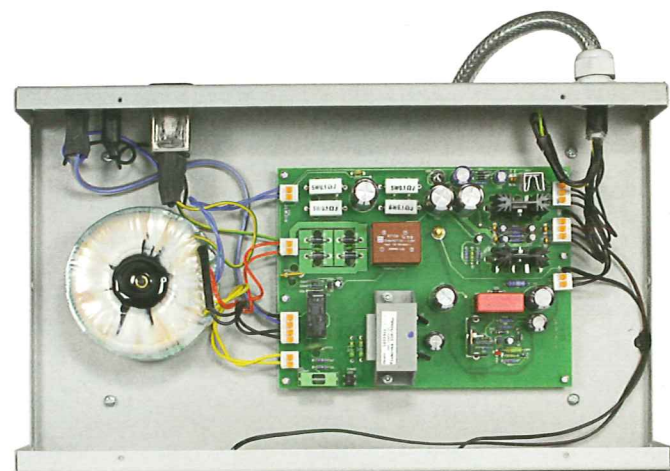
This turned out to be a regular feature of my listening with this phono stage. LPs that I would normally cherry pick one or two favourite tracks from were played in their entirety. The sound was so enjoyable that it almost seemed discourteous to the music being

promise. The tonality of the various strands of the orchestra seemed to me to sound correct. Although this phono stage has excellent sonic manners it avoided the traps that

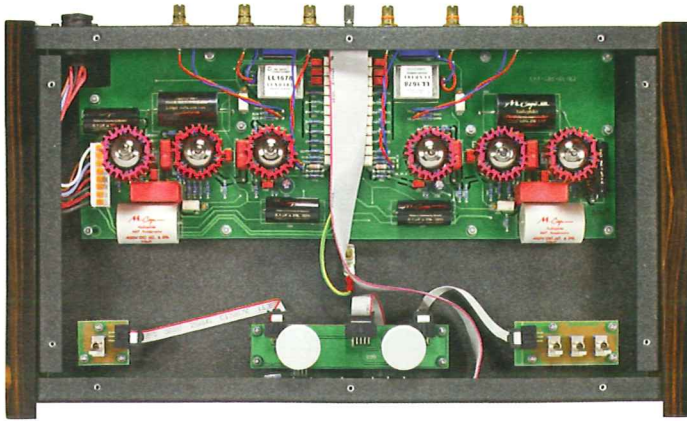


so many phono stages fall into of smoothing out the sounds of violins and brass. They still had a defined edge to them and had a bite when required.

I tested out the E-Glo's manners by playing Edith Piaf, a singer whose



The power supply has a toroidal transformer with double shielding between primary and secondary windings. This helps prevent RFI and acts as a mains filter.



The fully balanced circuit uses Mundorf capacitors in the output stage. All other capacitors are made by Wima. Each channel boasts two ECC83 and one ECC88 valve, seen here with their valve coolers fitted.

vocal style can be very difficult to reproduce without sounding as though she is gargling glass. The phono stage stepped up to challenge and passed with flying colours. I was presented with an almost holographic image of a little figure in her trademark black dress (I could hear the odd rustle of material as she moved within it) against an absolutely inky black background. Despite the focus of the recording being on her vocals, I was still aware of listening to a recording made in a large venue (the Paris Olympia music hall) and almost felt that I could have described the shape of the inside of the building from the sound of it.

I finished my listening a couple of days later with Dinah Washington swinging her way through 'You're Nobody 'Til Somebody Loves You'. This mono pressing is in good condition but I would normally hit the mono switch just to tidy away any odd bits of surface noise. However the E-Glo is not fitted with such a device. Normally I would find this irritating but for once I found myself listening to a phono stage

where this did not seem to make an audible difference. The image was wide and deep and totally believable in creating the impression of watching a singer strut her stuff to the beats of a jazz band. Although Dinah has a determined vocal style, it did not sound forced, merely

assertive and made for mesmerising listening.

I am thoroughly impressed with this phono stage. At this price I expect absolutely first class performance and the E-Glo did not disappoint at any time during a very extended listening period. Rhythms flowed with that natural gait that only valves can accurately reproduce and all aspects of the tonality of everything that I played, from electronica to orchestral sounds, were just right. It made music seem natural rather than being reproduced with the accurate but uninspiring air of 'high fidelity' that can sound technically correct, but is uninvolving.

The E-Glo has enough gain and choice of settings to accommodate most cartridges, it looks good and sounds wonderful. I think I may have just fallen in love!

MUSIC USED

- Rimsky-Korsakov. 'Scheherazade'. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham Bart. C.H. EMI Records Ltd (HMV). ASD 251. 1958.
- Edith Piaf. 'Recital 1961'. Columbia Records (France). SCXF 102. 1961.
- Dinah Washington. 'Dinah '62'. Columbia Records. 33SX1453. 1962.
- The Stone Roses. 'The Stone Roses'. Silvertone Records. ORE LP 502. 1989.
- Massive Attack. 'Protection'. Circa records. 7243 8 39883 1 0. 1994.

SYSTEM USED

- Clearaudio Master Solution turntable/ Magnify arm/ Benz Micro Wood SL cartridge.
- Leema Acoustics Tucana II amplifier, Chario Ursa Major loudspeakers.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Gain through MM measured x200 (46dB), a usefully high value for low output MMs, and with 27V output swing overload is not a problem with high output MMs. With 35mV in, about the maximum from an MM, the EAT E-Glo will give 7.3V out.

Very high gain was available from MC too, measuring x 3471 (71dB) at the low gain G2 setting, and a massive x6734 (77dB) at the high gain G1 setting. If an MC was to give 4mV out, around the maximum possible, then this stage will swing its maximum output of a massive 27V. It seems a bit extreme, but

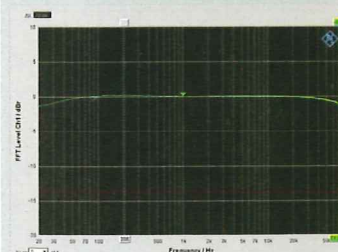
very low output MCs cruise at 0.1mV output and the E-Glo will deliver 670mV output from this, about right for 400mV input sensitivity of many amplifiers.

Frequency response was wide with MM, stretching from 12Hz to 100kHz. With MC at low gain (G2) it ran from 12Hz to 100kHz and with MC at high gain (G1) bass rolled off prematurely, below 100Hz at 300 Ohms input load selected; MC at G1 must be used with input impedance set low, best at 2-10 Ohms, which is high enough as most low output MCs have a generator value well below 1 Ohm. The warp filter worked very well, rolling off output sharply below 27Hz, as our analysis shows.

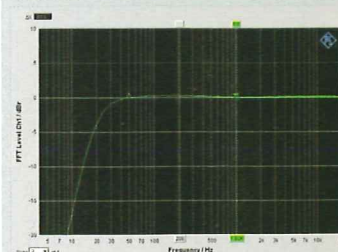
Noise was curiously unaltered by gain, so high MC gain (G1) gives lowest equivalent input noise (that takes gain into account), measuring 0.1µV IEC A wtd – good if not quite as low as possible with input transformers (0.08µV).

The EAT E-Glo works well. It has enormous gain and can deal with very low output MCs, for which it is designed. Noise is low, frequency response wide, distortion low (0.1%) and the warp filter is very effective. NK

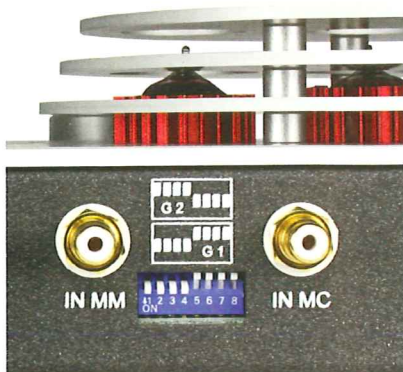
FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION



Frequency response	12Hz-100kHz
Separation	66dB
Noise (MM/MC)	-84/-75dB
Distortion	0.1%
Gain (MM/MC)	46dB; 71, 77dB
Overload	27V out



Each channel is equipped with dip switches to set G1 or G2 levels of gain.

EAT E-GLO PHONO STAGE £5300



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

expensive but offering truly first class performance, this valve powered two box phono stage is worth every penny.

FOR

- accurate and tight rhythms
- natural tonality
- excellent imaging

AGAINST

- price

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