

LISTENING TEST TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA

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Here I am again. And today with an exclusive hearing test for the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA. The headphone amplifier from the small manufacturer from Mladenovac not only marks the tube-reinforced top model of the Serbs, but also confidently and undisguisedly claims a top position in the sound olympus.

And even the dimensions of the classic tube amplifier leave no doubt that the Serbian manufacturer wants to set a distinctive and clear exclamation mark with regard to the aforementioned ambitions.

Tube amplifier par excellence

With dimensions of 340 x 480 x 240 mm (W x D x H) and a weight of an impressive 30 kg, no inexperienced newcomer in the illustrious circle of the Grail Knights of Sound would come up with the idea that the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA is actually different in view of these dimensions could act as the drive for an ear loudspeaker.

The tube beau, which operates in single-ended operation, also impresses for a piece of equipment in hand-made small series with excellent workmanship and haptics and, in my opinion, a very successful material mix of chrome-plated, brushed and painted steel and aluminum elements. Completely separate power supplies for both channels, as well as high-quality internal components, such as selected Mundorf capacitors, highly inductive filter chokes and oversized output transformers from our own production, testify to the efforts of the manufacturer to create a monumental masterpiece in this product series.

TRAFOMATIC AUDIO also produces the headphone amplifier in any desired RAL color, even the type of coating (soft-touch or glossy lacquer surfaces) can be freely selected by the customer. Of course, for an additional charge.

Each PRIMAVERA is therefore unique, which is usually only manufactured individually after the order has been placed. Currently only about 6 devices leave the holy halls in Mladenovac per year, which in turn underlines the worldwide exclusivity. Especially since the official retail price in Europe is a whopping 11,999 euros (14,999 US \$).

The price of the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA is almost on par with a VIVA EGOISTA 845 (€ 12,800) or the WOO AUDIO WA33 in the Elite Edition (US \$ 14,999). It almost goes without saying that the Serbian tube amplifier also offers the usual performance values in this class.

In the long run, only power helps

The PRIMAVERA provides identical 2 x 9 watts into 50 ohms on both its 4-pin XLR and the obligatory 6.3 mm Neutrik socket. Of course, the same applies to the two 3-pin outputs in the immediate vicinity. Not bad for a single-ended DHT (Directly Heated Triode) tube amplifier in pure Class-A operation.

However, the maximum power consumption of at least 280 watts is not bad. The power-guzzling amplifier layout with its strictly selected pairs of tubes, consisting of 2 x 6S45P in the pre-amp section and 2 x 5V811-10 power tubes, also contributes to this.

Due to a sensitively graduated impedance adjustment of 25 - 600 ohms, the potentially high-quality playing partners are also perfectly conditioned for their tonal purpose - to help the knight of the grail of fine tones in combination with the Serbian alpha animal to a unique musical adventure.

Of course, due to its enormous power reserves, the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA is also able to handle the most demanding headphone loads on this planet.

For this reason I choose the HIFIMAN SUSVARA as the ear loudspeaker for the following hearing test, which with an efficiency of 83 dB / mW is not necessarily one of the acoustical food despisers. The Chinese / American headphones relentlessly reveal even the smallest acoustic weakness of the source.

On the other hand, the ABYSS AB1266 PH1 TC, which is also relatively insensitive, has an extensive playing time on the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA, in order to fully explore the spatial representation capabilities of the Serbian tube amplifier in addition to determining the bass quality.

My iMAC, equipped with AUDIRVANA + software, acts as the signal source, while the very "analog" BAKOON DAC21 prepares the digital fare for the PRIMAVERA in a first-class manner. As a signal cable (USB + RCA) I use my soundproof strings from the CHORD EPIC series, the power cable for the TRAFOMATIC is provided by SHUNYATA RESEARCH in the form of an ALPHA-HC.

You can find more information about the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA on the homepage of the Serbian manufacturer at: Trafomatic.com or on the German sales website at: Berlin-Hifi.de

Sonic tube olymp

Before starting the sound assessment, I give the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA an almost obligatory break-in time of 50 hours. Because experience has shown that with tube amplifiers, the bass reproduction in particular improves afterwards.

And the bass range has it all in connection with the AB1266 PHI TC. Not only does the bass reach ultra-deep and really sound out the very last corner of the frequency range accurately and without any noticeable loss of pressure, it also has an excellent, albeit rather slim structure and convinces with a bone-dry and impulse-fast attack.

Regardless of the listening level, the PRIMAVERA never shows signs of acoustic fatigue, maintains control effortlessly, and fuels the American monster with bass attacks that at times cause fear and anxiety about the durability of the wafer-thin membrane material of the orthodynamic panel radiator.

The TRAFOMATIC doses the bass volume in a masterly manner and ensures that the bass range never overlaps the fundamental range. Rather untypical for tube amplifiers, the fundamental tone is not of an earthy, warm nature, but rather clearly maintains the neutral line and thus serves as a natural, as it were substantial, basis for the sound-relevant midrange.

And especially in the middle frequency spectrum, the PRIMAVERA impressively shows what the Serbian tube amplifier is made of. You have to experience this fantastically exact degree of acoustic imaging, precise focusing and, at the same time, razor-sharp edges of voices and instruments to be believed.

The TRAFOMATIC combines plasticity and airiness in an impressive way, so that, despite the known excessive stage display of the AB1266 PHI TC, precise location is possible at any time. In addition, the respective actors are always transparently placed in the spatial context in the correct proportions. This is undoubtedly world class.

The musical reproduction, however, is free of a flowery play of timbres, sometimes also because the big ABYSS on the one hand does not necessarily prefer it and on the other hand the PRIMAVERA feels obliged to reproduce as neutral as possible.

The TRAFOMATIC also demonstrates a great sensitivity for rhythm and timing and, in combination with Joe Skubinski's headphone legend, actually gives the now completely enthusiastic Knight of the Grail, a musically highly emotional experience.

Especially since this congenial combination also knows how to impress in the high frequency range. Even the tiniest sonic ramifications are detailed with delicate tube melting and resolved without any sharpness. Reverberation flags also appear completely natural, which leads to an absolutely authentic spatial impression.

With regard to the dynamic power reserves, there is also nothing left to be desired. Because the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA is able to unleash an acoustic assault on the eardrums that is unparalleled without any compression. And the superb fine dynamics also meet the highest demands. Simply great.

It is hard to imagine that this performance can still be topped. Nonetheless, the interaction with the HIFIMAN SUSVARA teaches me better. And once again makes me "ears" that Aristotle cannot be completely wrong after all. Because the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

In conjunction with the SUSVARA, the bass quality and quantity almost reach the ideal state. Depth, pressure and volume in absolute harmony, especially since the somewhat stronger bass of the HIFIMAN compared to the ABYSS is perfectly leveled out by the slim contour of the PRIMAVERA. In addition, the Serb drums precisely to the point with pitch-black basses.

The TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA always maintains the perfect musical balance in combination with the masterpiece by Dr. Fang Bian - in a fascinating way at the same time.

Because based on a slightly more plastic basic tone, every musical journey is not only drawn with the finest brush and individual tonal events are depicted in an extremely airy and spacious manner in breadth and depth, but also coherently combined into a larger whole. A three-dimensional masterpiece.

My conclusion

No question at all. In my opinion, the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA is currently one of the very best tube amplifiers for operation via ear loudspeakers that money can buy.

It combines the fundamental strengths of the tube principle such as impulse speed, spatial imaging and naturalness with the outstanding performance values of transistor amplifiers, garnishes them with a good pinch of emotions and impresses with a highly dynamic and irrepressible joy of playing.

The fact that the PRIMAVERA does without the tonal characteristics of classic tube amplifiers, such as the exuberant wealth of timbres and the sometimes unrealistic size representation, is to be credited to it in my opinion.

Unfortunately, the Serbian super tube will probably not be found in the wild in the future either. Especially since the TRAFOMATIC PRIMAVERA from the Serbian manufacturer is only given to handpicked knights of the grail of the finest notes for a not inconsiderable monetary tribute.

This amplifier is without a doubt a musical dream. And after all, dreams can be allowed.

Your Fidelio

(*) The reviews on Musicalhead only give my personal opinion on the product. These are editorial contributions, but they could certainly have an advertising effect on the reader without me being commissioned by a company.