

# VU/METRE

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**DAVIS NIKITA 3.0**

Plus intense que jamais

**PURE AUDIO ONE**

L'outsider

**MUNICH 2018**

Nos 10 coups de cœur !

**REPORTAGE PRO-JECT**

L'usine du 21<sup>e</sup> siècle

**INTERVIEW ANTONIO MEZE**

Le casque pas comme tout le monde

JUILLET-AOÛT 2018 10 €

## The Pureaudio ONE Integrated Amplifier

Despite very elegant proportions that make it appear modest and compact the One is nevertheless an imposing product whose dimensions are close to the 19 inch rack format, so not a lightweight! Pure Audio devices are based on a particularly innovative chassis that has been designed to bring no colour to the sound of the electronics it houses. Ross Stevens' imagination has resulted in an absolutely acoustically transparent platform. The case is made of two thick folded aluminium plates constituting the base and the cover, which are aligned to the millimetre. The upper part has been intensively cut to form a kind of postmodern design. These large asymmetrical gills are filled with two sizes of stainless steel mesh that prevent any impurity from entering the enclosure, and yet provide excellent ventilation. The sequencing of the openings contributes to both the vibratory and thermal aspect of the device. An 'open' chassis always sounds better than the same totally closed one! This box is of course anti-resonant and non-magnetic. It rests on three circular feet made of a specific resin that completes its mechanical insulation. Fans of rational production, the creators of Pure Audio had the idea of using the scraps from the cut-outs to create very effective heat sinks that can be found on the insides of the device!

It's hard to be more stripped back than the One, which has only one large, comfortable, volume knob on the front right hand. On the left is a small keypad which allows you to select one of the four line inputs, or the direct position that simply transforms the One into a power amplifier.

On the rear panel, ten beautiful Cardas 24-carat gold and rhodium plated pure copper RCA sockets with teflon insulation guarantee a secure connection. Don't look for any XLR connectors on a Pure Audio product, the New Zealand manufacturer has ignored balanced connections. This is not a provocation, but the result of a mature reflection solidly supported by a solid technical argument.

A special mention goes to the two double Cardas loudspeaker terminals, which only accept forks, but have an impressive tightening torque, guaranteeing flawless contact and above-average safety.

Like all Pure Audio products, the One is equipped with a fully regulated high-current power supply. The result is an optimal low impedance, a low-noise environment from which the amplifier can perform at its best. While offering a pure Class A operation but aware of the need to avoid wasting energy, Pure Audio designed the amplifier to automatically switch to low-power standby mode when not in use. Class A operation of the amplifier is automated by remote control and signal detection. Class A is an operating mode in which the amplifier reproduces the signal over the entire cycle of the music waveform. It is smooth and continuous, perfectly analogical. It is completely faithful to the original sound. On paper, it is therefore the purest form of amplification, a theory intimately shared by Pure Audio.



## Who is behind Pureaudio

You might think Pureaudio is just another brand in the hi-fi universe, but it is not. On the contrary, this brand is the result of a successful reflection on the part of two men whose curriculum speaks for itself. If Pure Audio is a very young New Zealand brand, its two creators have history. These are experienced people who have been deeply involved in this audio industry. Gary Morrison is a long-time friend of Peter Thomson, the creator of Plinius. Alongside him, he developed and conceptualized all the brand's flagship products, those which created its myth. SA 50, SA 100, SA 250, SA reference, M16 and others, all this is him. The second man, Ross Stevens, is the designer! The first curved electronic chassis was made by him in July 2001, when he presented a piece of round aluminium to the rest of Plinius' staff. In 2002, the Odeon multi-channel amplifier was released embodying this transcendent look that some other manufacturers have subsequently tried to copy. The Plinius bending was not just a cosmetic fantasy: rather it was a real industrial challenge made possible thanks to hard work with the brand's metallurgist partner. Ross has been working as an industrial designer for over 25 years, with a particular passion for high end audio. He has worked with the greatest names, including Philippe Starck, and for the brands B&W, Perreaux and Plinius. These are the two men who launched Pure Audio. To say that they are accomplices is the most elementary understatement of their long professional collaboration, which has given rise to a close friendship. Pure Audio embodies their common passion for simple, innovative and refined concepts that simply allow them to enjoy recorded music in the best conditions. In addition, and this is an invaluable strength of the duo, Gary and Ross are extremely complementary in terms of electronic design for the former and mechanical and aesthetic expertise for the latter.

## The Use

To support the 26 kgs of the One and its large footprint our Centaur furniture has been most suitable. In practice the One does not heat up too much, unless, of course, you have a slightly heavy right hand. Good cables are essential, but be careful not to go overboard. The One does not need too exotic cords. Our usual references have done wonders. In terms of association, we have made variations of more than 10 dB in terms of efficiency on various pairs of speakers, and the One has found nothing to complain about.

## The Sound

It only takes a few seconds to understand that with the One, we are not dealing with one more amp in this price range, but with a special device. Certainly, it sounds very good as soon as it comes out of the box. It is also remarkably well built. But it takes a little time to appreciate the capability of this device. It's not an amp that imposes a front-end personality on you, but

rather a device that makes you immerse yourself deeply in the sound performance of each disc. Each of these has its own atmosphere, borders and panorama. The layout of the stereophonic image is just as evocative as you like for jazz, rock, classical orchestra, piano or voice. The musicians instantly position themselves with infinite clarity. The sound scene is distinct, defined and precise. And it is not absolutely necessary for the listener to place himself within the stereophonic triangle to enjoy this landscape. A slight deviation from the sweet spot has very little effect on perception in relation to the ideal positioning. The layering of the different planes allows the relief to take on its full dimension. In this sense, the One brings to the music lover virtues that are generally deployed by panels and omnidirectional speakers, an innate sensation of aeration and freedom. The tonal balance is extremely successful, very much in phase with the qualities of the amps operating in Class A, characterized by this lack of hardness in the establishment of the timbres, by this ability to reproduce the message without any breakage, nor the slightest artificial hint. The high frequencies are precise and sharp, never artificially sharpened, which enhances the stability of the image. The bandwidth is generous. But the bass, although deep, is not heavy or excessively present. They highlight the foundations of melodic lines with subtlety. The One is superb for listening to all acoustic instruments, voices and subtle messages where brute force does not solve anything. This never prevents him from keeping his muscles in good condition if necessary. With him, the live show is a great moment of happiness. Its homogeneity is extremely pleasant. His ability to highlight reverberations is very successful. It makes musical sources even more coherent.

## No to balanced cabling

Pure Audio does not question the benefits of a balanced scheme, but considers them useful in a polluted environment, especially when long distance cables are unavoidable. The reduction in noise level so often claimed as an advantage of balancing is evident in difficult contexts over long distances, usually in professional studios and sound systems, but rarely in domestic systems. In addition, if the grounding is optimally designed, balanced connections offer no noise advantage and can be counterproductive. Within Pure Audio electronics, a large part of the design effort has been devoted to simplifying signal routing, power supply and ground circuit optimization. A simple and well-done signal path will provide significant sound benefits. Fewer devices in the signal path means less chance for the music to be stripped of its magic. If the high-end audio market has mostly opted for balanced links, it is reasons of dogma, according to Pure Audio. Finally, the balanced connection by definition requires the use of twice as many components and a very high level of accuracy in the design of the circuit. The manufacture using discrete components will not only be demanding, but will also challenge the best designer. Good results will only be achieved with a complex circuit containing many elements. Most will opt instead for the simplicity of an operational amplifier that will fulfil its role at the

expense of sound purity. Others use transformers that may sound good, but are expensive, and not always reliable. Pure Audio believes that its simple, single ended approach is the best, but as always, the brand strongly encourages its potential customers to use its ears before making any decisions, what seems best for you, in your system, with your music, is what matters most. Avoid dogma!

## Our Conclusion

As an old publicist would say, 'the One is an amp for life', and if you love it, it's hard to listen to anything else! A fierce enemy of compromise, a music lover, an outstanding technician and an experienced man, Gary Morrison thought of the One as the ideal integrated amplifier from his point of view, and one that coincides with ours on many points. We would advise you to listen to it, because it is a great product that restores the humanity and naturalness of recorded music. It is a rare product, built in small series, absolutely not made to flood the market, but to fill with its sound benefits the music lover without concession who wishes to dive into the depths of the recordings and feed himself with pure and elegant flows. A strong plea against single-mindedness. At VUmètre, we love it!