

Stereotype Hifi Blog

Get more out of the music you love

This is what PureAudio Sounds like - Part 2

Posted on **November 1, 2011** by **Tiens**



It was with anticipation that I opened the new toys from PureAudio, I'd seen the preamp before when Gary visited us a while back, but I hadn't had a chance to spend some time listening to them in detail until now.

First impressions

I like the packaging material. The units arrived double boxed with enough space around the units to allow for that accidental knock (God forbid!). The thick sponge is a welcome addition for protection against vibration during transportation and can't leave small white balls of polystyrene floating around in the box.

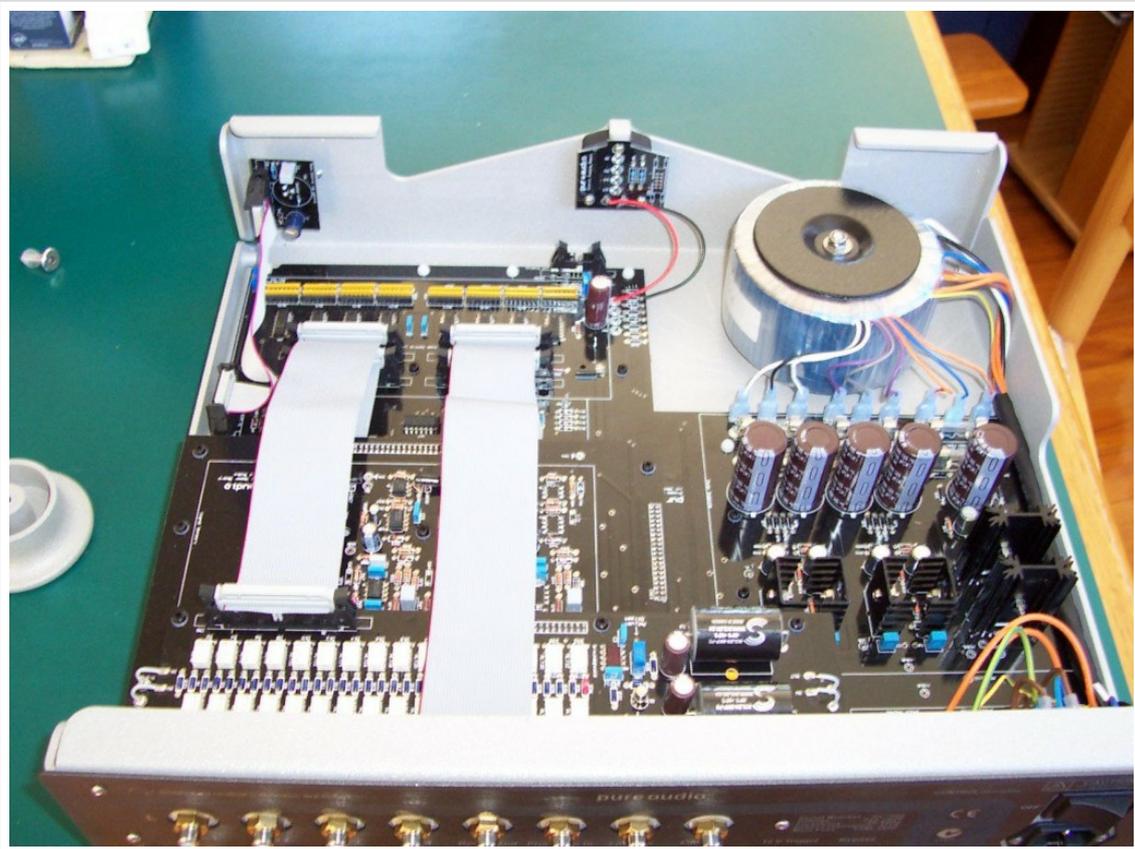


I like the openness of the units design. It reminds me of the ultramodern “industrial” look of some recent modern architecture. PureAudio’s design is totally different to anything else, very original and timeless.



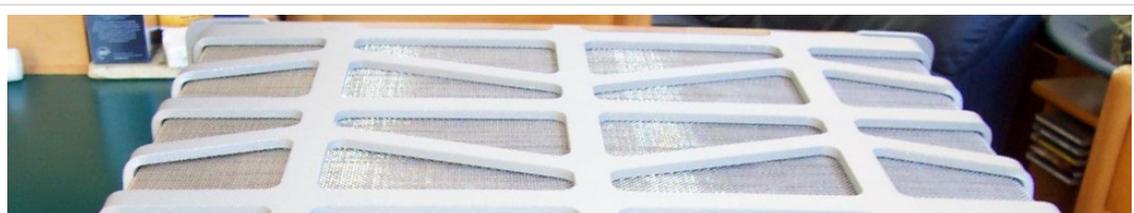
— PureAudio Monoblock Amplifier

I like that you can have a peek inside through the wire mesh and see the clean layout, the superb quality board components, and the big toroidal transformers – you immediately know this is serious gear that has been engineered with every last detail thought of and with a specific reason. The dimensions are spot on, not too small not too big, just right.



I decided to start off by listening to both the preamp and power amps together to get a grip on what the “PureAudio” sound is about, thinking *I will later try them separately.*

Set up was very simple. I like the Cardas Rhodium RCA plugs and Cardas speaker binding posts – the same ones used by the prestigious Jeff Rowland brand as well. These are some of the best you can get in the industry. A nice touch is the a toggle switch on the rear to switch the power lights on and off, theory behind the design is that by switching off the lights and you have no distractions, just *PureAudio.*





— The Volume Control is all class

I switched on preamp, waited 30 seconds and then turned on the power amps. I then turned up the volume a bit and that is when I heard something I very rarely hear... the soft clicking sound of the solenoids clicking in and out the resistor bank as the volume control is turning up. I love the volume control of this preamp! To me it's one of the nicest, smoothest, classiest, volume controls I have ever come across - pure class and a pure pleasure to use.

OK Music! First up were my Maggies 1.7 speakers.

I always test equipment first with good quality voice recordings that I am familiar with, if you don't get the mid-range right the rest will be of no consequence. This is the problem with most modern equipment, especially speakers, manufacturers play with the top and/or bottom end to catch the attention of the new buyer in the showroom. This is because the human ear picks up anomalies in these areas the best. You can either impress them or disappoint them. It all depends on what their taste is - Sharp top end or big bass are the extremes but it will only impress you for short burst of times. Mid-range is the place where long time listening can make or break a system; this is where listening fatigue comes in.



The Maggies 1.7 are one of the most detailed speakers you can find in the important mid-range field. It's also the most realistic sound I have found closest to the human voice, so it's ideal speakers to test a systems realism. My test tracks were [The Painter by Sara K](#) and [Beat Hotel by Allan Taylor](#), both on [Stockfisch Records](#).

What I heard via the PureAudio units was... REAL human voices. Immediately I knew we were in business... but a few minutes into the song I noticed something I never notice before. I could hear background instruments more clearly now standing out in the mix. Distinct low level instruments that I honestly never took notice off before. The main singer's voice became more separated from the background and was more clearly identified with more air around him. *It reminded me of driving in my car on a beautiful clear sunny day and looking out the window...you can see the houses nearby but you can also see the islands and boats sailing clearly in the far distance over the sea. On other days its misty and diffused but you can still see the nearby houses clearly, but not the background.*

I never heard this before and its very, very nice to hear all the detail that is lurking in the obscure background all this time! In a sentence that sums up what I have heard all day....that **fine detail**. I think it has to do a lot with what you will *NOT* find on PureAudio components.

So then, what's missing on PureAudio equipment?

- Remote control.
- Bass and treble controls, balanced control in fact not even an input selector control! Nothing! Just a volume control knob... that's it!
- No flashing lights and big LED displays either!
- Balanced line level inputs and outputs.
- No 100w or 200w (or whatever) power.

Why? You do not need them! Let me explain:

If you go to a live concert, do they issue you with a remote control? I think that answers the first Q. Also did you know that remote control-, bass- and treble-, balance- and input selection circuitry can effect the quality of your signal. Yes, your signal has to pass through those extra circuits and thus can be effected by them. If you want your signal to stay as pure as possible you have to avoid those. The brand's name *PureAudio* says it all. Volume control is done by a hand control that is set to your preferred level, then you can sit back and enjoy the music. The volume is controlled uniquely by a sophisticated resistor bank selection process to make sure once you have selected your volume its circuitry are then bypassed and a "straight line" is opened at that level. The same goes with the "input selection" which is done automatically for you. The preamp detects which input has a live signal, selects that input and then connect that input to the "straight line" thus freeing it from that circuitry.

LED lights and displays?

Same story as above, lighting displays can generate tiny electromagnetic interferences that can interfere with the tiny preamp signals masking the clear dark background with "tiny sparkles" so to speak and that will cloud that fine detail so lacking in so many other so called high end systems.

Balanced line level inputs and outputs?

Most people think that when you are talking about high end audio we are talking of balanced line level input and output and mega watts of power output. On the contrary, that belongs mostly to the opposite the market.... the professional equipment market for broadcasting and live concerts. Due to long cable runs and needing to run over power cables, a robust method of noise reduction like balanced cables comes into place. For a normal home with short cable lengths this is not a problem. True to the minimalist design principle of PureAudio they have decided to avoid this duplication of positive and negative signal paths and adding phases to avoid any possible phase distortion that can result effecting the fine detail in the higher frequencies.

Massive power?

High power amps by nature have to be more robust so you sacrifice detail for power (think low revs V8 engine power compared to smooth high revs 6 cylinder engines..same story...you cannot have one type of

engine that can do both!) Then another factor not realize by the normal man in the street is that the output level of a 100W amp and a 200W amp are very close to each other and you will hardly hear any difference. That is because it will only give you a 3db lift and the human ear can barely hear a difference of 1db. Look at the LED volume display on your Home-theater receiver and turn it up 3db... you will hardly hear any difference in the sound level! That is what you will also hear when you change your amp from a 100W amp to a 200W amp. (see my [previous blog on power ratings](#)). PureAudio has decided to give us 60W RMS into 8 ohms but in pure CLASS A mode giving the least possible distortion in the amplified signal.

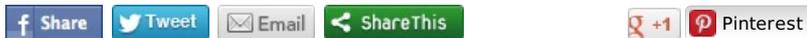
What I personally like about PureAudio is that it reminded me so much of my listening experiences and discoveries of this wonderful hobby in my youth, the golden age of audio... the 70's. Every great manufacturer's flagship models were made to be the best with no price object in mind. Money was no problem then it was all about who can make the best and for us the desire to own and to enjoy... pure enjoyment... PureAudio. Thanks PureAudio for taking me back there again and OMG how I missed that!

I'll have to save the R909's for another day, Gordia is calling me for a cup of coffee.

Kind Regards
Tiens

To listen to the PureAudio range please [contact us](#) to arrange an audition.

For more information on PureAudio, please visit the [store page](#).



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FANTASTIC, thorough, and downright human approach with this article B! I really enjoyed it, the way you showed respect and admiration for the design, while educating the listener about what you look for in a design. I've been hearing about the "pure audio project" for awhile now - and I'm out to get my hands on the gear to review it myself! I'm drooling. BRAVO - to Gary and his partner, and for you B for grabbing this bleeding edge gear!!!!