

It's a scandal...



But what a nice one it is!

Canor TP 306VR+ Precision phono Tube Preamplifier

Unbelievable beautiful

Since the earlier by Zdenek Brezovjak designed CD player CD2 VR and the amplifier TP106 VR gave a very good impression to me I was as a "true vinyl lover" very curious for his reference Phonopreamplifier. Especially designing a "quiet" tube phonopreamp is one of the most challenging things to do.

TP 306 VR+

Amplifying the level of the signal of a (low output) MC cartridge is all about very small signals that every fault in the design will immediately magnify these faults to an audible size. So the design must be done with caution while designing, preparation, building and production. Canor has -in earlier days named Edgar- as a manufacturer a serious reputation in building amplifiers with tube technology. How far this company takes his business seriously shows the fact they developed the BT-2 and TTM-2 testing and matching equipment to read the specifications of each tube. The quality standards used by the tubemanufacturers aren't acceptable to the high standards Canor is used to so that's why Canor designs the testing equipment themselves to match the tubes and read the specs. This € 2,890,- costing phonopreamplifier is the flagship of the Canor phono amp productrange and the successor of the old TP305 which was sold under the old brandname Edgar. With 12Kg the Canor TP 306VR+ is a heavyweight compared to the competition. The look matches perfect to the CD player and amplifier I have tested earlier but instead of silver the color of the massive front is black this time. As soon as the powerswitch on the back is activated a red LED is visible. If the powerswitch in the middle of front is touched this LED is starting to flash. 40 seconds later the Canor logo in the middle of the frontpanel is starting to light in the typical color amber. The red LED starts to blink in a higher frequency and again in 40 seconds later the LED stops as a sign the amp is stabilized and the relaisswitched output is ready for use. On the back can simultaneously connected MM and MC cartridges without any interference. The selection between both MM and MC inputs is done by a rockerswitch on the back. Directly under the RCA inputs are three blocks of dipswitches per channel. The dipswitches can be reached from the outside for comfortable use. The interlinks are a bit in the way to use the switches but once the selection is done it's no problem anymore. The biggest block of switches is used for adjusting the MC gain and you can choose 54 dB, 60 dB and 66 dB. The smaller block is for adjusting impedance of MC cartridges and the smallest block is for adjusting MM capacity where you can choose from 100, 200, 320, 420, 470, 570, 670, 690, 790 and 890 pF. The resistance-load and gain for MM cartridges are 47 Kohm and 40 dB. Internally connected on the MC input there is a step-up transformer from Lundahl. The tubes used inside are two pieces 6922, four pieces 6SL7 and one piece EZ81. The used capacitors are from Mundorf.

A specialty for all Canor units is that the enclosures are welded on all sides and therefore the stiffness of the chassis is secured. An other feature is that the double layered circuitboards have milled holes to electrically isolate the components to get the best possible sound. The circuitboards are suspended in rubber to minimize microfonics.



Reference audioset

During the reviewing period i have in my listeningroom two phonopreamps which i can use as a reference. Both belong to the absolute top and both are double mono buold solid state amps. First my own ASR Basis Exclusive and second the Blue Amp model 42. My turntable is the Acustic Raven Two with SME 309 arm and Lyra delos MC cartridge. I´am having a visitor at the moment a holborne Analog 1 RAW with Dualpivot MKII tonearm and Lyra Kleos MC cartridge. They are connected by an interlink from Crystal Cable and between the phonopreamp and the P70 amp from Unison Research is a sonore interlink. The speakercables from the Opera Callas Diva are from Siltech and the powercables are from Essential Audio tools. The seperate power for audio is delivered by Kemp Electronics.

Adjusting

Often manufacturers give the optimum resistanceload for particular cartridges. Sadly these specs often don´t match the reality. When the phonopreamp has the feature to match other settings it´s interesting to try out if other settings optimize the sound quality. There are for sure several combination of settings possible. For both MC cartridges used in this test Lyra has in his manual no specs but a usable range between 91 Ohm to 47 Kohm. Using a low capacitance cable like the Crystal cable which i am using has an advised impendanceload of 510 Ohm. Canor Advises when using a optimum impedance a high as possible gain. The only possibility of five settings, starting at 5 Ohm, with 66 dB gain in the Lyra range can be used are 100 and 150 ohm. Both settings i am trying with ´Ride across the river´ from Dire straits before i try the 60 dB option. From the settings are five usable for the Lyre. 100, 200, 300, 400 and 600 Ohm.

From the moment i tried the 200 Ohm setting i know that i wil not go back to the 66 dB setting. But there is a better option. 300 Ohm, 400 Ohm..... At the end i even don´t have to try 600 Ohm when i let the needle touch the records first track. The last step was one step to much and from 600 went back to 400. The perfect balance between clear sound and dynamics and on the other side definition an precision. Another record asured me this was the right setting.



Unbelievable beautiful

That record was the 180 grams Album Dylanesque from Brian Ferry with interpretations from songs written by Bob Dylan. The beautiful mastering is from Bobo Ludwig from Gateway Mastering. 'Make You feel My Love' was always one of my favorite tracks but oh that nasty Dylan voice. Also the interpretation of Adèle isn't my cup of tea. But this Bryan Ferry knows to put a feeling in his voice that i am feeling in my toes when thinking of my wife. But only when the song is played through a beautiful analog source like a turntable, cartridge and Phonopreamplifier. Never before i have heard the passion in the song better than with this phonopreamplifier. Especially with the Kleos cartridge, and a bit less, but also with the Delos cartridge. Less important is the absolute fantastic roominformation displayed through the 'spacey' rythme of this song. That also i have never heard more beatiful or more intense. Even not through my much more expensive ASR Basis Exclusive. That endlessly involvement, refinement and emotion. It doesn't matter which record i play. Also the newest 180 grams record from Sara K., the American singer songwriter who has put down her guitar but Stockfisch still brings out new albums, touches me right in the heart. On one side a compilation of live tracks i am playing 'Water Falls'. A womans voice and a guitar both i can look right into her throate and guitar body. From the side with the studiorecordings i play the opener 'I can't stand the rain' and i am getting speechless from the realistic sound of the accompanying instruments; the richness, completeness and elegance. This is outrageous beautiful. But also a jazz album as The private Collection of Charlie Haden, a set of three LP's distributed by the British Naim quality label brings me in a high level of ecstasy. The fantastic bassist is accompanied by Ernie Watts on saxaphone, Alan Broadbent on piano Paul Motian on drums while performing Charlie Parker's composition "Visa" and i am fully "in the music". Maybe you think: What a about a really big orchestra? That also impresses me very much. That is clear when i play an album of Clarke Boland big Band. With that overwhelming energy of the American drummer Kenny Clarke as a stable, dependable rock in a big band which is formed by European musicians. Thanks to his presence but also due to the Canor TP 306 VR+, let's this album Callas Divas swing. As last Strawinsky's "Le Sacre Du Printemps" shows that classical repertoire is performed by this phonopreamplifier in a unsurpassed, sensational way.



Scandalous

Many of you would expect that balanced, double mono build phono's soundwise could easily win at every aspect from phono's which haven't got these requirements. The Canor TP 306 VR+ doesn't meet these so called "superior requirements" but nevertheless it performs like it has all these 'superior' features. His strength lies in his beautiful involving realistic sound. But also the feature to match cartridges in every possible way. And that all for the price of € 2,890,-. Outrageous!