

# Super Teste 2

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EL34

12AU7

EL34

12AX7

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POWER  
AMPLIFIED PROLOGUE ONE

POWER

## PRIMALUNA PROLOGUE: ONE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

Flavio Adami

Sometimes I ask myself, "Are today's solid-state amps, after so much evolution, aiming to achieve the sound quality of tubes, or is it the other way around? Is the latest generation of tube amps sounding like the new solid state tube amps?" One thing is painfully obvious with tube amps: they have a warm and full mid-frequency range that is easy to listen to. Missing, however, is the "punch" that characterizes solid-state amps, especially in the lowest of bass notes. There are powerful tube amps that can achieve this "punch" at exorbitant prices. Within a modest price range, however, tube amps generally have less power, extended low frequencies and slam.

Once in a while I am surprised by something sent to my house that startles me immediately in terms of audio quality. The case of the **PrimaLuna Prologue One** is one example. I have listened to many a solid state amp in my years that did make an excellent impression in terms of audio quality in the mid-frequency range-with the strength in the lower frequencies that is so common with solid-state amps. However the **PrimaLuna** sounded rather different in some aspects which will be explained.

Construction is simple, compact, and robust while weighing 16 kilograms. The finish is in black sapphire, with just two knobs in front: one for volume setting and the other for the selection of the four line inputs. Curiously, the

on/off button is located laterally on the left side, and it took me some time to find it. Power is rated at 35 watts per channel using the well-known EL34, which passionate audiophiles have come to love for their sweet and musical sonority. It is built by hand with point-to-point soldering which means it uses no printed circuit boards. Its first-rate construction uses first-rate components with a toroidal transformer for the power supply and low noise encapsulated



transformers with wide frequency band for extended low and high frequencies. These transformers were developed by Marcel Croese, one of the most renowned audio designers, together with a "known" American transformer-designer. Ventilated ceramic sockets were used for the tubes, and an **Alps** potentiometer for the volume. **Nichicon** and **Real Caps** capacitors and gold-plated binding posts of the WBT type and RCA terminals were used.

The Adaptive Auto Bias system is exclusive to **PrimaLuna**. This circuit adjusts continuously and instantaneously monitors bias, and reduces distortion by about 40 to 50 percent. This means this amplifier will never need bias adjustment until tubes have to be replaced at the end of their lives. The **PrimaLuna** was set to 220 volts and even though it could be modified internally to operate on 110 volts, I decided to use a **By Knirsch** 2KVA transformer. Fortunately that did not affect the sound quality or cause any extraneous noise that could harm the results of this review.

After careful installation in my system, I waited a few minutes for the amp to warm up and was immediately surprised at the absence of residual noise, even when I put my ears close to the tweeter of the speakers. I couldn't hear anything at all. That is exceptional especially in the case of a tube amp.

In terms of music making, what immediately caught my attention was its harmonious sound reproduction, showing great equilibrium throughout the whole audible frequency spectrum, from the lowest bass to the highest treble notes. Even though it has some characteristics of a modern solid-state amplifier, its sound reproduction did not lose that famous tube magic. Low frequencies sounded different when compared to my solid-state amp: less "dry," more "rounded up," and less "dampened," in other words

"looser" but without exaggeration or loss of equilibrium.

My speakers are 90dB efficient, and the **PrimaLuna** played them with great ease in spite of its 35 watts per channel, as long as I didn't turn the volume up too much. Otherwise the sound would harden, a common feature in a low power amp.

In spite of the small dimensions of my room, I would say that the sound stage projected by the **PrimaLuna** exceeded its dimensions, with exceptional depth and width.

Transparency was another important factor with a clear absence of "electronic effects," especially with voices, both feminine and masculine, reproduced with a natural character.

This unit does not have a full and congested mid range like many other tube amps. Rather it always sounded rich and natural with uncommonly natural timbres.

When listening to more agitated music with instruments like the electric guitar, you might



lose some of the noise of the chords being plucked. In this case

solid state amps respond quicker, but on the other hand the harmonic richness of instruments like the piano, acoustic guitar, violin and cello was superior to many solid state amps with four times the power. The warm tone of the



woodwinds drove me to a high level of listening satisfaction; one which you only attain when listening to very expensive equipment- which is not the case with **PrimaLuna**.

#### Conclusion

Considering the cost/benefit ratio, every watt in the PrimaLuna in spite of the low power rating is a pleasure. This is reflected naturally in the joy and vivacity with which music is reproduced. Even at low frequencies, the "Achilles' heel" of many low power tube amps, it showed an uncommon extension and articulation using the traditional EL 34 as output tubes. I believe all this magic derives from a well-executed and intelligent design, with first-rate components, and output transformers of the highest level.

As long as it is connected to efficient speakers, one obtains a surprising result since the

PrimaLuna knows how to balance out the magic of tubes in the mid-frequency region while at the same time maintaining extended bass and a "crystal clear" top end.

### PRIMALUNA

Total Equilibrium	8.5
Sound Stage	9.0
Texture	8.5
Dynamics	7.5
Transients	8.0
Harmonic Body	8.0
Character	8.0
Musicality	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>66.0</b>

Maximum points for equipment in the Gold category: 72

### GOLD RECOMMENDED

Distributor: Sound Stage  
(61) 225 3229  
Average Price; US\$ 2,200.00