

TV STES

AV  
COMPONENTS

PROJECTORS

STEREO  
COMPONENTS

ACOUSTICS

PORTABLE

&lt; 10 000

&lt; 30 000

&lt;100 000

&gt;100 000

# INTEGRAL SOLUTION

A genuine German valve amplifier with perfect performance and assembly quality...

When one is presented with such arguments, it's hard to keep yourself from reaching for the wallet

Yasha GODINA

## Live and Learn

**HISTORY** We understood that this visitor would turn out to be a unique exhibit, by the wooded box it was delivered in – with a blindly bolted cover with eight screws. We are still poorly aware of German High End stars, and Assistent-50 is a demonstrative evidence of the depth of this ignorance. The Audio Valve, which has been dealing with valve amplifiers for about 30 years (the current portfolio includes over a dozen models), has presented several generations of them (for instance, our Assistent was preceded by models 10 / 20), and boasts of a sufficient number

of devoted admirers across the world, from Europe to America, to keep afloat during today's era of extra-severe marketing massacre.

## Red and Black

**TECHNOLOGY** The Audio Valve Assistent-50 amplifier we pulled out from the box is, no doubt, one of the most spectacular devices, which ever visited our editorial office. The black silhouette leans against four gilded washers. A 10-millimeter sheet of Perspex is clamped from above with a metallic cover fitted with a "window". The

latter, in its turn, has two wide slits cut, for ventilation of valves. And what valves! Four legendary ECC82EA (12AU7A) working on input are, by the way, made in Russia. Further the signal is pumped with eight (four per channel) QQE 3 / 12 valves produced by Valvo — they are less famous here, and represent coupled GU17-type tetrodes, with a common cathode and screen mesh. Plus there are a couple of 270 mF capacitors.

# Audio Valve Assistent 50





Appearance, assembly quality,  
playback stability



No built-in background  
corrector



All this splendor is installed on a trademark bright-red board, in fact, such beauty shouldn't have been hidden behind the fine mesh. The assembly is perfect. Layouts of all Audio Valve amplifiers were developed by one person — Helmut Becker. In this case, owing to its own patented system of self-adjustment of mode ABR, they managed to reject coupled selection of capacity valves. Besides, now each of them is provided with a diode, which would glow in case of necessity of its replacement.

### Order and tranquility

Withdrawal of heated air is conducted not only through upper holes, but also through a mesh on the rear side. Also, there are five pairs of RCA for external sources and one recorder output — instead of the latter, we would be more happy to see a background corrector for MM, even a simple one. However, the Audio Valve includes a separate Sunilda background corrector. Meanwhile, we were pleased to see Assistant-50's sockets for audio cables. That deserves respect. In fact, it is possible to easily connect there a thin cable, as well as a thick one. It is a pleasure to connect such components. Apart from a gilded volume knob and a general power button on the rear panel, there are no controls on the amplifier's body.

EXPERIENCE

Input changeover through a relay, muting and standby — all these are entrusted to the heavy and serious-looking remote control. Small buttons are grouped on its metallic padding, and one should mention that a part of them remained unsigned, therefore the initial switch-on moment arouses slight puzzlement.

But, at least, here we go: the relay clicks, the red standby diode fades away, and a blue Audio Valve emblem appears on the glass of the front panel. A projecting logo — this is what we haven't seen yet! Now listen.

So, what does our ear have to deal with? The lack of unpleasant tails of "metallic" distortions of medium-upper band is obvious. The music is not forced out from the metal, but sounds naturally, "comes from nowhere", in a cohesive way. Tonally the area of highest frequencies is carefully rounded and smoothened. Undoubtedly, it can't be called a monitor, studio sound. But do many of us really need it? This is a typical domestic pet, which will never confess to the owner that some record was dubbed poorly. The mid is smooth, the bass is soft and rolling. Strange as it may be, the device wonderfully conveys hip-hop patterns with rich, rolling sound. At the same time, in records with the highest tension in the mood, the sound lacks pomposity, certain compression

can be felt at the speaker. However, Assistant-50's scene is solid, it doesn't split into parts, and will offer depth even with a large display panel in the middle of the system. What is quite important, the device demonstrates surprising indifference towards the quality of mains power, therefore the music performance it offers will be characterized by excellent stability, regardless of the time of day.

### Protection and parts

As the upper part of the amplifier is ventilated (there cannot be any other in equipment with valve output cascades), and our urban apartments, even best-appointed ones, are not free from dust, it is better to foresee a certain type of protection. At least you can put our latest edition onto it... Of course, any obstacle for harmful particles may be installed only after the device is completely cooled down.

By the way, in case of necessity, most of the components — valves, knobs, sockets and Alps servomotors, may be ordered from Russian Audio Valve distributor, in «N?t?+» salon.



### DATA

- NAME** Audio Valve Assistant-50  
**TYPE** integral valve amplifier  
**PRICE** 150,000 rubles  
**FEATURES**  
 † Capacity (per 8 Ohm) - 2 x 50 W  
 † Valves - 4 x ECC82, 8 x QQE 03/12, RS 1029 or CV 2798  
 † Number of inputs - 5  
 † Number of outputs - 1  
 † Input impedance - 47 kOhm  
 † Harmonic distortions (20 W) less than 0,3%  
 † Dimensions - 420x155x320 mm  
 † Weight - 18 kg

### TEST IN PAIR

- † Pro Ac Response One SC  
 Acoustic systems



The device displays surprising indifference towards the quality of mains power

### CONTENT

- † POP .....+  
 † ROCK .....+  
 † JAZZ .....+  
 † ELECTRONIC .....+  
 † CLASSIC .....+

