Allnic HPA-5000XL

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Realistic beauty created only by a vacuum tube

Human misery is said to begin with dissatisfaction. It's probably a common idea that most people have to shout a little more, even if they've gone one step further. What's different about audio? After listening to a new device, a few days later I couldn't be satisfied with it. If you listen to a higher level of sound at this time, it will be a continuation of sleepless night from that moment.
Following last month, I heard Olnick's headphone amplifier again. The main character is the HPA-5000XL, the advanced aircraft of the HPA-3000GT. The HPA-3000GT, which I usually

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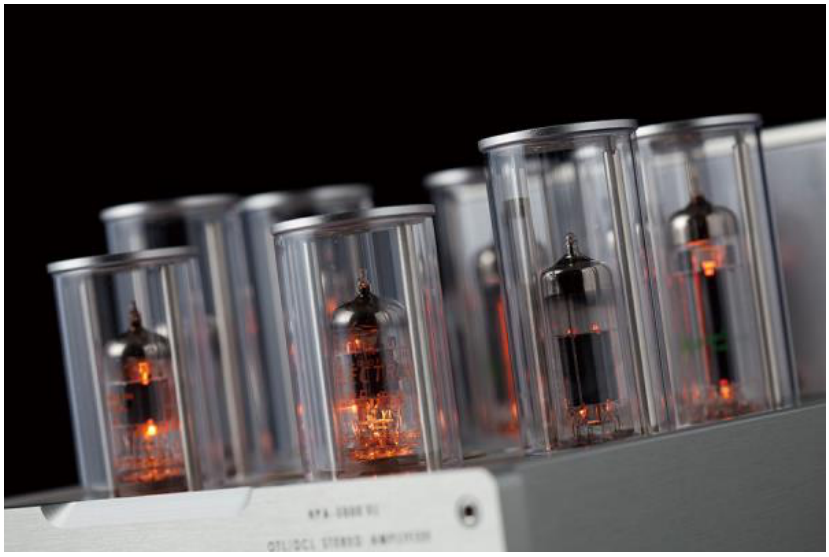
use, was already a great device for me. At least until you hear the HPA-5000XL. The naturalness of the sound that the HPA-5000XL takes is a step further threw stones into my audio life.

Pure without tolerating any impurities

balanced connection has become popular in the head pie field, it has been supporting the balance terminal from the DAC to the headphone, and accordingly, Olnick has started supporting the balanced input and output from the HPA-3000GT. The 5000XL product name has two meanings of supporting XLR balanced inputs and outputs along with 'eXceLlence'. Switching between balanced and unbalanced inputs consists of a button between the two jacks, and the headphone outputs have a 6.5mm unbalanced output and four 4-pin XLR balanced outputs on each side with the volume knob in the center. The HPA-3000GT distinguishes between low and high impedance output terminals according to the headphone impedance, whereas the HPA-5000XL has no distinction of impedance due to the structural characteristics of the HPA-5000XL, OTL / OCL.



OTL stands for 'Output Transformer-Less' and OCL stands for 'Output Capacitor-Less'. In the case of the tube, the internal impedance is higher than the transistor, so it is common to use an output transformer, but Olnick's HPA-5000XL eliminates the output transformer and is directly connected to the receiver. The concept of all Olnick products is to get rid of all the impurities that can cause sound distortion. Even when using a volume attenuator that is sound in terms of quality, Olnick's stubbornness is already seen in parts such as sticking to an attenuator made by self-made by reducing the contact point to one by one. A closer approach to this concept is the OTL / OCL approach.
The effect of the output transformer on the sound is quite large. Even if the signal is transmitted through the tube, passing the output transformer in the middle removes the sound from the pure tube. The HPA-5000XL omits the output transformer. In addition, no capacitors were used. In the past, OTL-type tube amplifiers were often made, but it is likely that OLYK is the only amplifier applied to the OCL method. The direct coupling method can break even the receiver connected to the amplifier, so without the proper technology, it is impossible to use the OCL method. Once again, Olnick's technology is confirmed. OTL / OCL amplifiers were the result of finding a way to eliminate the risk of DC offset ingress without a capacitor.
The OTL / OCL method has been applied since the previous HPA-5000, but the 5000XL has been further developed. In previous works, due to the limitations of the OTL method, it was not possible to match headphones with various impedances. While it's not impossible to connect high-impedance headphones, it's basically designed to sound optimally with headphones that are between 30 and 50Ω. If the main purpose is to connect with high-impedance headphones, it was a pity that the parts that had to be manufactured for the

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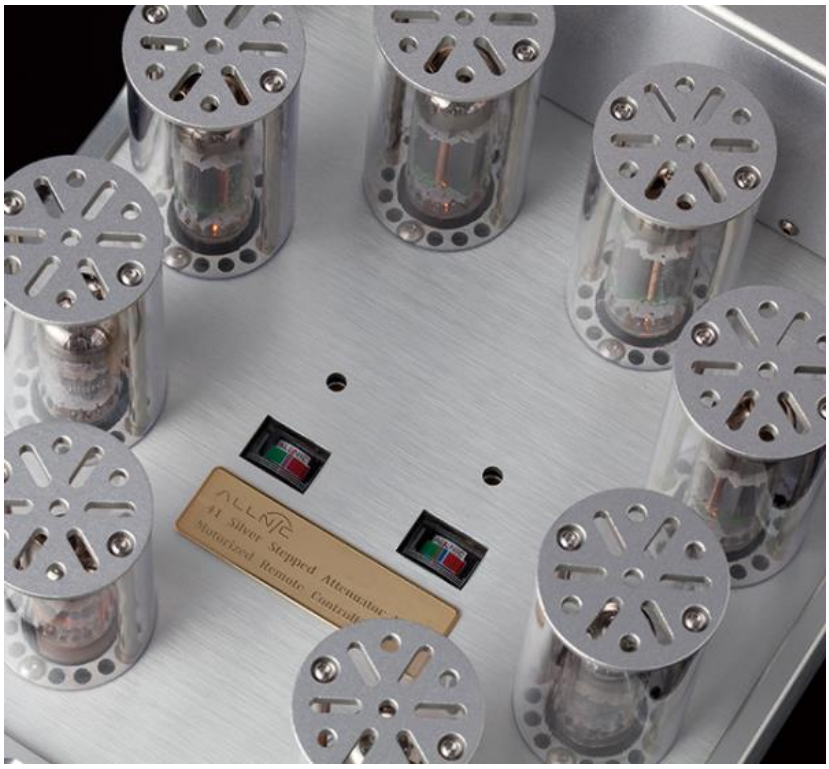
impedance from the point of manufacture were left. HPA-5000XL complements this and solves the problem of matching with headphones because it is designed to give the performance of any headphones from low impedance to high impedance even though it is OTL type.
Looking at the device, you'll notice eight vacuum tubes inside Olnick's polycarbonate chimney, the first of its kind. All of Olnick's products have taken two steps to ensure that the tube is susceptible to vibration: one is the chimney surrounding the tube and the other is a liquid rubber Tube Damper socket. Olym's proprietary tube damper prevents vibrations from the instrument from affecting the vacuum tube, and the chimney once again prevents external sound vibrations, which completely isolates the vacuum tube from vibration. Prevention of safety accidents due to heat generated in the vacuum tube is a bonus.



The vacuum tubes used are divided into two pairs of ultrashort and drive tubes and four output tubes from the front. 6AN8 was used as the ultra short tube. The 6AN8 is one of the few vacuum tubes originally produced for audio use, while most of the tubes were developed for industrial use. Of the two tubes, the five-pole tube plays an important role for the OTL / OCL method, which is the core of the 5000XL. The constant current function allows a constant current to flow while balancing. Behind it is the drive tube E180CC. The drive tube is responsible for amplifying the amplified sound from the ultra short tube and passing it to the output tube. It is no exaggeration to say that the combination of the ultra-short tube and the drive tube affects the sound of the device. Finally, to build a device without an output transformer, the tube with the lowest resistance should be selected as the output tube. Used as the 5000XL's output tube, the 7233 is one of the tubes with the lowest internal resistance among the headphones amplifiers.
Among the tubes, two balance meters indicate the condition of the instrument. Due to the nature of OTL / OCL, if DC Offset occurs, it will flow into the receiver connected to the amplifier without the safety device, and there is a risk of damaging the receiver. The balance meter visually checks that your device is working. Normally, the scale of the meter always points to the middle, but if an error occurs, it will be shifted to the left or right. In this case, the instrument should be checked immediately. If the amplifier fails, you have already taken steps to avoid problems with the connected receivers, so you don't have to worry about expensive receivers breaking down.

Realistic realistic reproduction

In general, transistor amplifiers have high resolution and clear sound, but have a rather cold tendency. On

the contrary, the tube amplifier is not a natural and warm sound, but instead of slow speed and a clean background. This is not wrong. But beyond a certain level, we can no longer establish a boundary between the transistor and the tube. The sound that is colder than the original sound is distortion, and the sound that is warmer than the original sound is distortion. A well-designed amplifier would have to sound as it should, whether it be a transistor or a vacuum tube.

The environment used to listen to the equipment is as follows. The music was played using the MacBook Pro's Odyrvana 2, and the DAC connected the 2Qute of the cord using the HPA-5000XL and RCA cables. The receiver is a Sennheiser HD800S.

The HPA-5000XL, like all Olnick's devices, eliminates the unnecessary elements that can distort the original sound. This makes the sound heard through the headphones feel natural, without exaggerating anything. They do not intentionally try to expand the space of the stage. Originally, recordings in large spaces are wide, and narrow recordings are narrow. For example, listen to Jazz at The Pawnshop, one of the best-known jazz recordings. The stage was also narrow, as the recording environment was originally set up in a small Swedish pub. Instead, sound engineer Gert Palmcrantz placed the microphone in front of the audience, in addition to placing the microphone directly in front of each instrument, which gave him an alumni of details of the instrument's performance and the atmosphere of the field. It was born. HPA-5000XL reproduces the realism as it is. Piano, drums, saxophones, and bass were gathered in tight spaces to fit together and the audiences talking in front of them.

I listened to one more jazz sound. It's Amy's 2nd album 'Back to Black' which reminds me of July every year. July 23 is the fifth anniversary of Amy Winehouse's death. It may be because the time has passed quickly, but in the meantime, I sometimes listen to Amy's sound source and still feel like I'm still alive and will release a new album. Although he ended up at a young age, Amy's two albums would be long-lasting alums. The recording status of 'Back to Black' is not very neat. If the high resolution of the high-resolution sound source or the delicacy of the sound is based on a level that is less than the reference point. Rather, it may be that Amy's sensibility is fully conveyed by the rough recording state and Amy's vocal encounter. And in order to enjoy it properly, the device must also deliver the raw material as it is without packing the sound. The HPA-5000XL lets Amy hear Amy's sticky vocals and subtle ringing. It feels like listening to LP through an old Lohas speaker.

The genre of jazz can be thought of as a home ground for vacuum tubes. If so, the viewing environment so far is too biased. So this time I tried playing some new music. A female group that goes well with the hot summer, 'Mall Ae Ae', a new star of C-Star. I wondered what would happen if a tube amplifier met a girl group. The HPA-3000GT also feels dull, but the tube amp's response is dull. Tube amplifiers are fast enough to close and break. Track 2, 'Thong' is a song with a strong emphasis on beat, and the song itself will sound flat if the rhythm of the beat beats throughout the song. The HPA-5000XL has a solid beat that makes the song light. Rhythm properly saved. The EDM-style mixing expression in the middle of the song is perfect, so it can be regarded as a tube amplifier suitable for idol music.

Allnic HPA-3000GT, introduced in the June 2016 issue

Gifts for a handful of enthusiasts

Ears are so sweet. When I listened to the HPA-3000GT, I admired it as a natural sound expression, but when I listened to the HPA-5000XL, I was fascinated by the higher level of naturalness than the 3000GT. The overtones and reverberation of the tube are more pronounced, and the clarity of each one makes the entire song more realistic. This is the result of hearing the two devices side by side, not by any means the 3000GT is unnatural. The HPA-5000XL is suitable for a handful of enthusiasts who only care about sound quality. It is designed for greedy people who don't tolerate even the smallest element that interferes with sound quality. In fact, the 5000 series was not originally developed for commercial use. Park Kang-soo, the CEO of Olnick, said that the device was developed for enjoyment. Vacuum tube products are still being developed, but compared to the popularity of vacuum tubes in the past, it now feels like the exclusive possession of a few enthusiasts. The HPA-5000XL reminds us of the superiority of vacuum tubes that are gradually being forgotten, and shows that tube amplifiers can be further developed. If you want to see the end in the head pie field, I highly recommend listening to the HPA-5000XL.

Distributor Audiomentos (031)716-3311
Price Distributor Inquiry **vacuum tube** 6AN8 × 2, E180CC × 2, 7233 × 4 **Headphone output** 6.5mm RCA × 1, 4 pin XLR × 1 **Analog input** RCA × 1, XLR × 1 **Frequency response** 20Hz-20kHz (± 0.3dB) **Voltage gain** + 28dB THD 0.03% or less **S / N ratio** -68dB **Size (WHD)** 23 × 16.5 × 38cm **Weight** 9kg

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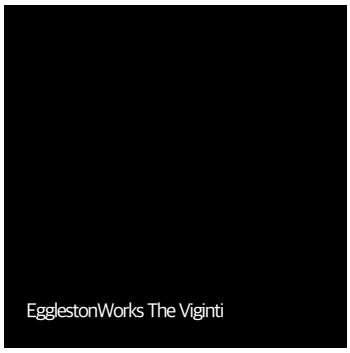

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