

Tube out of time



Valery is Ukrainian by birth, and now a Portuguese citizen. He lives in the city of Porto.

Well, what will the sophisticated reader say, tell me where the Ukrainians do not live now?

The fact is that he does not just live somewhere, but works in a successful Portuguese firm with his philosophy of sound. Not so long ago he was in Kiev, visiting the company "English sound", for which he paid - he was interviewed.

Stereo & Video: Valery, tell us about the history of AUDOLICI and the purpose of its creation.

Valery: The initiator of the creation of AUDOLICI (Sistemas Electronicos De Audio) was the very famous INESC- Porto scientific research institute in Portugal. The main activities developed in INESC are the creation of modern information systems and software for computer technology; development and introduction of fiber-optic communication and video monitoring systems based on LCD displays; the development of measuring complexes and techniques for analyzing sound amplifying devices for the professional music market; creation of innovative technologies for industrial production. To develop these activities a team of investors was organized, among which there are both private individuals and state financial structures (INOVCAPITAL), as well as the engineering and production team of the enterprise.

The main core of AUDOLICI's engineering policy is the creation of audio equipment designed for high-quality reproduction of music. These are tube products with the characteristic sound of the 60s-80s decades.

S & V: How do you assess the state of the European audio products market, its "vector", and what, in your opinion, is the difference in national tastes?

Valery: It seems to me that European audio sets the tastes to the whole world. Whether from the talented efforts of English marketers, or because almost 100% of classical music was written by Europeans. Meaning that the European continent was a strong influencer in the definition of the standard musical taste. That is why Asian products with their components and performance sound strange and unacceptable to the European listener, and the American look too grossly technogenic.

Tube amplifiers have become firmly established in Europe and almost all the expensive and very expensive setups are tube-mounted. Meaning that something classic sets the consumer.

In the USA, surprisingly, the tube entered the mass market, winning in the sound/price ratio and reaching a cost of \$ 300-400 per amplifier. The young generation compares it, and in all the price categories, normally chooses a tube with more comfortably sounding. This is an amazing phenomenon that keeps up with the popularity of vinyl. Probably, the "blame" is the American disco that shines with a great sound, and DJs spinning vinyl.

S & V: And yet, why the tubes? What will the new consumer find in it? What kinds of discoveries still waiting for him, what genres and specific works will open in a new way for us?

Valery: Let's just say so.

There are some consumer properties (longevity, power consumption, weight, etc.), but there is an emotional part of music as well. There is a speed of movement of electrons in the transistor, and a completely different speed, almost equal to the speed of light that occurs in the tube. That's why there are other horizons and possibilities, another resolution at medium and high frequencies. Yes, the tube can add the colors to the sound, elegance and emotional satisfaction.

Decisively, the tube is the main character for the best reproduction of acoustic music, such as jazz, blues, classics, old rock. With it, we will hear the luxury of the nuances of the musical performers, which previously seemed boring and uninteresting!

S & V: What, in your opinion, are the main problems with the creation of a quality tube amplifier? What should consumers pay attention to when they are choosing such products? Are there any special requirements for acoustics, cable products?

Valery: There are a lot of problems, and that is the reason why there are so few quality products of this area in the world.

Of course, transformers are the heart of a tube product. As example, the process of manufacturing our output transformers it is truly unique. To obtain the required inductance of the output transformers, we need a special German standard E/1. Its magnetic properties provides the highest induction with small dimensions and weight. In addition, the transformer plates are cold-rolled with the orientation of the rolling direction. The selection of such high-quality transformer materials allowed AUDOLICI to avoid the need for a large number of turns of the primary windings of the output transformers and, thus, to minimize its own capacitance and loss of the high-frequency component of the amplified signals. A special laminated core plate guarantees a minimum loss of eddy currents and proper insulation of the plates when assembling the cores. The final assembly of the transformers allied with a vacuum ambient reduces losses and vibration.

Moreover, the plates of the transformer are cold-rolled with the orientation of the rolling direction. The selection of such high-quality transformer materials allowed AUDOLICI to avoid the need for a large number of turns of the primary windings of the output transformers and, thus, to minimize its own capacitance and loss of the high-frequency component of the amplified signals.

Structure of output transformer coils - with binding partitioning between the primary and secondary windings, which provides maximum interaction between windings and, at the same time ensuring the maximum fidelity of high



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AUDOLICI

frequency transmission of the audio signal. And also - excellent transient characteristics.

To obtain a brilliant result, the tube technology requires the seller to have more competent expertise, like a careful selection of cable products. The tube loves highly sensitive acoustics, preferably broadband. Although, to be honest, it also works fine with any components.

S & V: How does AUDOLICI stand out among a broad number of producers, especially inexpensive Asian ones?

Valery: The basic principles of product development are:

- simplicity of circuitry and uncompromising approaches;
- the choice of electronic components solely for reasons of their audio quality;
- own production of transformers;
- ergonomics of products and its unique design;
- 100% control of electronic characteristics during assembly and adjustment of products;
- selection of electron tubes at the final stage of setting up devices;
- testing and running within one week;
- European view on the signature of sound.

When installing printed circuit boards of AUDOLICI amplifiers we use manual assembly and soldering. To ensure minimal impact and sound coloring of the whole amplifier is required to apply carboxylic resistors power up to 2 watts in the tube circuit.



Signal capacitors are of axial type, polypropylene.

Electrolytic capacitors of the power unit is Nichicon.

The radio tubes used in AUDOLICI products are pre-screened and tested for identical gain characteristics.

For final selection we do special audition of the finished product.

The choice of the type of tubes is determined by their belonging to one or another musical genre. For example, tetrodes 6L6 (6PZS) are most adequate for jazz phonograms.

Therefore, that is why AUDOLICI choose the name "JAZZ" for one of their amplifier models. The EL34 radio tube perfectly suits the blues accent in music. That is the reason of the existence of the model "BLUES" in AUDOLICI collection. For fans of large-scale sound, for example, orchestras – we have a product named SWING.

S & V: Will there be a renaissance of analog sound and how are you ready for it? Do I need to associate vinyl and a tube as a "sweet couple"?

Valery: It's like asking if there will be a renaissance of classical music. I do not know any rich person or sound engineer who does not have an analog setup and he would not be the main one.

Unfortunately, classical music, like the analogue, has become a choice of rich people.

Tube and vinyl - this is where everything started, what has reached its peak and flowering almost at the same time, which synergistically enhances the listener's involvement in the sometimes difficult intentions of the performer. But neither the tube nor the vinyl are too easy choices and are not given immediately, the expert's help is important here.

The result is unattainably far from the sum of the figure and transistor.

S & V: What is your strategy - to bring to perfection the basic model, or bring to the market more and more new products? What are the average customer's expectations?

Valery: There are two types of consumers: the first are the self-sufficient people and the second ones are "the fashion followers". By the way, the fashion followers are always tired and unsatisfied with themselves and their system.



They are requiring a quarterly release of new products, which, in general, gave rise to the phenomenon of the Chinese audio industry, ready to release anything quickly. Of course, the lapping sound is not so important at such a rate change of the company's portfolio. A balanced and self-sufficient consumer knows what he

wants. Regardless of the brand, the market conjuncture or appearance. Although however, these players are not doing the market. And now judge for yourself - how is life of the audio companies.

We decided so. One of the new areas of the product design will be luxury retro style "The Vintage Classic", which will include a series of such components, as a phono stage, an integrated power amplifier with extended functionality and monoblocks of power.



S & V: What would you like to wish to the Ukrainian buyer?

Valery: To add the success and joy in your life – I wish you the ability of watching more attentively to non-standard things that can reveal something that is not capable in the mass industry.

Listen to tube amplifiers with good broadband acoustics, and realize that you have't heard all the luxury of midrange resolution, yet. All their acoustic tools. Classics and jazz will open to you in a new resolution. Improve the quality of life, be yourself and discover the new horizons. There are many of them in music.

And we, the producers, will try to help you as much as possible.

Let's hit the road!