

## Review of **Audiomat Aria** Integrated amplifier

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Audiomat - ARIA

### Review Summary:

**Musicality: 10/10**

**Personal rating: 10/10**

**Value - Price: 10/10**



Origin: France

Integrated amplifier tube

Power: 2 x 30 watts / 8 ohms (Class A)

Sensitivity: 200 mV

Bandwidth: 15 Hz to 35 kHz - 3 dB

Distortion: 2.7%

Signal / noise ratio: 101 dB weighted

5 RCA high level inputs

2 outputs recorders

Created under the leadership of Norbert and Denis CLARISSE the French brand Audiomat has built since its inception in 1986 an indisputable international reputation. To assert his musical brand image, the brand has remained true to the principle of electronic tube, it continues to "grow" to its amplifiers.

Thereafter, Audiomat was largely interested in digital converters and has developed and recently a drive to accompany them. To date, the manufacturer's catalog includes Marseille Opus preamplifier

2, a power block Festival, four converters 2.6 Tempo, Tempo 3 2 Maestro, Maestro Number two phono preamplifiers, integrated amplifiers and two whose recent ARIA which is the The purpose of this listening / analysis.

I take these few lines to express my thanks to the designers for giving me the ARIA models for a few days - with the aim to share with you my impressions of plays.

The substantial weight of 26 kg, the machine includes an electronic loads which is not ridiculous and comparable with other products; and for good reason: Audiomat here reaffirms the principle of amplification tubes.

Much has been written and described on the tube electronics, but also many inaccuracies and stereotypes. We will see throughout this description, the so-called "tube sound" has variations, which are not always based on a warm tone to the death, or rather "skinny" as can be seen from time to time another.

ARIA is built on a chassis and ultra rigid thick plate based on 3 spikes (two front and one behind) solid brass and nickel-plated whose purpose is to evacuate the internal vibrations, but also filter vibrations from the outside world. These cone-shaped feet are cut so extremely sharp, but the designers have had the delicacy to deliver the device with 3 cups which avoid scratching the furniture carrier.

The very plain façade has a volume knob Original Alps, which can be controlled by the remote control in solid aluminum, a selector for the top 5 sources, a power switch with a beautiful blue LED, and a switch for the mute function whose activity is also identified via a diode of the same color. This facade is carved into a slab of smoked methacrylate 10 mm thick, which offers a partial view of the electronics.

The rear receives the IEC mains connector with stage marked red (excellent initiative), twelve terminals for connecting the speakers. On this point, Audiomat played the card of flexibility, as the proud owner of ARIA will have the choice of impedance (4 or 8 ohms) and the use of mono or bi-wiring. These solid HP terminals welcome banana plugs, forks, or bare wire high section.



Délicate attention : un point rouge sur la fiche IEC pour repérer la phase secteur

Connection possibilities are extended not less than twelve RCA will receive 5 level and one analog recorder or 1 headphone amplifier inputs, for example above. However, Audiomat drew a line on the monitoring function. The small solid aluminum remote control supplied with the unit will adjust the volume and mute.

Inside, as is tradition at the manufacturer, the focus has been on food that embeds three transformers, very high capacity, manufactured to specifications in France: one for power, and 2 for

the power section. They are supported by the filter capacitors to higher values. Assembly and components are intended to lower the impedance of the filter circuit and ensure exemplary responsiveness during heavy loads and violent differences dynamics. Also, have in the end, the tubes used, selected listening that give the ARIA guarantee of extraordinary musicality. For the input and gain stage, the designers have used 3 S JJ ECC 83 dual triode with high voltage gain. The output stage is assigned to two pentodes per channel E 34 L JJ configured in push-pull mode.



L' ARIA à cœur ouvert : 1 x ECC83S JJ Electronic pour l'étage d'entrée, 2 x ECC83S JJ Electronic pour l'étage Driver, et 4 x E34L JJ Electronic à polarisation automatique pour l'étage de sortie.

Some may be surprised by the low power advertised: 2 x 30 watts into 8 ohms. Do not be fooled because the ARIA operates in pure Class A the one hand, and 2 x 30 watts ensure the holding of the power and energy that many electronic transistors and tubes whose power is three times higher can claim - let it be said ...

Through the grid that covers the device or through the front panel, you can see the work of craftsmanship and meticulous hand assembly and the quality of the components - which are a guarantee of reliability and sustainability over time.

As part of the implementation and optimization, Audiomat advocates ask ARIA on a stable, rigid, preferably made of wood, without the use of brass cups come standard. It will also better connect the ARIA on an AC outlet with a ground. It is under these conditions that I applied to operate the integrated amplifier.

*LISTEN*

The tests were performed plays at home with a CD player YBA 3 Classic Sigma, a pair of speakers PEL Kantor and interconnect cables ESPRIT Beta and HP YBA Diamond, also analyzed in our columns, and cable sector VOVOX Alpha barrette sector ESPRIT, ESPRIT Manta case.

For these tests, I selected different extracts for targeted clearly identify the musical temperament and set up the various features specific to the character amplifier.

### **Dynamic - reactivity - rigor**

*Thus Spake Zarathustra by Richard Strauss by London Philharmonic Orchestra*

For an introduction, this passage seems chosen me for the development of various matters relating to the dynamics, responsiveness, and thoroughness. The first note that emanates from the great organ immediately sets the tone, and then quickly we enter the heart of the matter and the heart of the music. The look and reactive power handling are immediately felt on brass and percussion. The roll of drums breaks in the listening room without restraint, with a clear appearance, full sharpness and absolutely disconcerting frankness. Brass and strings "fly" with real flexibility: they fill the room listening to immerse yourself in the middle of the orchestra.

Attention, there is no question to focus on any aspect that would gushing: ARIA is above all a generous amplifier that nothing seems to stop in its tracks, and does its job with excellent control.

Very elegant in its own way without proposing the music reproduction, the amplifier supports the dynamic sympathetic and to a certain extent, taking care not to confuse the listener. The latter can then distinguish each plane and each group of musical instruments without any trouble. If one refers to the "weight" of timpani, we will see that their fiery crashes refund at any time slicks violins remain well suspended above the orchestral mass and give the assurance of rigor foolproof. The end of this short introduction ends with the same note to the great organ, a masterful beauty.

*Valeria by the Modern Jazz Quartet with Laurindo Almeida*

This record is used to control an electronic skills or a complete audio system to respond appropriately to certain events related to musical instruments used, which may for the occasion, take a few gaps in the midrange - I think including vibraphone is not one of the easiest to pass. Rather complicated to deal with an audio system, I can say that here our Audiomat amplifier has simply tame. No shadow of a difference, no more distortion sneaky and not vitiate spoil the charm of listening: through a remarkable fluidity, vibraphone spark without missteps, with nuances that mark out this rigor own to Audiomat and landmark in the production of tube amplifiers, amplifiers and all technologies and all generations.

To establish the legitimacy of the ARIA for dynamic and responsiveness, we can only losing to piano playing, where each note is well marked, carefully articulated and gives a beautiful sacred illusion of the presence of instrument in the listening room, small size does Fuße.

Through listening, we go from one surprise: Can not miss the superb bass playing, because it arouses the attention. Each note can be followed to the letter, and it is easy to imagine the surprise game of the left hand the chords and the right hand to strum. Burrs or inadvertent slip is to be feared; by its timeliness, the ARIA has this ability to leave no room for approximation!

On all these points, the general behavior of the ARIA is simply exemplary. The listener will appreciate further and its fair value, the extinction of the notes in time, harmonic richness, which synthesizes a musical frank nature and exudes authenticity.

### **Stamps - Transparency**

#### *Valeria by the Modern Jazz Quartet with Laurindo Almeida*

If the issue of stamps is mentioned, ARIA has a privileged and enviable. The attentive listener can see, from the opening bars, a very wide bandwidth. So my first point will jump to the bass; and how serious! We are facing a serious registry down low, but really low. Better than that, it shows no serious boursoufflure or coloring of any kind. It is still playing bass with the Modern Jazz Quartet that you can actually find out what the concept of serious means. For all practical purposes, I note that ARIA does not add it to grave there where there is none. When the situation permits, and that the instrument is venturing into abyssal frequencies, our "travel amplifying" the challenge, and gives you a very accurate definition of musical notes involved. With this, we can then define the firm as serious, deep, and tight. I myself also made the same observation regarding the piano notes (already mentioned), but here the emphasis should be put on the weight it can take depending on the circumstance.

In the same spirit, I found a set of cymbals superb finesse and deadly accuracy, which I have already mentioned in the previous chapter. The blows of sticks worn result in a very pure tone, or even uninhibited. We can make the same observation regarding the stamps vibraphone which then take a natural color, play with flexibility and which agrees to highlight every nuance, every intonation, or vibration characteristics of the instrument. At any say on "Valeria" (but also in other passages), it takes a real pleasure to savor every inflection, side-bodied, rich, which will carry many votes with sensitive lively music lovers.

#### *Double game by Laurent Korcia*

By listening to the single "Minor Waltz", specifically by that of violin playing Laurent Korcia I wanted to share my impressions of the color patches. This violin does not sound just right, it rings true. Also, for those who have the habit of listening or practicing this instrument, it is interesting to draw a parallel between the original sound of the instrument and one that is returned by the audio system. With ARIA, it was not difficult to detect small nuances that confirm that it is an authentic instrument on the one hand, that the sound was carried out carefully on the other hand and that the amplifier does not tend to sacrifice tiny intricacies of the third part.

Violin Laurent Korcia here offers a wide range of timbres from which escape varied according to the notes of colors. The friction of the bow across the strings is absolutely fabulous; its grain and materialization go in the direction of absolute realism. A discreet accompaniment, punctuated by a few notes and those of an accordion bass, just give the music tonal contrasting colors that provide a beautiful emotion.

If the yarn violin sometimes rises very high, it is still very controlled and never acid. On this passage, as in others, we forget very quickly what the term means aggression. It is always through a pure that changes the violin and other instruments emphasize the quality and infinite respect stamps style.



### *Gregorio Paniagua La Folia*

Gregorio Paniagua La Folia combines classical and baroque instruments. Classical guitar, cromorne, through violin, harpsichord and clarinet, all the "noble" instruments will be respectfully directed by ARIA. Baroque flute accompanied by pizzicato violin offer a fruity flavor, color and tonal unmistakable. Right in his boots, very neutral, ARIA introduces us to a harpsichord "Well-Tempered" which sounds a bit dull lets small mechanical impacts that shows us the faculties of the widely ARIA to borrow a specific musical path and transparent.

Viola da gamba that blends violin is returned with a velvety connoisseurs will recognize and appreciate the true value stamp. The great "silent operation" ARIA favors many small percussion are invited to the party: they demonstrate, for the occasion, a real physical presence, which reinforces the role of ARIA to be implement a simply elegant sound reproduction.

Finally, I took the charm of crumhorns quartet whose twangy sound and the medieval tone, have given me that little shiver down the spine that we owe to the great recordings, and the best audio systems.

The mask falls and crystal clear invites the listener to experience all that the record contains. The total absence of sail shape or opacity allow absolutely every instrument speak clearly. At no time, the auditor will be forced to strain to try to distinguish the ringing of a hammer, the mechanical noise of the keys of the accordion accompanying Laurent Korcia, or those who come from a harpsichord. ARIA is very analytical, it is an established fact, but it "runs" not only by promoting the top of the spectrum. By faculties to open, it simply helps to highlight a host of micro details, taking the precaution to return them to their original color.

### **Fluidity**

Is it necessary to discuss this topic? The answer is YES, because do not forget that one of the workhorses who made the Audiomat reputation is legendary fluidity of its products. Also, ARIA does not deny its origins, and no exception to the "house" rule of using all technical means, optimizations, and expertise to ensure the listener a comfortable and enjoyable listening.

If I had to summarize in one word the quality of this amplifier, I still like to mention his natural side. But that also leaves called natural imply that a product must be perfect for a musical without a hitch, and thus by definition fluid. ARIA known as the dynamic control, he has a great respect for the stamps that transparency is unassailable, why fluidity is contested? certainly, it can at no time be critical of no kind. During those long hours of listening, many have succeeded CD. The general softness reinforces the notion of fluidity. On a little difficult passages, or recordings of average quality, ARIA even has the talent to be lenient, which clearly place the head of his counterparts tubes, see transistors. The music flows like a spring: it overcomes all forms of "roughness" or pollution, and we guarantee clarity and openness that ultimately gives true meaning to the music.

This exceptional behavior reinforces the tempo, the sequence of notes, sequences, variations of all kinds, with a perfectly "oiled" phrasing it is allowing me to use this metaphor.

### **Soundstage**

### *Mozart Requiem by Karajan*

With Mozart's Requiem, ARIA shows the potential he is capable of, in terms of the extent of the soundstage. Gradually, the sound scene unfolds majestically to as the rise of the orchestra. Better yet, this deployment is exercised in three dimensions in an orderly manner and without constraint. As to the orchestra and choirs take their place: all the cellos and double bass appear at the bottom, while the "layers" of violins take their place at the top, then the choruses are added with conviction and a strong presence, and well structured. Thus, one can only appreciate the staging plans that allow us (once will not hurt) to be able to discern each desk or each group of instruments, without confusion. I note in passing that, whatever the complexity of the audio message, the soundstage remains remarkably stable and exemplary linearity over all registers. The terrain is guaranteed in all circumstances. It is certain that the power and components play a major role in this behavior.

The holographic side is present, but it is scrupulously respectful of the listener. Thus, the generosity of the ARIA does not mean a tendency to pack or do too much. Each instrument group takes up a clearly established, and the most beautiful moment of happiness I would like to discuss and share is the intervention of Maria Stader who plays her role as a soloist in the center of the soundstage. If I dared, I would venture to say that this passage is simply magical (magical perhaps), and shows great notions of realism. The timbre of the voice is warm; This warmth is supported by the accompanying choirs and soloist around without choking. The total lack of sailing leaves room for freedom of expression and a very airy appearance, which allows to discover many small nuances, subtleties and details, and lead to a spatial remarkable in every

The third part of this specification covers the scene depth. In many cases, it is not always easy to perceive. Listening room playing an important role in addition to the domestic environment, the concept of terrain pass very often "by the wayside", or at best is very simplified. I have the distinct impression that the ARIA overcomes these "environmental" problems, or others who are more technical. On this recording, it is quite easy to "see" the positioning of the performers at the sound, and distinguish those who are at the forefront of those who are in the background.

#### *5th and 9th symphony of Beethoven by Rudolf Kempe (Esoteric Edition)*

We find that generosity to listen to these two symphonies led by a master hand. The orchestral flood fills the room with sound, demonstrating the capacity to bind the different phases of the score, without constraints, so passionately when released passages require. Sequences perfectly mastered it notes fabulous to listen, and to correlate with the dynamics already mentioned above, to form a coherent and balanced musical work. The different panels move between the two speakers in a structured manner, and no vacuum appears in the center of the soundstage. This is probably the perennial appearance and clocked that caught my attention the most: there is a relevance of the impacts of the attacks, ramp-ups who accuse any time a deflection or settlement, and expenses ARIA is a complex stability in all tests.

#### **Communication with the auditor**

#### *Romance of the symphonic suite "Lieutenant Kué" Serge Prokofiev*

I regularly use this Symphonic Suite during my testing plays, because the sound and mixing are high. So it is with great emotion that I find here a new facet of the interpretation of Sergei Prokofiev. Why new? because the amplifier delivers ARIA music with very detailed appearance that ultimately has little equivalent in this class of amplifier tube where they are transistors. I think many audiophiles

and music lovers are a hundred leagues to imagine this overwhelming feeling that emanates from this partition. It begins with the cello ensemble, perfect unison, one perceives the slightest vibrato related to each agreement. These cellos have the body and are a likely dimension in the listening room, which allowed me to control the quality of their grain and tone are very similar to those heard at a concert.

Then comes in "overlay" the group violins complete the score with a delightful yarn of a beautiful smoothness. ARIA arrives at the top of his game when the glockenspiel (orchestra bells) just whisper in your ear a delicate sound color, which gives a real feeling of happiness. The few notes of harp coming gently to égrainer complementarily reflect how the musician touches the strings with light and nobility. The bassoon has a "treatment" which allows us to recognize that it is an instrument for hip one hand, and the pounding of the keys on the instrument materializes each musical note with a hyper definition realistic. Every moment, every note I did not have that simple feeling of listening to music, but to live with it!

#### *Kyrie Ariel Ramirez by José Luis Ocejo*

I conclude this series by listening Kyrie Ariel Ramirez, to discuss and focus on purely emotional side felt on hearing these so warm and expressive vocals to the point that would make almost a tear in the ... happiness.

The passionate and captivating side of soloist and vocal ensemble that accompanies it is certainly making the point that we totally forget the sound system and all the technical aspects. Opening a form to "another musical world" in which the listener is fully involved, leaves no doubt as to the faculties of ARIA to provide moments of unforgettable moments of musical joy. Each syllable is clearly articulated, and breathing soloist or group of singers are provided with such a presence, they suggest the seriousness with which the development of the device was made, we note that the choice of components and implementation carried out during long hours of listening. Nothing is left to chance, the languid appearance and absolute conviction of the performers currently identified, provide a feeling of well-being mad.

A statement of exception may be granted to the drums that come quietly enrich the Kyrie: they are a benchmark in the field of clipping, and the extinction of notes in time and space. Their sound is full, well articulated, with a good "consistency. The attacks on the stretched skin of the drum induce the material used (skin drum) is of animal origin, not synthetic .... It seemed to me To recall this notion in these times when the "digital" is not often take on "authentic".

Beware, ARIA is not an amplifier like the others: these faculties to communicate live music, fair, accurate, it tends to take you on a musical adventure without boundaries. One might even fear that other products in the same category or superior appear, by comparison, bland and / or surface on a lot of objective and subjective parameters. Musical "Soul" which has this built-in amplifier gives him an enviable position in this product category.

#### **Conclusion**

There are a few years now, and ARPEGE PRELUDE models had already left me great memories. With ARIA, we firmly believe that music reaches the summit of his art. The power of 2 x 30 watts into 8 ohms does not mean much because the ARIA has an "engine" similar to that proposed by amplifiers



whose power is two to three times higher. This energy output allows him to fly and associate with even more ambitious than the PEL Kantor speakers, and as the PEL Alegria, the Jean-Marie Reynaud CANTABILE, and ProAc D 28 partners will highly recommendable.

Personally, I was particularly marked and enchanted by the beauty and accuracy of stamps, and I readily admit that ARIA is classified in the category of the most dynamic amplifiers and more open at the time. His talent for communication with the listener landmark with its neutrality, accuracy, transparency and infinite, which honor technology used tubes.

Summary:                      Musicality: 10/10  
   Personal rating: 10/10  
   Value - Price: 10/10

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