

Fedelta

dal suono



ORGOGGIO ITALIANO

Reportage



SYNTHESIS



SONUS FABER VENERE S



Su FDS di Aprile:

- * 8 prodotti in prova
- * Un mese di appuntamenti musicali
- * Tanti dischi da ascoltare ...e molto altro ancora!

Andrea Bassanelli

N° 256



MASTERSOUND
COMPACT 300B



QUALITY AUDIO
B815 & NATURAL MKII



MATRIX
MINI-I PRO 2

BLU PRESS FDS - #04 - ISSN 1121-5313
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Prima Immersione 14 APR 2017



MASTERSOUND

Selector $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Cd} \\ \text{Tape} \\ \text{Tuner} \end{array} \right.$

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER
 MASTERSouNDCOMPACT 300B

The construction OF A LOVE...

by Dimitri Santini

"... breaks the veins of the hands" Ivano Fossati would say and the electronics of this article broke several veins to build the love that ultimately bound us. Yes, because the beginning wasn't simple, like all those things that are born full of expectations and somehow collide with a different reality.

Q This is a story of feelings and suffering. It is the story of unrequited love and a desperate attempt at seduction, something totally opposite to love at first sight. There is a lie to the end, but if we had to choose a category in which to ascribe the relationship that linked me to this amplifier it would undoubtedly be the drama, certainly not the romantic film. I will talk about it in the feminine way, because I have to think of this amplifier as a woman to express the feelings that she has generated in a month of living together: readers don't hold me against it, it's not sexism!

At the beginning I felt a bit like Mickey Rourke in "9 1/2 Weeks": I tried to mislead, to turn his natural inclination to my side and the side of my tastes. In doing so I discovered little agreement between us, indeed, a certain reticence on his part in performing the pieces I chose as I wanted. She adapted, but she was cold and not very resolute: I wanted her to be more toned, more dynamic and she trained to the point of exhaustion, playing hours and hours of records without me giving her the slightest compliment. Every evening I came home and she looked at me, waiting for me to turn on the button and leave her there to warm up. yes, to stretch, until I sat down on the sofa and the exam began. If the tubes contain feelings, he must have been frustrated at never seeing a wide smile on my face, trying to figure out what I wanted. At this point I had gone from Mickey Rourke to Humphrey Bogart, a tough guy into whose arms fall a lot of chicks that he rejects.

Then something happened: one album, maybe two in agreement, I took a step in the direction of looking for music that was good and I finally found it. This is why this month's listening is based on just one album, because it is that of the capitulation and the beginning of a

love that, like all those that start slowly, will last forever.

DESCRIPTION

The eye wants its part and here there is plenty of part. The difficult extraction of the 33 kg device. it slowly reveals something aesthetically very beautiful, in front of which it is impossible to remain insensitive. The curved, feminine 300Bs hide and partly mischievously show themselves through the protection which reveals their shape only if you are at the amplifier's height, while obscuring them from any other viewing angle.

The very shapely transformers, power supply and output, give the idea of strength, but have a nice poise and are almost displayed, in an elegant and alluring play of symmetries.

The line is very classic, with a low profile and visible tubes, with a nice dimensional ratio and the sensual addition of two well-curved sides, in wood with valuable them veins.

Also very precious



DISCS USED IN THE TEST

Amelie - Yann Tiersen - Virgin

**Pro**

- Refined sound.
- Precise and very little euphonious.
- Original circuitry and custom transformers.
- Beautiful design and excellent construction.

Against

- Not very muscular.
- Sparkling high range.
- The midrange tends to "sit down" when there are many instruments.

THE LISTENING SYSTEM USED

digital source for liquid music: Mac Book Air, Amarra Symphony;

digital source: Sony DVP NS930VL; **integrated amplifier:** Musical Fidelity A200; **Speakers:** Audiovector SR1 Avantgarde, Indiana Line HC 206; **Signal cables:** Sound Fidelity Silver, Acrolink 7N-A2200 III;

Power cables: Homebuilt with 24 solid core conductors;

COaX cables: Sound Fidelity Silver

TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS STATED**MastersOUNd COMPACT 300B**

typO: Single Ended in Class "A"

Power: 2 x 15 Watts **FINAL**

VALVES: 2 x 300 B

PREAMPLIFIER VALVES: 2 x ECC802 **DriveR**

VALVE: 2 x 6SN7 GT **INPUT IMPEDENCE:** 50

KOhm **Entrances:** 3 x Line + 1 Direct to the

finals **OUTPUT TRANSFORMERS:**

MASTERSOUND **NOMINAL IMPEDENCE:** 4 –

8 Ohms **feedback:** 0 dB

FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 8 Hz / 40 kHz – 0 dB

DiMensiOni: 45 x 43 x 27 cm **Weight:** 33 kg

Price: Euro 6,100.00

Distributor:

MASTER SOUND

www.mastersoundsas.it

set of binding posts, which however do not accept stripped cable. The inputs are beautiful and on the front there are only two knobs for selecting inputs and the volume, which can also be adjusted remotely from a splendid wooden remote control that has only two buttons.

TECHNIQUE

If you take a look at the Mastersound website you immediately understand that some choices are part of a precise company philosophy, which has always been unshakable: in the price list there are only single ended or at most parallel single ended amplifiers, always and in any case with zero feedback. My attempt to unstitch something more went in vain: 4 valves before the finals, what do they do? How do two 300Bs pull out 15W?

I had an extremely complicated and very, very vague answer to the first question, so I would start from the second. The output transformers, handmade at home, are based on special, shorter windings and are built according to calculation algorithms different from those normally known. Obviously everything is top secret, but it is only thanks to this type of transformers that the power amplifiers are able to express 10 W at very low distortion across the entire range. As regards the circuit topology of the other tubes, I only know that the amplifier is made almost in dual mono, with a pre, a driver and a final valve per channel. I understood very little about how they work in synergy (a smoke screen arrived), although I sensed that someone had invented something new in a field where everything seemed to have already been said. Below the ECC802 you can insert a preamp, using the final part of the Compact 300B: the two sections go so well together that I would have done without it...

I LISTEN

After what I am about to tell you, there were many other musical episodes, many other rendezvous as a corollary of the love that had just blossomed. There's no point in recounting them all, because what came out of the Compact 300B was the emotion of the music, played in its own way from start to finish in obstinate response to my reticence. The meeting ground was Paris, the city of lovers, it was the genius of Yann Tiersen, it was the melodies of an extraordinary soundtrack: "Amelie". Interpreted in such a personal way by the Compact 300B that I completely left the film's images to be accompanied in the creation of my own, aroused only by its great ability to involve without intrusiveness. This is the summary in brief.

#1 "J'y suis jamais allé" - I found myself on Rue Mouffetard, in the middle of the human traffic of the market. There is, in this performance, a crystalline liveliness, a perfect separation, a full-bodied and real sound. The scene is also perfect and you are enchanted by following the air that enters and exits the accordion.

#2 "The sad days" - Le Cirque d'Hiver in January, with bare trees and hooded people running quickly down the metro stairs in Filles du Calvaire. The bass, excellent, comes out very nice. There is a spinet, or an unidentified keyboard instrument that emerges with metallic joy, then the march explodes without a crash and it seems like a band of street artists, sad but leaning forward to walk, putting on a show.

#3 "La Valse d'Amelie (instrumental)" - The exotic atmosphere of Belleville and the Arab shops. Once again I choose



The other listens

Instead of the usual WAF I use this box so as not to disappoint the purists and to fit into a "test" dimension with some value beyond the subjective.

The Mastersound Compact 300B is an integrated amplifier capable of offering top-level listening, but - as you will have understood - it needs to find the right terrain for the listener's tastes. I undoubtedly found it a bit soft in classical, even if very realistic: don't expect phantasmagorical dynamic leaps, with 10 watts RMS (the 15 declared are peak), but maybe you like sitting and listening to symphonies in the background where the strings reign supreme, so you will be satisfied. I found it very pleasant with the male voices and the brilliant and easy orchestrations: from the first version of Michael Bublé to the late George Michael of "Older". He manages to render jazz trumpet with extreme grace or suffering, but if you feed him too much stuff he struggles to extricate himself from a midrange that tends to "empty" a bit, but only of power and not of precision or truthfulness. In short, it's stuff for pa-



fine sides and it's stuff that needs to be tried and tried again. Maybe someone gets the coup de heart, it took me a while...

a magnificent, vibrant accordion, a wonderful high range. The piece adds instruments and dynamics along the way, until it ends in a fanfare that in a few seconds gives space and sound to silence.

#4" *Comptine d'autre été: après midi*" - Like feeling alone (alone) in the midst of a multitude of distracted passers-by at the Trocadero, their heads turned towards the Eiffel Tower. The piano is musical, soft. Refined and melancholy atmosphere. It's all in one instrument, yet there's so much music.

#5" *La Noyée*" - The long Seine of second-hand booksellers and sellers of old postcards. The violins burst in thinly and energetically, without stealing the show from the accordion which even lets you hear the beating of its keys. Perfect positioning of each instrument, magnificent euphony.

#9" *Le moulin*" - Night at Pont Neuf, towards the Île de la Cité. The accordion becomes space and air in silence. Technical note: the sound planes are perfect and the distance is perceptible. The piano arrives and warms, but does not take away the melodious melancholy. Correct timbre and very credible, even when the execution tends towards the dramatic. The dynamics are very well reproduced, despite the lack of power.

#10" *Pas si simple*" - It feels like being on a bateau mouche and that there is a concert under a large bridge. We get closer to the instruments, which become more and more distinct, visible, real.

#11" *La valse d'Amelie (Orchestra version)*" - The tenderness and softness of the performance do not prevent the Compact 300B from showing how it can manage a small orchestra: with grace and realism. The pizzicato is really very beautiful.

#13" *The dispute*" - The leaves on the ground in the Jardins du Luxembourg in autumn. The accordion is poignant and the distortions produced by certain notes are reproduced in a very vivid and detailed way. There is an incredible, almost enveloping realism and the silence itself plays to generate the expectation of the piano, not sculpted but softened, played with grace and feeling.

#15" *Soir de fête*" - Spring in the gardens behind the Petit Palais. The atmosphere is halfway between Greece and France and the speed and precision with which the musicians appear and move on the stage projects the listener into a sunny and fragrant place, while the music box that will close the piece slowly arrives. ..

CONCLUSIONS

Leaving aside, at least a little, the fictionalized romances and coming back down to earth a little in the prosaic world of hi-fi, I can say that this is an amplifier of exclusive refinement, of exciting softness. It doesn't have the power to move deaf speakers, but it manages to maintain a nice warmth without distorting the tones. It's correct, it's sufficiently detailed, it's precise, it's restful even with the ribbon tweeters: I would have liked to have a pair of speakers with something more than the 87 dB of my Audiovectors, to try to hear a little more sound pressure, but even so the Compact 300B was able to express itself at its best. It needs a lot of "active" warming up, in the sense that you don't just turn it on and leave it there, but it has to play. It is not for everyone, in the sense that perhaps some will not be able to understand its virtues, but if you get in tune with it, it can offer hours and hours of velvety but also scratchy listening, giving the voices vitality and naturalness, enhancing the strings and restraining the brass. I acted picky and tough, but in the end when things settle down and (mutual) feeling prevails, everything shines in a better light. This is why I feel like closing with Torquato Tasso:

"Perhaps if you once again tasted the thousandth part of the joys who enjoys a beloved heart by loving it back, you would say, regretfully, sighing: «All time is lost, that you don't spend on loving". ▼