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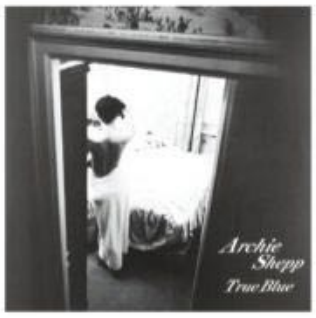


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INFORMATION

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HERB REICHERT

AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

During my 100 years on earth, I've owned mostly separate amps and preamps, but only because that is where I started—or I should say, that is where my audio-savvy friends directed me when I began asking for guidance. Nevertheless, the audio system I've used the longest (unchanged for almost 10 years) consisted of 1984 Rogers LS3/5a loudspeakers (15 ohms, with factory wall mounts) powered by a proletarian-looking Creek 4330 integrated amp sourced by an Oppo CD player.

If I weren't an audio reviewer, I'd revert to my regular self and use the newest (Gold Badge) Falcon LS3/5a with the best integrated amp I could afford. Why? Because I find the Zen-hut simplicity of integrated amplifiers appealing, and I like how integrated amps just sit there, all self-contained and one-box confident.

What the AVM integrated did well was deliver music in a well-shaped, delightfully detailed, slightly lush manner.

Lucky for me, in 2021, upmarket integrated amplifiers are *the* hot audiophile product. Which means I've been scouring the globe for interesting integrateds to audition. While I am excited by the prospects of new integrateds for review, I am disappointed by how similar most of them look. With few exceptions, they are big, heavy, shiny, and luxuriously finished, with, frequently, two disproportionately large knobs flanking a central blue-light display. These 2021 integrateds seem designed not for perfectionist audio racks or deep bookcase shelves but for the tops of French-polished living room or office bureaus.

The AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME integrated looks like it would fit in anywhere. It *does* have two big knobs and a blue-lit display, but it is not glitzy, bulky, or shiny. It looks

SPECIFICATIONS

Description Stereo integrated amplifier with dual-mono, DC-coupled input and class-AB, high-current MOSFET output stage. Analog inputs: 5 pair RCA, 2 XLR. Analog outputs: 2 pair RCA variable, 1 pair RCA fixed. Loudspeaker outputs: stereo pair of 3-way binding posts. Input sensitivity: adjustable (12.5–125mV). Power output: 180Wpc into 8 ohms (22.6dBW), 300Wpc into 4 ohms (21.75dBW). Damping factor: >200. Class-A headphone amplifier with 6.3mm jack. Tone controls: Balance, Bass, Treble, Contour (Loudness). Volume control with 256 0.5dB steps. Power consumption: 1500W max, 75W at idle, <0.5W in standby.

Dimensions 17" (430mm) W × 5.1" (130mm) H × 13.8" (350mm) D. Weight: 42lb (19kg).
Finish Black or Silver.
Serial number of unit reviewed AVM-0-01373, "Made in Germany."
Price $8295. Approximate number of US dealers: 10. Warranty: 3 years, parts and labor.

Manufacturer AVM Audio Video Manufaktur GmbH, Daiamlerstr. 8, 76316 Malsch, Germany.
Tel: +49 (0) 7246 30991-0.
Web: avm.audio.
US Distributor:
Bluebird Music Ltd.,
1100 Military Rd., Kenmore, New York 14217.
Tel: (416) 638-8207.
Web: bluebirdmusic.com.

expensive, and, at $8295, it *is* expensive, but it is also serious and intelligent-looking. It measures a modest 17" wide, 13.8" deep, and 5.1" high and weighs a modest 42lb. It comes in a relatively understated black or silver satin-anodized aluminum case (with no screws showing on the front, top, or sides). Its display is unobtrusive and easy-to-read and illuminates an easy-to-navigate menu.

I was directed to this German-made amplifier by my old friend Bill Leebens, who is now working with Bluebird Music. Leebens said, "Herb, this AVM integrated has your name on it: It is simple, all-analog, and outputs a chunk of its power in class-A." Bill knows I like integrated amplifiers to be real *amplifiers*—not feature-laden lifestyle products that try to be everything to everybody and become boat anchor irrelevancies in just a few years.

I asked Leebens to tell me about AVM, the company. "Audio Video Manufaktur GmbH was founded in 1986 and was purchased in 2010 by Udo Besser, who had been a co-owner and managing director at Burmester for 15 years and had arranged that company's high-profile partnerships with Porsche and Mercedes." Then Besser joined the conversation, adding, "The original founders are still working here, and I'm happy being able to gather for AVM the most top-notch engineers in Germany." Plus, "[O]ur main suppliers are all here in the same village (Malsch) or less than a 15-minute drive away."

AVM is not only old and well-established; it is a full-service audio manufacturer that makes phono stages, streamers, CD players, amplifiers, and preamplifiers.

A word about the product name (or number) is in order. If you look at the AVM website, you'll see that the company has already released an Ovation A 6.3. It would be natural to assume that the A 6.2 ME is an older product, perhaps approaching the end of its lifespan. But you'd be wrong. The A 6.2 ME, a stripped-down, souped-up version of the A 6.2, was released in Europe in the fall of 2020 and only recently made its way to the US market.

According to the AVM website, the Ovation A 6.2 ME (Master Edition) features a DC-coupled input and a "class-A/AB"—apparently the AVM designation for class-AB—high-current MOSFET amplifier that is specified to output 180Wpc into 8 ohms and 300Wpc into 4 ohms. The class-A range has been extended: According to Besser, the A 6.2 ME "operates in class-A up to 5Wpc at 8 ohms and 10Wpc at 4 ohms." With reasonably sensitive speakers, that's plenty of watts for most music at normal listening levels. There's a new 2kVA power-supply transformer for the main power supply; there are four power supplies total including separate supplies for the left- and right-channel input stages and for the processor circuitry. The ME sports a new headphone amplifier drawn from the 6.3 line.

The A 6.2 ME includes seven line-level inputs, five single-ended (RCA) and two balanced (XLR). The sensitivity of each line input may be adjusted between –9.5dB and +10dB via relays programed in the front-panel menu. There are two line-level outputs, one RCA and one XLR, which may be configured as fixed or variable. The 6.2's menu offers a host of options that some audiophiles will find attractive including one called Set Tone Control, which, according to the owner's manual, enables users to "individually adjust

MEASUREMENTS

I tested the AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME with my Audio Precision SYS2722 system (see the January 2008 "As We See It"[1]). I preconditioned the amplifier by following the CEA's recommendation of operating it at one-eighth the specified power into 8 ohms for 30 minutes.[2] The manual states that the A 6.2 ME can get warm. At the end of the preconditioning, its heatsinks were very hot, at 132.3°F (55.8°C), and the top panel's temperature was 110.4°F (43.6°C). Operating the amplifier at the older IHF recommendation for preconditioning—both channels driven at one-third power for 60 minutes—the temperatures increased slightly, with the heatsink measuring 140°F (60.5°C) and the top panel measuring 113.9°F (45.5°C). Be sure to give this amplifier plenty of ventilation.

I looked first at the AVM's behavior via its line inputs, mostly with the volume control set to its maximum of "99.5," then at lower settings. With the optional attenuation bypassed with the menu, the maximum gain at the loudspeaker outputs was a high 47.8dB for both the balanced and single-ended inputs. With the attenuation switched into the circuit, set to 6dB, the gain was reduced by exactly 6dB. (I didn't investigate other attenuation values.) The maximum gain at the headphone outputs was 21.75dB without attenuation, 15.75dB with 6dB attenuation. At the preamplifier output, the maximum gain was 12.2dB with and without attenuation. The Ovation A 6.2 preserved absolute polarity at its loudspeaker, preamplifier, and headphone outputs (ie, was noninverting) for both balanced and single-ended line inputs.

The Ovation A 6.2 ME's single-ended input impedance was 10k ohms at low and midrange frequencies, dropping slightly to 9.4k ohms at 20kHz. The balanced input impedance was lower, at 6.8k ohms across the audioband. The single-ended preamplifier output impedance was a low 46.8 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz. The balanced impedance was exactly twice that value, as expected. The headphone output impedance was a very low 0.5 ohms at 20Hz and 1kHz but rose to a still-low 7.6 ohms at 20kHz. The AVM should not have problems driving low-impedance headphones (though see later).

The amplifier's output impedance was a very low 0.07 ohms at 20Hz and 1kHz, rising slightly to 0.09 ohms at 20kHz. (The measured values include the series impedance of 6' of spaced-pair speaker cable.) The modulation of the amplifier's frequency response,

1 See stereophile.com/content/measurements-maps-precision.

2 See stereophile.com/content/ftc-proposes-eliminating-its-amplifier-rule.

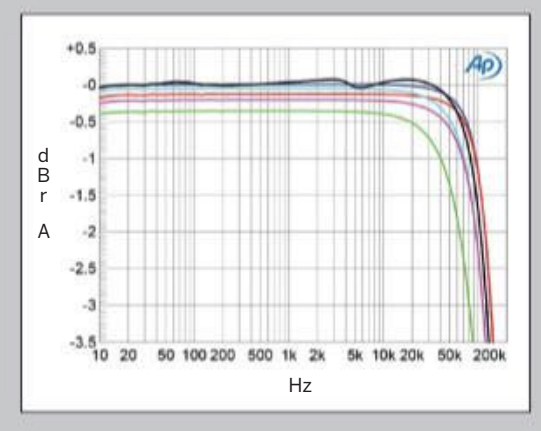

Fig.1 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, frequency response at 2.83V into: simulated loudspeaker load (gray), 8 ohms (left channel blue, right red), 4 ohms (left cyan, right magenta), 2 ohms (green) (0.5dB/vertical div.).

the bass or treble level of a certain sound source or lets you choose from a range of available loudness curves." Preset tone-control choices may be retained then later bypassed or activated as the listener desires. Favored tone-control presets may be selected globally (for all inputs combined) or individually (for each separate input).

The Set Loudness menu option compensates for our ear's relative insensitivity to bass and treble frequencies at low volumes. The 6.3 includes a "parametric loudness function" that increases bass and treble levels as the volume is lowered and decreases them as the volume is raised. Switching in the parametric loudness function further modifies any preselected Set Tone curves.

I tried all of these "Tone On" *Vergnügungen*, but all of the below-described listening was done with Tone and Loudness set to Linear and Bypassed. In the menu, there is also a Balance control that got left off of the slender "RC3" aluminum remote.

The big knob on the left selects one or another of the seven line-level inputs. The big volume knob on the right directs a volume control based on the Cirrus Logic CS3310 IC that raises or lowers volume in 256 steps. Cirrus calls it a "digital volume control," presumably because it's digitally controlled, but it works in the analog domain with an adjustable range of 127dB in 0.5dB steps, "achieved through 95.5dB of attenuation and 31.5dB of gain."[1]

To the left of the left knob is a small button that toggles power between On and Standby. (The main power switch is on the back.) To the right of the right knob is a ¼" head-

1 See http://bit.ly/3qLCuY3.

measurements, continued

due to the Ohm's law interaction between this source impedance and the impedance of our standard simulated loudspeaker,[3] was minimal (fig.1, gray trace). The small-signal bandwidth into resistive loads with the volume control set to its maximum was flat to 20kHz, not reaching –3dB into 8 ohms until 120kHz (blue and red traces), although a slight, 0.15dB channel imbalance can be seen in this graph. This wide small-signal bandwidth was preserved at lower settings of the volume control. The amplifier's reproduction of a 10kHz squarewave (fig.2) featured very short risetimes. A slight amount of overshoot can be seen, but there was no ringing. A 1kHz squarewave was perfectly square (not shown).

The Treble and Bass controls each offer seven steps of boost or cut. Their effect set to "+7" and "–7," with the volume control set to "79.5," is shown as the blue and red traces in fig.3. Each step of the Treble control boosts or cuts the output above 10kHz by 2dB. The Bass control operates in smaller steps, but instead of a conventional Baxandall-type control, it boosts or cuts the output between 50Hz and 500Hz and rolls off the output below 50Hz. The Contour control provides a traditional "Loudness" function for low-level listening and has 10 settings. The green and gray traces in fig.3 were taken with it set to the maximum. The treble is boosted by 5.5dB and the 50–500Hz region by the same amount as when the Bass control was set to "7." With the Contour set to "3," the treble is very slightly attenuated, and the bass boost peaks just above 4dB.

Channel separation (not shown) was excellent, at 100dB in both directions below 1kHz and still 80dB at the top of the audioband. With the

3 See stereophile.com/content/real-life-measurements-page-2.

Fig.2 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, small-signal 10kHz squarewave into 8 ohms.

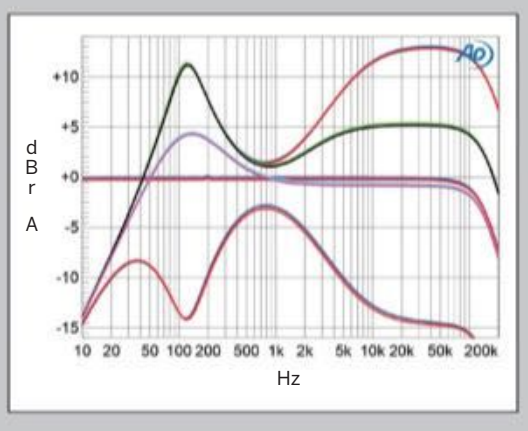

Fig.3 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, response with Treble and Bass controls set to "0" and "±7" and Contour set to "Off" (left channel blue, right red) and with Contour set to "10" (left green, right gray) and "3" (left cyan, right magenta) (5dB/vertical div.).

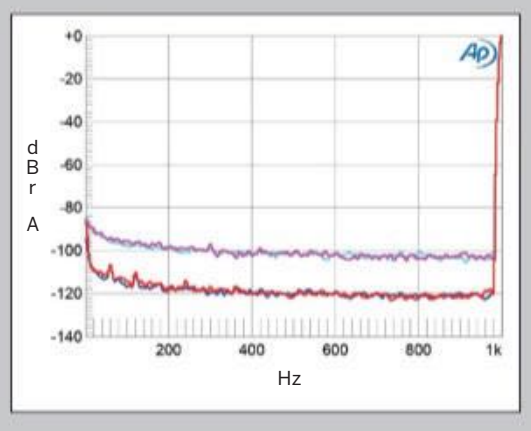

Fig.4 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, spectrum of 1kHz sinewave, DC–1kHz, at 1W into 8 ohms with attenuation active and volume control set to –20dB (left channel blue, right red) and its maximum (left cyan, right magenta, linear frequency scale).

phone output jack. The Ovation A 6.2 ME arrived packed in a flight case that weighed almost half as much as the amp itself.

Listening

The first and last parts of my evaluative listening were done with the A 6.2 ME driving my Falcon Gold Badge LS3/5a loudspeakers full range and enhanced by KEF's KC62 subwoofer connected from the A 6.2's preamp output. My auditioning goal was to see how this made-in-Germany machine affected not only the sound of my system, but also my daily listening proclivities.

In an instantly recognizable way, the A 6.2 ME imparted a sense of polish, or "wetness," to the Falcon's almost-dry-but-not-dry sound. By wetness I don't mean more reverb in the room tone or recording studio sense but more like the humidity of heavy, warm summer air. With the AVM, the sound from the Falcons had a slight gloss that was not there with either the Rogue Sphinx V3 or Pass Labs INT-25 integrateds. It also wasn't there with the Rogue RP-7/Parasound A 21+ preamp/amp combination.

The main effect of this slight sonic glow was to direct my listening toward music I always *want* to listen to but often refrain from playing because the recordings can be tiring and difficult to stay focused on. The AVM A 6.2 ME presented these challenging recordings in a detailed, well-structured, nonfatiguing manner. As a result, my AVM month was filled with fantastic albums by Björk, Alice Coltrane, and mezzo-soprano Clare Wilkinson. I find these diverse artists to be similar in how their art reaches my psyche by exposing a kind of beauty grounded not in technique or ego, but in a

measurements, continued

unbalanced input shorted to ground, the volume control set to its maximum, and attenuation bypassed, the wideband, unweighted S/N ratio was 59.1dB (average of both channels), ref. 2.83V output into 8 ohms. Restricting the measurement bandwidth to the audioband increased the ratio to 68dB, while switching an A-weighting filter into circuit further improved the ratio to 70.3dB. Activating the attenuation increased all these ratios by around 3dB. The level of the Ovation A 6.2's noise floor depended on the volume control setting. Even with the control set to its maximum, no supply-related spuriae were present in the amplifier's low-frequency output spectrum (fig.4, cyan and magenta traces). When the volume control was set to –20dB (blue and red traces), the random noise was lowered by 20dB, which shows that the source of the noise, which in any case is probably inconsequential, is before the volume control.

To reduce the influence of the random noise floor on the distortion measurements, I performed all of these with the attenuation active and the volume control set to –20dB. AVM specifies the Ovation A 6.2 ME's maximum power as 300Wpc into 4 ohms (21.75dBW). With both channels driven and using our definition of clipping, which is when the output's percentage of THD+noise reaches 1%, the amplifier clipped at 190Wpc into 8 ohms (fig.5, 22.8dBW), 315Wpc into 4 ohms (fig.6, 22.0dBW), and 505W (21.0dBW) with one channel driven into 2 ohms (not shown). The headphone output clipped asymmetrically at just over 1V into 300 ohms under all circumstances measured: with attenuation active or bypassed, with both balanced and unbalanced input

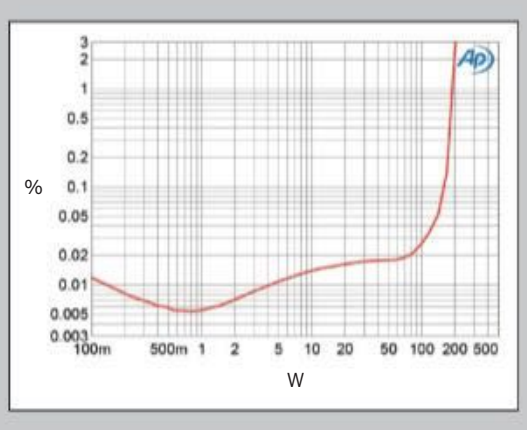

Fig.5 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, distortion (%) vs 1kHz continuous output power into 8 ohms.

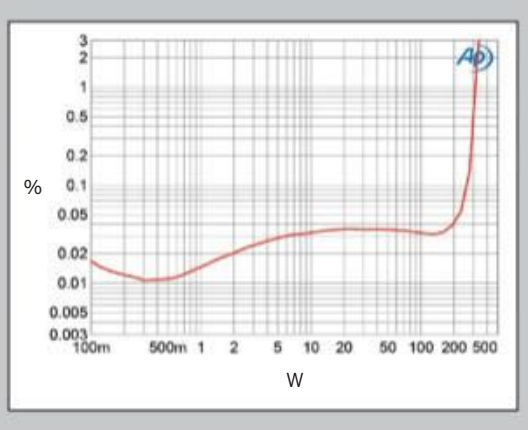

Fig.6 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, distortion (%) vs 1kHz continuous output power into 4 ohms.

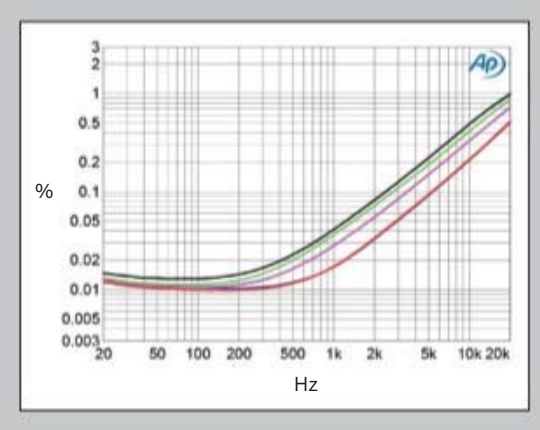

Fig.7 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, THD+N (%) vs frequency at 20V into: 8 ohms (left channel blue, right red), 4 ohms (left cyan, right magenta), and 2 ohms (left green, right gray).

universal human spirit. I cherish what these artists make me feel, but some components I've reviewed did not allow me to access those feelings. The Ovation A 6.2 ME did.

When I played Björk's compilation of live-performance tracks from her 2015 album tour, *Vulnicura Live* (16/44.1 FLAC, One Little Indian/Tidal), the AVM integrated gave me a wide-angle, member-of-the-audience view, providing information about the size and nature of the diverse venues Björk performed in. In my scribbled notes, I characterized the AVM's *Vulnicura* presentation as "ease with lush detail." It was smooth and engaging.

Rogue Sphinx V3 comparison

Alice Coltrane's *Transfiguration* (24/44.1 FLAC MQA Warner Music/Tidal) is another of my favorite albums. I love Alice for how she rejected bebop's orthodoxy and turned free jazz into something more personal, inward looking, and mysterious. What I admire most about Alice's art is how she plays each composition as if it has an important message to convey. When my hi-fi is singing just right, the urgency of her transcendental messages comes through. When it's not, I hear only exotic musicianship.

The AVM A 6.2 integrated (powering the Falcon LS3/5a) showed me the most inspired and enlightened Alice Coltrane I've ever heard.

The A 6.2 displayed Alice's unique expressiveness with a sparkling sonic radiance that disappeared almost completely when I swapped in Rogue Audio's much less expensive ($1595) Sphinx V3 integrated amplifier.

As always in audio, sequence is everything. Switching from the AVM to the Rogue integrated made it clear what five times more money can buy. Alice Coltrane's *Transfiguration* sounded dynamic, engaging, and pleasurably tactile with the humble Rogue. Alice's electric organ was exceptionally exciting with the Sphinx V3. Playing this album, and others by organ masters Jimmy Smith and Dr. Lonnie Smith, the Sphinx-Falcon combo reproduced Hammond, Wurlitzer, and Farfisa organs in a supertactile way that, maybe, no amp could better. But compared to the A 6.2 ME, the Sphinx V3 sounded shadowy, slightly soft, and physically and emotionally distant. The $7999 AVM lit up the music, making it brighter, more vivacious, more *right there in front of me*, more pacey, and—I think—more meaningful.

Pass Labs INT-25 comparison

Overtly precise, uber-clean audio sound has one problem: It doesn't strike my musical memory chords as *real*. It is so clean and distinctly outlined that my brain shouts, "Whoa! That's hi-fi!" The $7250 Pass Labs INT-25 is *almost* that clean. When it drives my LS3/5a's or Harbeth 30.2's, my brain will sometimes interrupt my music focus to admire the well-formed, pristine beauty of the reproduction I am experiencing. This happens most frequently with modern digital recordings like *Mynstrelles with Straunge Sounds* (16/44.1 FLAC Delphian/Tidal), with mezzo-soprano Clare Wilkinson and the Rose Consort of Viols, because recordings like this one have been mastered to deliver this type of pristine clarity.

measurements, continued

signals, and regardless of the volume control setting. This will not be an issue with high-sensitivity headphones, but it correlates with Herb's observation that the AVM couldn't drive his low-sensitivity HiFiMan Susvaras to appropriate levels without clipping.

As the distortion at low powers was very low, I measured how the Ovation A 6.2's distortion changed with frequency at 20V, which is equivalent to 50W into 8 ohms, 100W into 4 ohms, and 200W into 2 ohms. The THD+N percentage was very low into all three impedances at low frequencies (fig.7), but the increase in the treble implies a relatively restricted open-loop bandwidth. (As the signal frequency increases, correspondingly less negative feedback is available to reduce distortion.)

The distortion was predominantly the third harmonic (fig.8), with the higher odd-order harmonics all lying below –100dB and decreasing in a linear manner with frequency (fig.9). (Other than the third, which remained at –80dB/0.01%, these harmonics all lay below –110dB at the same drive voltage into 8 ohms, not shown.) The reduction in high-frequency linearity seen in fig.7 led to the production of high-order intermodulation products with an equal high-power mix of 19kHz and 20Hz tones (fig.10). The difference product at 1kHz lay at a low –86dB (0.005%), however.

Other than the random noise that comes before the volume control and the reduction in linearity in the treble octaves, the AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME did well on the test bench, slightly exceeding its specified power. I was puzzled by the headphone jack's limited output voltage, but that might well be a sample-specific problem. **—John Atkinson**

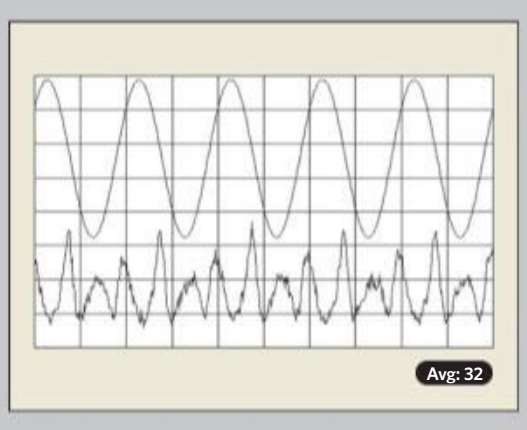

Fig.8 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, 1kHz waveform at 20W into 8 ohms, 0.024% THD+N (top); distortion and noise waveform with fundamental notched out (bottom, not to scale).

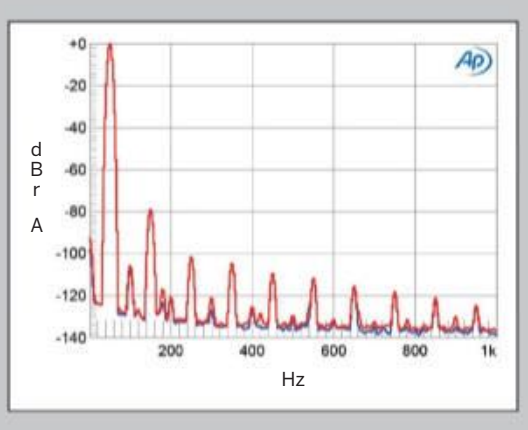

Fig.9 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, spectrum of 50Hz sinewave, DC–1kHz, at 100Wpc into 4 ohms (left channel blue, right red, linear frequency scale).

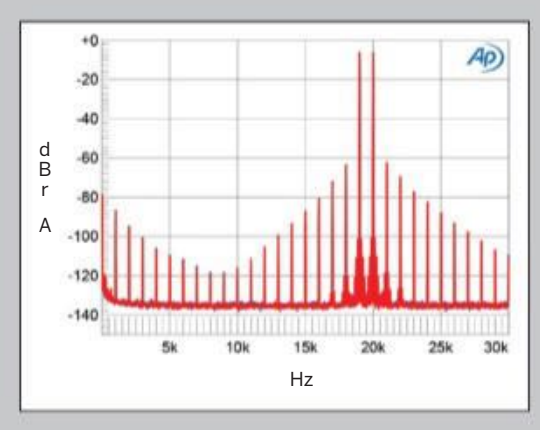

Fig.10 AVM Ovation A 6.2 ME, HF intermodulation spectrum, DC–30kHz, 19+20kHz at 100Wpc peak into 4 ohms (linear frequency scale).

Driving the Falcons, the AVM A 6.2 gave Clare Wilkinson's voice a lifelike physicality, a tangible, moist, throat-and-mouth presence. With the Pass Labs INT-25, her voice was beautiful but purer and drier. Less touchable. With the Pass, I perceived more space around each instrument. Players seemed more separated from each other and better outlined. This comparison was not subtle or complicated: The INT-25 delivered more bone and less flesh than the Ovation A 6.2.

With Magnepan .7s

Magnepan's .7 quasi-ribbon panel speakers need an amplifier that snoozes while pushing amperes into 4 ohm loads. Björk's *Vulnicura Live* is a good Magnepan-compatibility test because "getting it all sorted" is a trick only a few amplifiers have excelled at. At the end of each *Vulnicura* track, the audience cheers and applauds. This happens in a variety of venues. The more focused and distinct and separated each audience member sounds, the better the amp is at driving the .7's load. The AVM A 6.2 not only did *focused* and *distinct*, it let each concert venue speak in its own voice. I could sense differences in microphone placement and air volume in each auditorium. The A 6.2 ME had no difficulty sinking current into the Maggies.

I used the AVM with the Magnepan .7s for about five days, playing blues, avant-garde jazz, and diverse opera and choral programs. The sound was not as clean and pristine as with the pure class-A Pass Labs INT-25, nor was it as bold and romantic as Rogue Audio's class-D Sphinx V3 integrated. What the AVM integrated did well was deliver music in a well-shaped, delightfully detailed, slightly lush manner.

Headphone output

I read the complete Ovation A 6.2 ME owner's manual, but I only found two sentences about the headphone output. "Plug a 6.35mm headphone connector to the headphone jack. The loudspeaker and preamp outputs will mute automatically while a headphone is plugged in." There were no specifications in the manual nor on the AVM website. I pressed Udo for more info. "It is a completely separate amplifying stage mounted inside on the chassis front panel. It is a discrete bipolar balanced amp with matched transistors. It makes seven watts class-A and does not draw any power from the main amp." Even when I pressed him via email, Udo would not specify any other headphone amp power ratings (into 32 or 300 ohms for example) or say into what impedance those "seven watts" could be achieved.

The most expensive headphones I have in-house are the planar-magnetic T+A Solitaire P openbacks ($6400) I reviewed in Gramophone Dreams #45. They are finely crafted, taut-sounding, low-distortion transducers with an 80 ohm impedance and a moderate sensitivity of 92dB/mW. Like the AVM, they are made in Germany and so jumped out of the deck as an interesting first headphone to try.

I started by listening with an album that sometimes sounds a little vague and fuzzy through floorspeakers but really sharpens up (focus and structure-wise) with top-shelf headphones like the Solitaire P's: *Bill Frisell with Dave Holland and Elvin Jones* (24/44.1 FLAC MQA ECM/Tidal) is my everyday test album for assessing "focused and well-sorted." Happily, the resolving powers of the Solitaire P's and AVM headphone amplifier banished all vagueness.

The A 6.2 ME's headphone amp sounds like a completely different amp than the AVM amp that was driving my speakers. Compared to the A 6.2's lightly polished, slightly wet-sounding speaker amp, the headphone amp sounded dry and straitlaced.

My curiosity piqued, I tried HiFiMan's 60 ohm low-sensitivity (83dB/mW) Susvara openback planar-magnetic headphones. I played the Bill Frisell, the Alice Coltrane, and a bunch of Charles Mingus. The AVM headphone amplifier struggled to deliver undistorted power into the Susvara's difficult load.

Next, I tried the lower impedance (35 ohms) but higher sensitivity (106dB/mW) Focal Stellia, currently my main closed-back reference and daily driver. The beautifully fashioned, superbly finished, $2990 Stellia seemed like a natural (and I thought logical) pairing with the equally stylish Ovation integrated.

I started laughing, tears streamed down my face, while listening to another of my most favorite albums, *Jimmy Martin: The King of Bluegrass* (16/44.1 FLAC Decca/Tidal). I couldn't stop repeat-playing "Milwaukee, Here I Come," the high-spirited Lee Fykes song popularized by George Jones and Tammy Wynette. With the dCS Bartók DAC sourcing the AVM headphone amp, all the lyrics' stretched words, bent words, and mountain music inflections came pouring out in living color. The AVM headphone amplifier proved it could boogie if it had the right load. The supersensitive Stellias seemed to wake up the A 6.2's headphone amp, which had struggled with the Susvara's more difficult load.

Conclusions

Call it bad memory or confirmation bias, but after a month of daily listening, I concluded that the AVM A 6.2 ME sounded a lot like those classic class-A amplifiers of yesteryore, which sounded like they had full control and weren't leaving any information behind. They sounded musically *right* and *complete*. The AVM A 6.2 ME integrated sounded that kind of right, with a little fairy dust sprinkled on top. ■

ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

Analog sources Dr. Feickert Analogue Blackbird turntable with Schick 10.5" tonearm, Koetsu Rosewood Signature Platinum, My Sonic Lab Ultra Eminent Ex, Hana Umami moving coil cartridges; Lundahl LL1931Ag SUT, Ketsuné KTE LCR-1 MK4 phono stage.
Digital sources Roon Nucleus+ music server; HoloAudio May (Level 3) D/A processor; dCS Bartok DAC/Streamer/headphone amp with Mosaic control app.
Integrated amplifiers Pass Labs INT-25, Rogue Audio Sphinx V3.
Power amplifier Parasound Halo A 21+.
Loudspeakers Magnepan .7, Falcon Acoustic LS3/5a (Gold Badge), Harbeth M30.2, KEF LS50; KEF KC62 subwoofer.
Headphones Focal Stellia, HiFiMan Susvara, T+A Solitaire P.
Cables Digital: AudioQuest Diamond, Kimber Kable D60 Data Flex Studio (coax). Interconnect: Cardas Clear Cygnus. Speaker: Triode Wire Labs American Series. AC: AudioQuest Tornado, manufacturer's own.
Accessories AudioQuest Niagara 1000 power conditioner; Harmonic Resolution Systems M3X-1719-AMG GR LF isolation platform; Sound Anchor Reference speaker stands. **—Herb Reichert**

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MANUFACTURERS' COMMENTS

THIS ISSUE: Representatives of Haniwa, AVM, Marten, ELAC, and Clearaudio respond to our reviews of their products.

Haniwa HCTR-CO MkII

We'd like to thank Michael Fremer and *Stereophile* for giving the improved Haniwa cartridge a listen. We agree with Michael that there is something magical about this 0.2 ohm cartridge that keeps you listening well into the next morning. The Current Loop System with our HCVC01 Current to Voltage Converter is something we believe audiophiles need to experience for themselves, either with their existing sub-ohm cartridge or with one of Haniwa's Current Output Cartridges.

The COVID-19 lockdown has made listening to new audio equipment at shows difficult or impossible. We feel the best way to audition the Haniwa equipment is to try it in your own system. At haniwaaudio.com, you can sign up to try this new experience with your own system; we welcome all inquiries and would be happy to ship you a demo Cartridge and Current to Voltage Converter.

Again, thank you, Michael, for listening to Haniwa as Dr. Kubo continues to develop new and improved components of the Current Loop System. Everyone, stay safe, and we hope to connect with you soon!

Robert Bean
Haniwa at Kubotek USA, Inc.

AVM A 6.2 ME

Thanks to Herb Reichert and John Atkinson for their thorough review and test of the AVM A 6.2 ME. At Bluebird Music, we seek out products that offer lasting value, combining exceptional build quality and class-leading sound quality. The 6.2 ME is an excellent example of such a high-value product, and AVM is a well-established maker with a reputation for quality.

We also feature products that are attractive and provide pleasure in daily use. Herb mentions that the A 6.2 ME "looks like it would fit in anywhere" and "looks expensive" but "is also serious and intelligent-looking." Good looks may not be everything, but they're certainly meaningful in the home.

Herb comments that adding the A 6.2 ME to his system caused him to "direct my listening toward music I always *want* to listen to but often refrain from playing because the recordings can be tiring and difficult to stay focused on. The AVM A 6.2 presented these challenging recordings in a detailed, well-structured, nonfatiguing manner." Herb added, "I cherish what these artists make me feel, but some components I've reviewed did not allow me to access those feelings. The Ovation A 6.2 ME did."

We're convinced that enjoyment of music is good for body, mind, and soul—and Herb's affirmation of the A 6.2 ME's therapeutic qualities is, well, *music to our ears.*

We were pleased that Herb used the A 6.2 ME with both panel speakers and classic British box speakers and had excellent results with both. With Maggies, Herb found the A 6.2 ME to "deliver music in a well-shaped, delightfully detailed, slightly lush manner." With LS3/5a's, Herb noted "ease with lush detail" and commented, "It was smooth and engaging." While Herb chose to bypass the A 6.2 ME's versatile tone controls, they allow users to compensate for poor recordings, room problems, deficiencies in associated components, or just to season to taste.

JA's findings on the test bench proved that the A 6.2 ME is a solid performer, and Herb's conclusions backed that up. We were delighted to read: "I concluded that the AVM A 6.2 ME sounded a lot like those classic class-A amplifiers of yesteryore, which sounded like they had full control and weren't leaving any information behind. *They sounded musically right and complete* [our italics]. The AVM A 6.2 ME integrated sounded that kind of right, with a little fairy dust sprinkled on top."

We'll take all of that. Even the fairy dust. ;->

Jay Rein, President
Bluebird Music

Marten Parker Trio Diamond

We want to sincerely thank John Atkinson for the time and efforts made in this review. We are very pleased that Mr. Atkinson also comments on the less exclusive, standard-version Parker Trio as well as our entry-level model Oscar Duo.

A comment about the sensitivity measurement. It's stated to have 91dB/2.83V/m, but Mr. Atkinson measured 86dB. Why it differs compared to my measurements is most probably because Mr. Atkinson measured the Trios at the tweeter axis, that is 108cm from floor. The normal listening height and where I measure them is 95cm from the floor, and it will be more representative for the actual sensitivity and frequency response.

Leif Olofsson,
Chief Designer and Founder
Marten

ELAC DPA-2 power amplifier

We at ELAC Americas wish to sincerely thank the magazine and JVS for this wonderful review of our DPA-2 power amplifier. When Jason originally approached us to do a review, there was the initial trepidation one gets when one