

# HIFI CRITIC

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# EAT E-GLO

MARTIN COLLOMS TRIES OUT A VERSATILE AND FLEXIBLE TWO-BOX VALVE-EQUIPPED MC/MM PHONO PRE-AMPLIFIER



Prague-based EAT (European Audio Team), was originally founded many years ago in the Czech Republic by Slovakian citizen Jozefina (who subsequently married long-term partner Heinz Lichtenegger, Austrian high end distributor and creator of Pro-Ject). Jozefina produces and markets a number of products, including turntables and selected audio valves (the latter naturally fitted to this phono pre-amp).

Originally introduced back in 2013 the E-GLO phono pre-amplifier was designed as an accompaniment to the growing range of EAT turntables, and since it has maintained a high profile on the market, we took this opportunity to make a belated assessment. A two-box design with separate linear power supply, no FETs or transistors are used in the signal path of the phono stage proper, which is ideally located on a separate shelf from the supply, in order to have the lowest noise and best vibration isolation. The selected triode valves are easily accessed for those inclined to experiment with swapping, in order to discover the best sounding combinations; however, some patience is required when refitting the external tube cages.

To match the low impedance and low output from moving-coil cartridges, a step-up transformer is employed, and it uses top class examples from specialist Lundahl (with non-crystalline, 'amorphous'

magnetic cores). The further one examines this design the more purist it seems to be. For example, it does not use the customary negative feedback for RIAA disc equalisation; instead, this is executed in two split stages, using passive filters. Following similar design commitment, numerous audiophile capacitors and connectors have been sourced from Mundorf, where appropriate.

The design aim is to match virtually any cartridge, whether moving magnet or moving coil, where the final stage is the optimisation of the tonal quality for the customers' system. Moving magnet input loading has switchable steps from 50, 150, 270, 370, 520, 620, 740, and 840pF, with the load resistance at the standard 47kohms, and the usual 46dB gain. For moving-coil the options are: 10, 20, 40, 80, 150, 300, 600, 1200ohms at 70dB gain; the quietest models allow a choice from 2.5, 10, 20, 40, 80, 150, and 300ohms with the greater 76dB gain option. Two low profile top panel controls with continuous rotation rotary encoders allow for a seamless, noise-free setting of the input loading options during replay, assisted by an array of input board relays that are backed up by front panel indicators.

## Sound Quality

After a few minutes warming up it was clear that the E-GLO was able to deliver fine musical experiences. After a day or two left powered up, the emotional rewards available from this design using fine analogue LPs were unmistakable.

To hand was Paul Simon's *Graceland*, an original if well used pressing. It came up fresh and vibrant, seemingly with less noise and distortion than before, and was more expressive musically. In fact it was so engaging that I played it right through and then some of side two. Standing back a little, I tried to take notes to describe these experiences but continued listening for some time before I took up my pen.

No background noise was audible, even at high volume settings. The sound was rich in the best sense, lacking hardness, stridency, grain or edge. It flowed with fine rhythms, clean transients, and a convincing soundstage that was wide, deep and very well focused. All kinds of music were well handled, from Abdulla Ibrahim's classic jazz to the best Decca classical orchestral pressings.

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While I can play digital audio to a very high standard, and indeed have invested heavily in it in order to enjoy a massive variety of performances, it remains largely true that original pressings of pure analogue material may deliver a particular standard of musicality with an appropriate phono pre-amp, where that sense of easy unrestrained naturalness truly reigns. The EAT *E-GLO* is such a design.

Some phono pre-amps need electrical silence, such as that from local power supplies used with nearby digital audio equipment. Not so the *E-GLO*, which performed very well right away. However, the true enthusiast will note, as I did, that a small but worthwhile gain in clarity and purity is possible when all the digital audio gear in the system is powered down, including the network switch. This all sounds like low feedback triode technology, which it is. Yet it also has great dynamics and satisfying authority, and this is maintained to low frequencies.

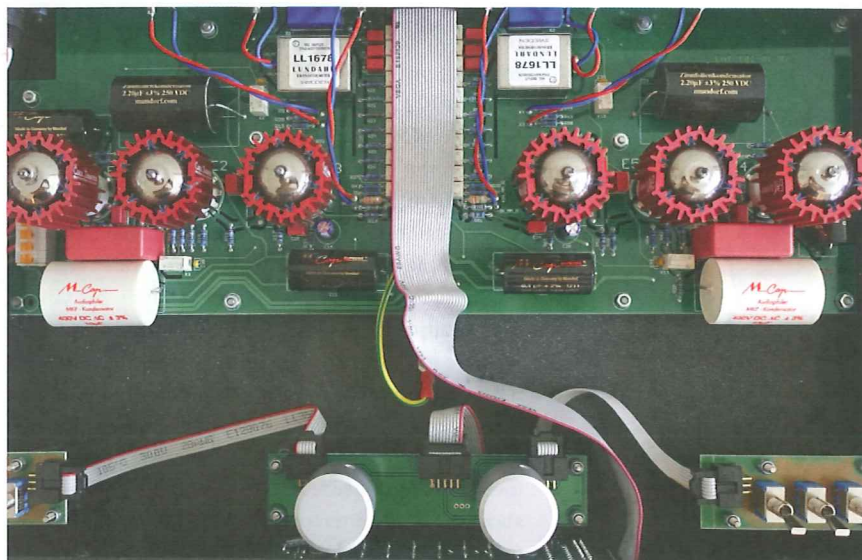
It is hard to score phono pre-amplifiers, but such is the sheer quality presented here a sound quality figure of 220 seems appropriate, which is truly reference class. The sound is neither showy nor brilliant, but is simply and always highly communicative, enjoyable and musically believable.

### Conclusions

We greatly enjoyed using EAT's *E-GLO* phono pre-amp, finding a sound that was modern in terms of accuracy, yet which also glowed with classical harmony. Stereo imaging was very fine: deep, wide and well focused, with a natural tonality and a vibrant involving performance on all kinds of music. No noise, hardness of distortion could be heard. This design may be highly recommended and clearly deserves an Audio Excellence rating

### Technical Design

Attention to detail is manifest throughout this



*EAT GLO interior showing Lundahl moving coil input transformers*

design, from the two-box configuration in aluminium alloy, to the low noise double-screened toroidal power transformer used in the supply. Following RFI filtering, the AC power is rectified to DC by fast-recovery, low-noise diodes that are fitted with noise damping resistors. Optimum isolation is assured using low feed-through FET regulation for the high voltage supply.

Further noise rejection is assured by using balanced internal amplification with six triodes, the *ECC83* for their higher gain and the *RIA*A stages, and the more powerful *ECC88* for the output. Circuitry is single-ended throughout, and the technical problem of coping with low output moving-coil signals is addressed by the use of Lundahl matching transformers.

The six triodes are fitted with finned alloy damping coolers surrounded by the distinctive circular horizontal fins. An umbilical power cable runs back to the supply box.

### Manufacturer Specifications

Input impedance (MC)	10, 20, 40, 80, 150, 300, 600, 1200ohms for 70dB gain
	2,5, 10, 20, 40, 80, 150, 300ohms for 76dB gain
Load (MM)	50, 150, 270, 370, 520, 620, 740, 840pF (46dB, 47kohms)
Output impedance	< 150ohms
Signal-to-noise ratio	MM >80 dBA; MC >72dBA
THD MM/MC	typically better than -76dB, (0.015%)
Infrasonic Filter	25Hz -3dB (12dB/oct)
Alloy Casework	
Trim options	High gloss Makassar Ebony, Piano Black
Price	£6,000