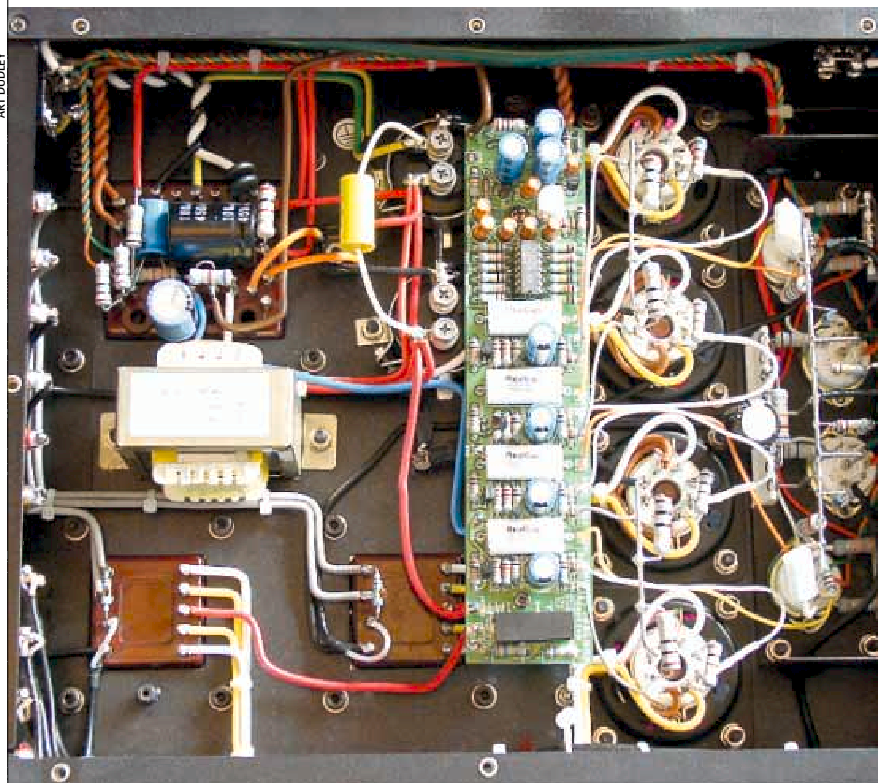


ACD-35). Another plus was the timbral and spatial realism of Del McCoury's backing guitar. On the minus side, the ProLogue One made that recording and others like it a bit draggy, rhythmically: It missed a lot of the bounce and momentum that other amps seem able to find.

Conclusions

In fewer words: This chunky little tube amp sounded like a chunky little tube amp, for better and for worse. That it's so easy to buy and to use may steer you further from *worse* and closer to *better*.

Apart from its clever bias circuit, there's nothing new inside the ProLogue One's handsome chassis, technologically speaking. Economically, however—or geopolitically, or however else you want to look at it—there's a much bigger story: An amp this good can't be made to sell for this little in America, Europe, Japan, or even Mexico. So the PrimaLuna ProLogue One, while designed in the Netherlands, is manufactured in the People's Republic of China. Its



Inside the ProLogue One.

ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

ANALOG SOURCES Linn LP12 turntable with Naim Armageddon power supply, Naim Aro tonearm; Rega Planar 9 turntable; Supex 900 Super, Linn Akiva, Lyra Helikon Mono cartridges; Audio Note AN-S2 step-up transformer.

DIGITAL SOURCE Sony SCD-777ES and dCS La Scala-Delius SACD/CD players.

PREAMPLIFIERS Fi, DNM 3C Primus.

POWER AMPLIFIERS EAR 890, Lamm ML2.1s, First Watt F1.

LOUDSPEAKERS Quad ESL-989, Lowther PM2A in modified Medalion horns.

CABLES Digital: various dCS.

Interconnect: Audio Note AN-Vx, Nordost Valhalla, homemades. **Speaker:** Audio Note AN-SPx, Nordost Valhalla, homemades.

ACCESSORIES Mana stands under turntables, digital components; Base base under EAR, First Watt amplifiers; Wally tools for phono setup.

—Art Dudley

casework is fabricated and finished in China. Its components are wired together in China. And its original, Dutch-designed output trannies are wound in China—apparently quite well. (The ProLogue One may not be at the very cutting edge of tube design, but it wouldn't sound this good if its output trannies were crap.)

1970s, when sequestering oneself with a record player was a way of turning one's back on all other media, most notably television—I can't help but feel that affordable or relatively affordable products are good for everyone: for dealers, for magazines, and even for people who make and sell music in the first place. Of course,

BOY OH BOY, CAN I EVER RECOMMEND THIS AMP!

Let's face it: China, when she's not busy buying up US currency, is busy making things, and making them well. And just like the clothes on your back and the flag in your yard, China makes them for a lot less than we apparently can. You are free to make of that what you wish.

I know how *I* feel about it. Because my first full-time job paid \$96 a week after taxes, and my first integrated amplifier, a Sansui AU101, cost about \$150, I've never shaken the notion that one's first very good amp should cost between one and two weeks' pay. And while I recognize that most things have changed since then—hi-fi doesn't mean the same thing to young people today that it did in the

I may whistle another tune if our economy tanks and I can't even afford the Christmas-tree ornaments at Wal-Mart on December 26.

But for now, boy oh boy, can I ever recommend this amp! It's not the liveliest-sounding thing, and if that's more important to you than such things as texture and color, you'll be better off considering something else. But if you're new to the world of tubes and you want to see what it's all about—and you're on a limited budget, and rolling your own is out of the question—then it's hard to see how you can go wrong with the PrimaLuna ProLogue One. Lustily, heartily, and enthusiastically (if conditionally) recommended. ■