

KEN MICALLES

Heed Audio Elixir

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

I recently watched *Terra*, an exceptional film by French directors Yann Arthus-Bertrand and Michael Pitiot. It's not a nature documentary per se, rather a history of life on Earth from lichens to lions, amoebas to humans. *Terra* boasts stunning cinematography of the natural world, revealing a beauty that nearly softens the film's cautionary message.

"How have our relations with other living beings changed so much?" asks Arthus-Bertrand on his website.¹ "What do we still see, or notice, of the living world around us? . . . We no longer see the wild, we dream of it. It's an age-old fascination, visible in the paintings of the Chauvet Cave. But this dream is today disappearing, vanishing in factory smoke and industrial smog. . . .

"*Terra* is an essay . . . on the human species and its relationship with other living beings. . . . a humanist and deliberately positive film, openly advocating that humanity is still capable of 'getting back to basics.'"

Terra posits that, as factories owned by transnational companies, overpopulation, corporate farming, and swelling megalopolises push wildlife farther away from their native habitats, these estranged creatures essentially become refugees: natural beings without a home, no residence beyond urban zoos or vast preserves. With over 100 species currently on the endangered list, what happens when the last gorilla, rhinoceros, or leopard is no more? That will be a day beyond the imagination of any Hollywood screenwriter. *Terra* tells this alarming story with grandeur, empathy, and insight.



That so much amplifier is available for \$1295 should have music lovers dancing, unclothed and unhinged.

Terra and an informative book, Diane Ackerman's *A Natural History of the Senses*, got me thinking about the audiophile. Without trivializing the concept of natural habitat: as the nature lover enjoys the fresh air, scurrying critters, and open terrain found off the grid, the audiophile's natural environment is the here and now of *music*. Transported via our audio time machine of choice—digital or analog, tubes or solid-state, speakers or headphones—we enjoy music of any genre and from any record label, era, or origin. This, for us, is a natural state of being as perfect as anything under the heavens. Music provides respite from the

¹ See www.yannarthusbertrand.org/en/films-tv/terra.

SPECIFICATIONS

Description Two-channel, solid-state, integrated amplifier. Inputs: 4 analog, 1 MM phono stage. Outputs: 1 stereo speaker, 1 preamplifier, 1 headphones (6.35mm). Power outputs: 50Wpc into 8 ohms, 65Wpc into 4 ohms. Frequency ranges: 10Hz–110kHz, speaker outputs; 3.5Hz–300kHz, preamplifier output; 3.5Hz–320kHz, headphone output.

Phono input impedance: 47k ohms/100pF. Line input impedance: 10k ohms. Input sensitivity: 135mV. Negative feedback: 32dB. Damping factor: 150 at 1kHz into 8 ohms. Total harmonic distortion: 0.09% at 1kHz. Channel separation: 59dB into 8 ohms, 10W out. Signal/noise: 91dB, unweighted (0Hz–25kHz). Power consumption: 150W max, 20W idle.

Dimensions 8.7" (220mm) W by 3.3" (85mm) H by 14.2" (360mm) D. Weight: 13.2 lbs (6kg).

Finishes Silver-anodized front panel & dark-gray top, or black-anodized front panel & black top.

Serial number of unit reviewed 921010025.

Price \$1295. Approximate number of dealers: 100. Warranty: 3 years.

Manufacturer Heed Audio Ltd., Unit 5, Eastside Industrial Estate, Mead Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL53 7EF, England, UK. Tel: (44) (0)124-2-547663. Web: <http://heedaudio.com>. US distributor: Profundo, 2051 Gattis School Road, Suite 540/123, Round Rock, TX 78664. Tel: (510) 375-8651. Web: www.profundo.us.

very things *Terra* decries as unnatural, soul-killing, and life-crushing—those things that increasingly assail our senses.

Thankfully, enjoying music doesn't require the cost of an all-expenses-paid trip to the Amazon rainforest. As vinyl's resurgence has produced a robust spurt in growth for turntables, mono cartridges, and—arguably—amplifiers and headphones, reasonably priced gear is more abundant than ever before, providing exceptional sound quality at almost any price point.

One of the easiest ways to enjoy high-quality reproduction of recorded music is through a well-made integrated amplifier, preferably one with an internal phono stage, DAC, headphone amplifier, preamplifier-only functionality, and a remote control. Heed Audio's Elixir integrated amplifier (\$1295) meets all of these requirements save an onboard DAC. It offers 50Wpc into 8 ohms or 65Wpc into 4 ohms—and my review sample worked flawlessly from the moment I flipped its power switch.

Building a bridge

Heed Audio Ltd. has a motto: "Forget hi-fi—remember music!" This 25-employee company designs and manufactures its lines of CD transports, DACs, speakers, and amplification components in Budapest, with parts from around the world. Heed's casework, formerly made in Hungary, is now made in the UK by "one of the audio industry's top metalwork houses, for the sake of quality and consistency," notes Bob Clarke of Profundo, Heed's US distributor.

In Hungarian, *Heed* (pronounced *hid*) means *bridge*. For Zsolt Huszti, Heed's owner and chief designer, the bridge in question is that which must be made between "the world[s] of music and electronics. We heed the needs of that connection, and we make devices that can establish a bridge

between the two worlds."

Heed's debut product, the Obelisk integrated amplifier, introduced in 1993, followed the design concepts of the founder of Nytech and Ion Systems, the late Richard Hay. (The current version, the Obelisk III, costs \$2195.) Later, Heed's Orbit power supply for turntables (not available in the US), which is compatible with tables from Rega Research and other manufacturers, became a hit when imported into Germany, and led to the development of Heed's Quasar (\$1200) and Questar (\$500) phono stages, which won praise from European hi-fi cognoscenti. Although Heed's phono stages remain its best sellers, the Elixir and Obelisk SI integrated amplifiers now nip at their heels in Heed's most popular markets: France, the UK, and the US.

Transcap technology, svelte steel body

The output sections of the Elixir and Obelisk SI amps are *non-direct-coupled*. Instead, they use output capacitors that are charged by complementary pairs of Darlingtons transistors, in an architecture referred to by Huszti as Transcap technology. "We make transistor amplifiers with capacitor outputs," Huszti explained via e-mail. "These capacitors are *translator capacitors*, as they convert the electronic signal into a form that an electromechanical converter needs. [Sound] is tiny changes in air pressure, the deviation of the basic atmospheric pressure. Sound recordings, however, store absolute levels. A directly coupled amplifier is a level-setting amplifier; it tries to set an absolute air-pressure level, which is not [an ideal] goal. An output-capacitor amp, however, drives the speaker in a changes-only mode, and that is required for the stress-free generation of air-pressure changes [into] the sound we hear.

"Tube amplifiers do almost the same thing," Huszti

MEASUREMENTS

I performed a full set of measurements on the Heed Elixir using my Audio Precision SYS2722 system (see the January 2008 "As We See It," www.stereophile.com/content/measurements-maps-precision). I preconditioned the amplifier by running it with both channels driven at one-third power into 8 ohms for 60 minutes. Thermally, this is the worst-case situation for an amplifier with a class-B or class-AB output stage, as one-third power is when the maximum heat dissipation occurs in the output transistors. As the Heed Elixir's maximum power is specified as 50Wpc into 8 ohms, I ran it for an hour at 16.6Wpc into 8 ohms. At the end of that time, the top panel was hot, 119°F (48.3°C) and the internal heatsinks, which could be seen through the vents in the top, were very hot, at 152°F (61°C). As it says in the Elixir's manual, this amplifier needs to be placed in a well-ventilated site.

Looking first at the phono input, this

preserved absolute polarity (ie, was non-inverting) and offered a gain of 53.5dB measured at the Pre Out jacks, 55.2dB measured at the Headphone jack, and 84.4dB measured at the Speaker terminals, all with the volume control set to its maximum. These are all on the high side, meaning the volume control will be need to be set low in normal listening. The input impedance measured 40k ohms at low frequency, dropping to 34k ohms at 1kHz

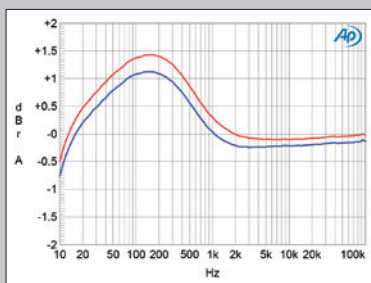


Fig.1 Heed Elixir, phono input, response with RIAA correction (left channel blue, right red) (1dB/vertical div.).

and 31k at the top of the audioband. This is slightly low for MM cartridges. Fig.1 shows the RIAA error: The two channels match within 0.4dB but both show a 1.45dB peak in the upper bass, which will be audible as a slightly rich balance.

Despite the higher-than-usual gain, the MM input's S/N ratios, measured at the Headphone output with the input shorted but the volume control set to its maximum, were good, at

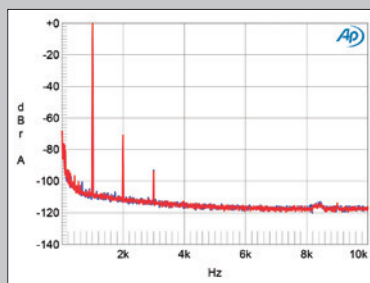


Fig.2 Heed Elixir, phono input, spectrum of 1kHz sine wave, DC-10kHz, at 1V into 100k ohms (linear frequency scale).

added, “but there is a difference: output transformers are restrictive elements. Capacitors are, however, energy-storing devices. This energy is always directly accessible for the speaker, as there is nothing between it and the output capacitor. The speaker can work with one less electric restriction, and in a mode that is more close to its mechanical needs (as a mechanical result is our main goal). In terms of [sounding natural], this is a huge difference.”

The Heed Elixir is one of the most robust and substantial products I’ve encountered, regardless of price. Somewhat resembling a Rega Brio-R integrated amplifier, the Elixir looks and feels like a tank designed not by General Dynamics but by Finnish futurist Eero Saarinen. There’s nothing fussy or confusing in its design or its functionality—it’s a finely realized, practically foolproof product that any Pokémon kid or iPhone fanatic could easily set up, understand, and enjoy. What better way to bring people into this hi-fi thing of ours than with understated, affordable gear that’s easy to operate?

Popping the top of the Elixir’s black, powder-coated steel case revealed a single large, hand-soldered circuit board holding various relays, resistors, transistors, Jamicon electrolytic capacitors, and low-impedance Teapo and Samwha output caps. A vertical steel plate running down the middle of the interior separates the circuit board from a UK-built Airlink 150VA transformer and a robust heatsink. The Elixir’s dedicated headphone circuit is a fully discrete—all transistors, no integrated circuits—class-A output amp shielded from the transformer’s EMI effects by that same steel center plate. Also attached to the big board is a Heed-motorized Alps Blue Velvet volume pot.

On the back of the CNC-machined-aluminum faceplate is a small strip of fabric—to “eliminate the vibrations between the chassis top and bottom,” Bob Clarke explained. I found this small detail somehow touching. It reminded me of the careful attention to detail you might see in a hobbyist’s project: not an afterthought, but a logical embellishment that would have obvious impacts on both sound quality and the unit’s overall fit’n’finish. The small fabric strip produced feelings similar to those I have for the late Ken Shindo, who went to great lengths to personally sound-design his beautiful amplifiers, three of which I am proud to own.

The front of the Elixir’s faceplate is silky to the touch. On it are, from left to right, a $\frac{1}{4}$ " headphone jack, followed by a row of seven small circles (they light up!), one each for the five inputs and two outputs. The inputs are labeled 1, 2, 3, 4, and MM (for moving-magnet phono stage). Icons depicting headphones and a speaker drive-unit mark the output circles. Inputs and outputs can be selected by pressing one of two large buttons, labeled In and Out, to the right of the circles—or from the remote. (The latter is an oblong, hand’s-length design.) When I selected an option with the remote, the circle representing that option emitted a soft white light. The remote also controls the Elixir’s large volume knob; a tiny, sliver-thin light at the edge of the knob blinks when you press the remote’s + or – key, to adjust the gain.

The Elixir is small—only 8.66" wide by 3.34" high by 14.17" deep—and its hind plate is densely populated, but my generally clumsy fingers had no trouble inserting RCA and banana plugs and attaching my turntable’s ground wire. A power switch, phono ground screw, IEC receptacle, RCA

measurements, continued

66dB (wideband unweighted), 73dB (audio-band, unweighted), and 83.5dB (A-weighted), all ref. 1kHz at 5mV. Channel separation was also good, at >60dB in both directions at 1kHz.

Phono overload margins, again ref. 1kHz at 5mV, were good at low and middle frequencies, at 21dB, but dropped to 15.5dB at 20kHz. Harmonic distortion with the Heed’s phono input was low, with the dominant harmonic the subjectively benign second harmonic, this lying at -70dB (0.03%) ref. 1kHz at

5mV (fig.2). Intermodulation distortion via the phono input was also low, with the difference product resulting from an equal mix of 19kHz and 20kHz tones lying at -70dB (not shown).

Turning to the line inputs, these preserved absolute polarity (ie, were non-inverting) and offered a maximum gain of 12.9dB measured at the Pre Out jacks, 14.75dB measured at the Headphone jack, and 43.65dB measured at the Speaker terminals, the latter typical for an integrated amplifier. The mea-

sured input impedance was the same as the specified 10k ohms at 20Hz and 1kHz, but dropped to 7.25k ohms at 10kHz. This is on the low side for tubed source components, which might sound lightweight as a result. The output impedance at the Pre Out jacks was 440 ohms at 20Hz dropping to 37 ohms at middle and high frequencies. Although the Elixir’s manual recommends the amplifier’s headphone output not be used with headphones having an impedance of >30 ohms, the

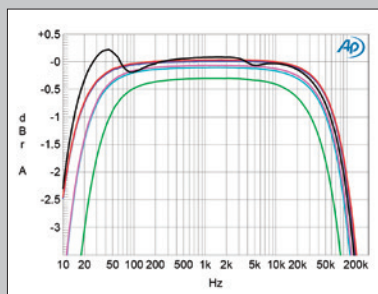


Fig.3 Heed Elixir, frequency response with volume control set to its maximum at 2.83V into: simulated loudspeaker load (gray), 8 ohms (left channel blue, right red), 4 ohms (left cyan, right magenta), 2 ohms (green) (0.5dB/vertical div.).

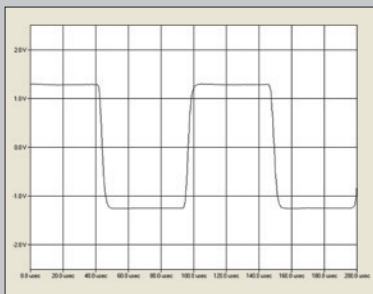


Fig.4 Heed Elixir, small-signal, 10kHz squarewave into 8 ohms.

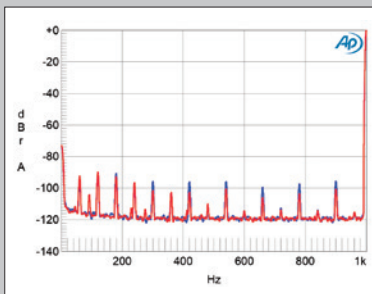


Fig.5 Heed Elixir, spectrum of 1kHz sinewave, DC-1kHz, at 1W into 8 ohms (linear frequency scale).

jacks, and two pairs of hefty speaker binding posts complete the Elixir's connections. Each RCA and post is clearly labeled in bold caps: gnd, inputs, pre out, speakers. Now here's an everyperson amplifier!

Listening

Bob Clarke recommended that I leave the Heed powered up 24/7, I assume to keep the capacitors charged and ready to rock'n'roll. The Elixir ran hot, but never crazy-hot.

I listened to the Elixir in multiple system configurations, beginning with my nearfield-positioned smaller rig: Music Hall MMF-73 turntable with Ortofon 2M Bronze cartridge (\$1595), and a choice between two pairs of stand-mounted speakers: Elac Debut B6 (\$279/pair) and Snell J/Type II (\$680/pair, *CA* 1989). For part of this review I spun my last vinyl purchases from the recently closed Other Music, a one-of-a-kind record store for music lovers that operated on Manhattan's W. Fourth Street from 1995 to 2016. R.I.P.!

Heed, say hello to Snell

I don't know if it was down to the Heed's capacitors directly interacting with my Snell J/Type IIs, but I was immediately struck by the Elixir's superb sense of *flow*. The Elixir portrayed dynamic swings with a natural and effortless musicality. I wasn't immediately drawn to unearthing individual facets of the Heed's sound so much as enjoying its ebb and flow, its tactile inhalations and exhalations of the music. The Elixir made more music with the Snells' 92dB sensitivity and 8 ohm impedance than any other amplifier I've owned. The J/Type IIs can sometimes sound closed-in,

hard, anal-retentive—but powered by the Heed, they spun a complete 180. Their bass was now full and ripe, their tonality saturated and rather glorious. Color me stunned. Not even the grand Shindo Haut-Brion makes the Snells sound this human, warm, and righteous.

As I played the shimmering hipster country of Laura Gibson's *Empire Builder* (LP, Barsuk BARK 162LP), the Heed-Snell combo created a juicy sense of audio buoyancy, the music floating before me on a cloud of steel guitars and pizzicato bass backing Gibson's odd, ethereal voice, her nerdy goodness and graceful tunes—like June Carter by way of Emmylou Harris.

Sam Beam and Jesca Hoop's exquisite *Love Letter for Fire* (LP, Sub Pop SP1165) is another scruffy-beard-and-calico-dress favorite, and the Heed-Snell combo again worked its magic: voices sounded clear and intimate, while the album's dense, fairyland production style was well resolved in a cotton-candy-friendly soundstage. The Heed's unerring warmth, consummate energy, and ability to resolve vast macrodynamic swings was a consistent surprise—nearly a revelation.

"Trane's Blues," from *Workin' with the Miles Davis Quintet* (LP, Prestige PRLP 7166), revealed another consistent Elixir trait: tonal color that leaned toward the darker side of neutral. This darkness could occasionally equal overcast, but was largely of the rich, warm variety—more an inclusive benefit than a torpor-inducing cloud. The Heed didn't resolve recordings to the point of revealing "air," as some describe it. Instead, the Heed designers seem to have opted for a balance: a harmonious blend of the Elixir's warmer and darker

measurements, continued

output impedance was a low 2 ohms (including cables).

The output impedance at the speaker terminals was 0.4 ohms at 20Hz, 0.06 ohms at 1kHz, and 0.15 ohms at 20kHz. The increase in impedance at low frequencies, presumably a result of the capacitor-coupled output stage, results in a very slight boost in the mid bass with our standard simulated loudspeaker¹ (fig.3, gray trace), but otherwise the Elixir rolls off a little early, reaching -2.4dB at 10Hz into 8 ohms (blue and red traces). Note the excel-

lent channel matching in this graph, which was preserved at lower settings of the volume control. At the other end of the spectrum, the response is down by 3dB at a high 100kHz and a little higher at lower volume control settings. As a result, the Heed's reproduction of a 10kHz squarewave features very short risetimes, as well as no overshoot or ringing (fig.4).

Channel separation via the line inputs was good, and the unweighted, wideband S/N ratio (ref. 1W into 8 ohms and taken with the inputs shorted

but the volume control set to its maximum, the worst case condition) was a slightly disappointing 72.5dB. This improved to 80dB when the measurement bandwidth was restricted to 22Hz-22kHz, and 83dB when A-weighted. The actual noise level was dependent on the grounding arrangement between the Elixir and the Audio Precision test system. In the best case, both channels had low-level spurious present at the 60Hz powerline frequency and its

¹ See www.stereophile.com/content/real-life-measurements-page-2.

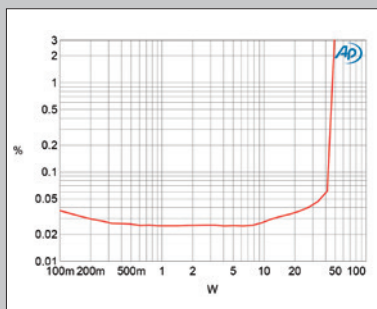


Fig.6 Heed Elixir, THD+N (%) vs 1kHz continuous output power into 8 ohms.

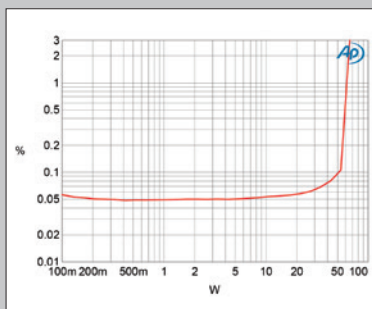


Fig.7 Heed Elixir, THD+N (%) vs 1kHz continuous output power into 4 ohms.

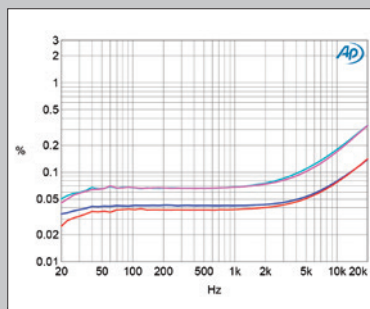


Fig.8 Heed Elixir, THD+N (%) vs frequency at 9.35V into: 8 ohms (left channel blue, right red), 4 ohms (left cyan, right magenta).

approach with powerful dynamics, touchable textures, and a set-it-and-get-it mandate that made the music the focus, not the gear.

And when I maxed the volume, which I often do, the music only sounded better! That force fully revealed itself with Colin Davis and the Boston Symphony Orchestra's recordings of Sibelius's Symphonies 5 and 7 (LP, Philips 6500 959). The Heed drew me into these moody recordings, the swirling layers of orchestral intensity working my emotional sectors like Nero fiddling as fires blazed. My listening notes ranged from "velvet" and "forceful" to "human-sounding" and "cozy." The Elixir brought me into the music, and left no room for resistance.

Heed, meet Elac

The Heed Elixir worked similar, if not as dramatic, magic with the Elac Debut B6 as with the Snell J/Type II, confirming and extending the Elac's strengths. Images of voices and instruments were extremely well focused, almost spooky in their graphic realism, if perhaps smaller overall. The Beam-Hoop LP sounded more close-up and more snug-fitting to my ears, with a tangible, leading-edge precision clearly spelled out on every image. "Trane's Blues" knocked me flat with extended cymbal decay, definition of Paul Chambers's gut-strung double bass, and increased richness and burnished glow from Miles's sizzling trumpet. *Brilliant!* I've heard this Miles Davis LP through umpteenzillion-dollar rigs, but the Heed-Elac duo took a backseat to

none. I could've stayed in the sweet spot for hours. But the headphones were calling . . .

Pay Heed! to Master & Dynamic

I kept Miles on the 'table and plugged in the Master & Dynamic MH40s (\$399): lambskin-clad headphones respected for their natural, easy sound. I heard no great revelations; my inner ears didn't perk up to improved textures or sonic secrets unveiled. Side D of Radiohead's *A Moon Shaped Pool* (2 LPs, XL Recordings XLLP790) sounded buttoned-down and proper, its bumping surdo drum and finger-plucked guitars rolling forward, though not especially tactilely or engagingly. Perhaps the M&D's easygoing

character, coupled to the Heed's dark sound, created a stand-off. Music was well defined, and accurate in a neutral sense, but I made no musical discoveries beyond those already offered by the Snell and Elac speakers.

Heed Meets Music Hall, Ortofon, and DeVore Fidelity

I moved the Heed and my Music Hall MMF-73 turntable with Ortofon 2M Bronze cartridge into my big rig—my Kuzma turntable and tonearm were malfunctioning—and hooked them up to my DeVore Fidelity Orangutan O/93 speakers. Revelation City! All the rich color, flow, and slam of the smaller rig were present through the larger DeVores, and the sound was stupendous. The Elixir's solid-state innards were obvious in its lack of spatial depth and a wee bit

The Heed-Snell combo created a juicy sense of audio buoyancy.

measurements, continued

harmonics present (fig.5).

The Heed Elixir is specified as having a maximum power rating of 50W into 8 ohms (17dBW) with both channels driven. Fig.6 reveals that at our usual definition of clipping (1% THD+noise), the amplifier just falls short of the specified power, at 48Wpc (16.8dBW). Into 4 ohms (fig.7), the amplifier clipped at 61Wpc (14.8dBW) rather than the specified 65Wpc (15.1dBW). I haven't shown how the amplifier's THD+N percentage varied with power into 2 ohms, but it clipped at just 9W into this load, with the waveform asym-

metrically clipped.

Fig.8 shows how the Elixir's THD+N percentage varied with frequency at a moderate output level, 9.35V, equivalent to 11W into 8 ohms and 22W into 4 ohms. The distortion is low in level, particularly into 8 ohms (blue and red traces), but shows the usual rise in the top octaves due to the decreasing amount of corrective negative feedback available. Again, I didn't plot the THD+N percentage into 2 ohms because the amplifier was clearly distressed into this load.

The distortion is heavily second-

harmonic in nature (fig.9), though a regular series of higher-order harmonics is present at a lower level (fig.10). Intermodulation distortion was also respectably low (fig.11).

Other than its inability to drive 2 ohms to any sensible level, the unflat RIAA response, and its higher output impedance at low frequencies, Heed's Elixir measures well for an amplifier costing just \$1295. Its distortion signature, with the second harmonic dominant but a low level of intermodulation, will also render it easy on the ear.—John Atkinson

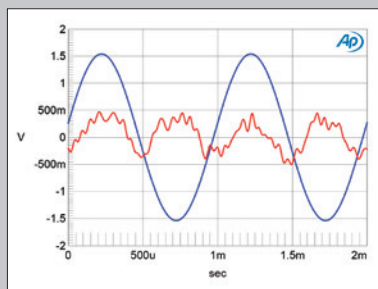


Fig.9 Heed Elixir, 1kHz waveform at 10W into 8 ohms, 0.024% THD+N (blue); distortion and noise waveform with fundamental notched out (red, not to scale).

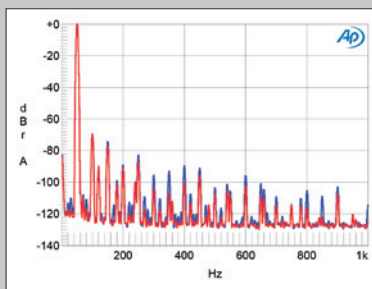


Fig.10 Heed Elixir, spectrum of 50Hz sine wave, DC-1kHz, at 10W into 8 ohms (linear frequency scale).

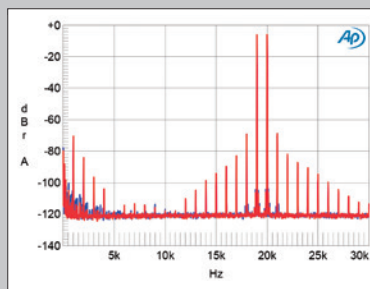


Fig.11 Heed Elixir, HF intermodulation spectrum, DC-30kHz, 19+20kHz at 20W peak into 4 ohms (linear frequency scale).

of hard transient edge, but the music unfurled to communicate with and move me—the amplifier's otherwise elephant-sized soundstage was shocking. The DeVores took to the Heed's solid-state-to-capacitor outputs like a T-bone lapping up Heinz 57. The Beam-Hoop album sounded as sweet as before, but better fleshed out, with deeper bass tones and a greater sense of organic life: that is, of actual musicians playing before me in space. Laura Gibson's *Empire Builder* sounded oddly synthetic and somehow hollow, while my reference Miles Davis Quintet album, *Workin'*, profited greatly from the Heed's forceful staging and plush appeal, from Chambers's chomping low-bass notes to the in-your-face *splat!* of Davis's trumpet. Compared to my Shindo separates, the Heed re-created music with harder edges, less saturated tonal colors, and fewer filigreed details or graceful musical lines. But the Elixir's extended midbass to low-bass notes and the robust physicality of its sound made every record a stone gas.

Conclusions

Some reviews write themselves: Some audio products, created by designers who understand and implement the key elements required to make music sing, are tuned finely enough to be able to let the music speak. The Heed Elixir is such a product: a versatile integrated amplifier whose strengths include musical momentum, a touchable and delicious midrange, first-row re-creation of voices, and a *very* large soundstage. The Elixir produced good micro-dynamics, and its big'n'bouncy macrodynamics presented me with endless surprises from my favorite reference recordings. That so much amplifier is available for \$1295

ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

Analog Sources Music Hall MMF-7.3 turntable & tonearm; Denon DL-103, Goldring Elite, Ortofon 2M Bronze cartridges.

Digital Sources Apple MacBook computer; Halide DAC HD, PS Audio NuWave DACs; Western Digital T2 Mirror Drive.

Preamplification Auditorium 23 A23 moving-coil step-up transformer; Schiit Audio Valhalla triode OTL preamplifier & headphone amplifier; Shindo Laboratory Allegro preamplifier.

Power Amplifier Shindo Laboratory Haut-Brion.

Loudspeakers DeVore Fidelity Orangutan O/93, Elac Debut B6, Snell Type J/II.

Headphones Audio-Technica ATH-ANC9 QuietPoint, Bose SoundTrue, Koss Pro4AA, Master & Dynamic MH40, Other Music DJ, Skullcandy Hesh 2.

Cables Interconnect: Shindo Laboratory. Speaker: Audio-Quest Castle Rock & GO-4, Auditorium 23.

Accessories Music Hall Aztec Blue & Mooo record mats; Spec AD-UP1 Analog Disc Sheet; Clearview Double Helix Mk.II power strip; Salamander five-tier equipment rack; IKEA Aptitlig bamboo chopping boards.—Ken Micallef

should have music lovers dancing, unclothed and unhinged, across fields and meadows, melodies on their lips, as creatures great and small join them in song. Incautiously, happily recommended. ■