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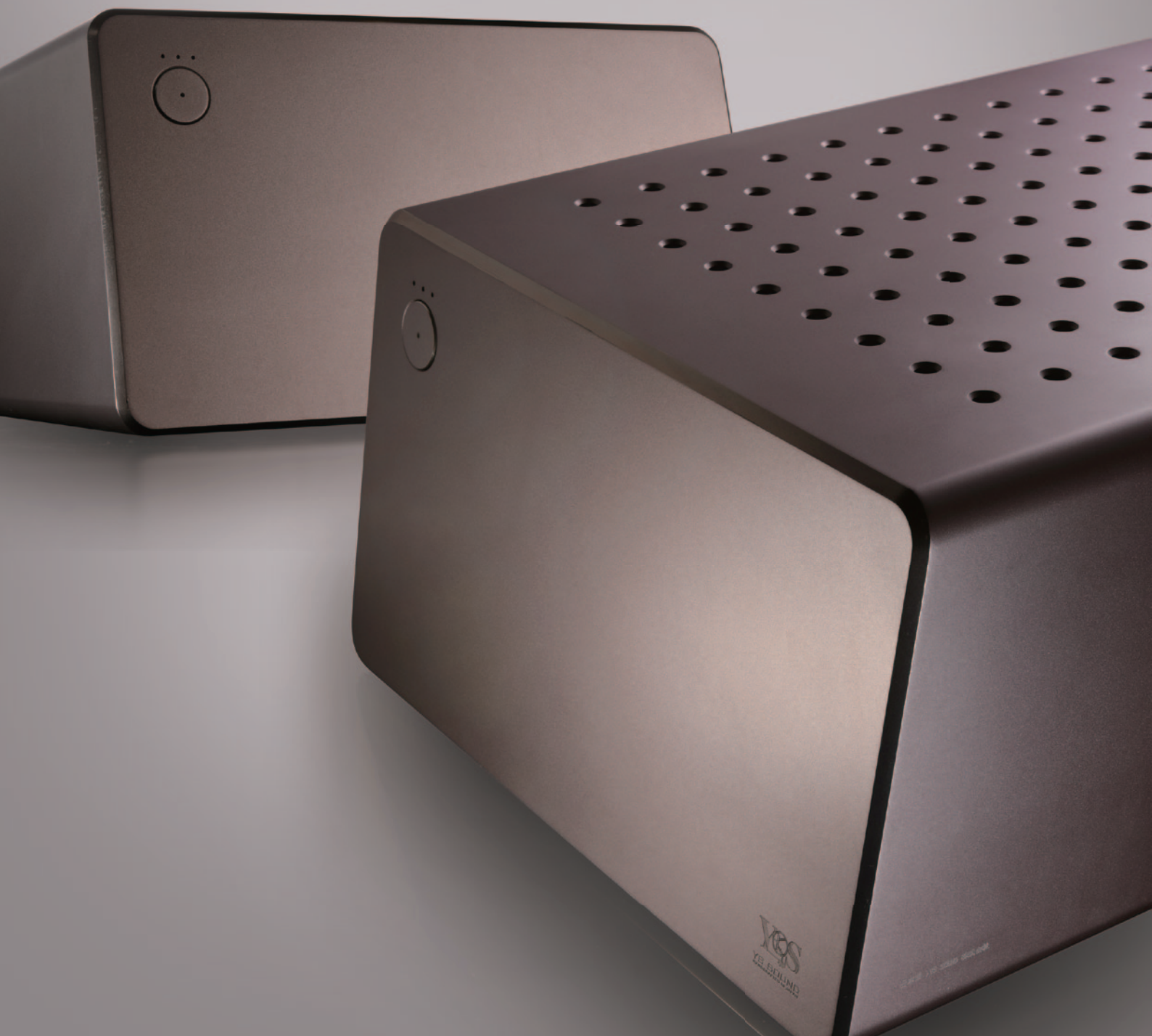
YS SOUND
HANDCRAFTED IN JAPAN

Knocking the Socks off Me!

The New **YS Sound** Mono Power Amplifiers

YSS-772JP

TEXT | Lincoln Cheng (大草)



About 3.5 years ago, we featured the local-made, HK\$2.8 million YS Sound pre and power amplifiers as the cover story of our issue 373, October 2012. It generated a sensation in the Hi Fi circle in China and Hong Kong. There were widespread comments on this amplifier combination, mostly on the sky-high marked price. At the same time, people queried if it worth the price. Would anybody really pay for such expensive local audio products? Well, Gold is tried in the fire. They, YS Sound 83W-103 preamplifier and 91W-615 mono power amplifiers, performed great in our audition room. They were delicate yet powerful, with great sound field, 100% Hi End performance and our reviewers Paul Leung and Thomas Leung praised them wholeheartedly. On the other hand, I witnessed a number of audiophiles here in Hong Kong actually bought them!

Study and Research in Japan

Half a year after, YS, the boss/designer of YS Audio expanded his business by moving the company to Japan. He not only bought a whole building in Kaminarimon, Tokyo, for the office of his YS Audio Cooperation, he also bought a factory in Izu Peninsula as his manufacture base. YS devoted himself in studying, researching and recruiting,

with the sole purpose of making a set of flawless, perfect pre and power amplifier. Finally, he produced the prototype of the set YSS-282JP preamplifier and the YSS-722JP mono power amplifier and showed them to the public in last year's Hong Kong High End Audio Visual Show. Half a year later, the official product YSS-772JP launched and made the cover of the current issue.

Flawless Chassis

By just looking at the photos, or even a close look at YSS-772JP, you may not be convinced it could be so expensive. But when we took them out with all our might from the rigid flight boxes for pictures taking and auditioning, we fully understood the great effort and development resources YS had paid. First of all, the extremely heavy (100kg) amplifier that took 4 men to lift up from the box, measuring 457(W) x 597(D) x 207(H). The chassis was machined from a solid piece of aerospace aluminum alloy with a 5-axis CNC lathe. Then it was very finely polished and anodized. No screws or joints can be seen except at the back and bottom. The edges were so smooth, even the 99 10mm ventilating holes at the top were perfectly polished. The unique rose grey titanium surface was uniformly anodized;



YSS-772JP Mono Power Amplifiers Specifications :

■ Mono Output Power : > 1500W ■ Output Load Impedance : 1 - 16Ω ■ Distortion : 0.002% ■ Signal to Noise Ratio : >135dB ■ Frequency Response : 5Hz - 60kHz ■ Dimensions : 457W x 597D x 279H(mm) ■ Weight : 100kg ■ List Price : US\$300,000



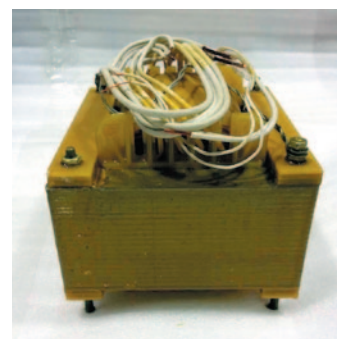
the reclining faceplate had nothing on it but a circular push for power and three little holes above it. They had red lights inside and were used to show abnormal conditions, namely, DC, Short Circuit or Leakage. At the right bottom corner was laser-marked "YS Sound, handcrafted in Japan"; and also on the right side panel, "(Japan) YS Sound Cooperation" was marked at the left bottom corner.

The back plate was simple and clear. A big and extremely quiet fan was positioned at the center; on its left was a pair of Furutech Torque Guard speaker binding posts, FT-818. Under it was the 20A power socket. On the right was a pair of XLR terminals, right on its top was a turbo circuit switch, developed by YS Sound. After power was on for 1 minute, if this switch was pushed for 30 seconds, the fan would turn to a high speed, and the bias of all the power transistors would be increased in a short time, so that the temperature would rise to the ideal working condition. That meant the amplifier would take only 1-1/2 minutes to warm up which normally should take 1/2 hour. Such design would be most welcome by impatient audiophiles!

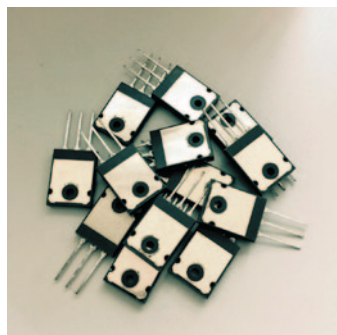
First-Rate Components

Since we couldn't open the bottom of the amplifier, and hence couldn't take any inside pictures, neither had YS

taken any pictures, we could only report on information given by YS on the components used. The 5000W big transformer was wound in a special way using British-made enameled wire and silicon steel sheets from Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal. YS emphasized that the transformer was wound with their newly developed skill; it had the lowest magnetic leakage and was a most stable one. The 4 filtering capacitors were custom-made in Germany, capacitances were 15,000 μ F and 22,000 μ F respectively and were connected with thick gold-plated copper bars. Each channel of the YSS-772JP had 16 strictly matched transistors, picked from the stock of YS. They were high quality Motorola



transistors which had discontinued for many years. Furthermore, NPN transistors were used for both positive and negative cycles. Such design had the advantage of high power and analytical power, wide sound field and high speed; but it was also very high demanding on transistor matching, and that increased the manufacture cost. Connecting wires inside the amplifier was very high quality Japan-made PCOCC-A high current cables. Although it output a 1.5kW power, in the audition period of over one month, the ventilation fan turned slowly and even if I put my ears closed to the amplifier back, I didn't notice any sound from the motor or sound of wind. The body was only slightly warm and that meant the heat dispersion was very effective. Even if it was kept turned on for a long time, the temperature remained basically unchanged, and it worked very stable.



A Sense of Wonder

The gears hooked up with YSS-772JP included dCS Vivaldi's 4-piece SACD/CD system, Dr. Feickert Analogue Firebird turntable + Acoustical Systems Axiom tonearm + Aiwon cartridge, Kondo SFz silver step-up transformer + GE-1 phono stage, Dan D'Agostino Momentum Preamplifier and Dynaudio Platinum Evidence Speakers. Cables were Siltech Triple-Crown XLR from DAC to Pre and from Pre to Power Amplifier, all the rest were Nordost Odin 2. After 300 hours run-in, the YSS-772JP had entered into operational status, and we were ready to give it a thorough review.

It was our reference combo and we were very familiar with its sound, so it was very easy to tell how good or how bad YSS-772JP was once it was tested. It turned out that we were all shocked at the result! Our audition room with all those reference gears had already a very high level of sound quality, how come it could be raised to a higher level beyond our expectations by only replacing the power amplifier? We couldn't believe it but we had to, with a sense of wonder!

Whenever there was any real good product brought into our audition room, the news spread quickly, and everybody including our reviewers, of course, would like to have a look and listen. Everyone would like to occupy the best seat, not willing to leave. So, besides Leo Fung and



Thomas Leung, who were responsible to write the cover story, Duncan and Paul Leung would also have something to say!

Hard to Find Fault

For me, it was hard to find any fault on YSS-772JP --- the US\$300 high price could be one, and the super heavy 100kg could be another. Its quietness was beyond normal. A dark background plus super high analytic power, it gave abundant music details---to a frightening degree! In "How can I be willing to leave You", the guitar of Su De Hua was a good example. The pressing, picking and strumming, the crispy sound and harmonics of the steel strings, the sound and resonance of the sound box, all were clear, thrilling, and like-real! Jacky Cheung's voice was more delicate than ever, the diction, chest tone resonance and breathing came out naturally. Again, clear, thrilling, and like-real! This song always had very good sound effect, only I didn't expect YSS-772JP could give it another breakthrough.

The channel separation of YSS-772JP was exceptional, instruments were full of bodies. Listening to "Rossini String Sonatas" led by Accardo, the magnificent sounds of the two antique violins, the melodious and moving cello, and the deep and warm double bass were not only distinctive, the gestures of the musicians, the actions of their bowing seemed to be right in front of me. Even the harmonics and overtones of each instrument were clearly heard. The sound was harmonious and touching, full of charm!

With an output power of 1.5kW, vigorous pieces such as "Pictures at an exhibition", "Dragon Rising and Tiger Leaping" was easy for YSS-772JP. Power came and faded as demanded by the music, and it had absolute control on the Platinum Evidence speakers. When replaying delicate pieces like "River of Sorrow" and "Cai Qui Old Songs", YSS-772JP performed like a small power tube amplifier, fine, rich and with charm. That was most unexpected!

A Final Word

YSS-772JP was amazing! Its sound quality was beyond our expectations. On the other hand, not many music lovers could afford such high price. Anyway, this amplifier was an eye opener, it raised the standard of hi end power amplifier to a new level! 音



My Impressions on YS Sound YSS-772JP

TEXT | Paul Leung (梁錦暉)

After listening to the YSS-772JP mono block, I'd like to express some of my feelings.

This was not my first encounter with these amplifiers. In the previous August Hi End Audio Visual Show, they were there in one of the rooms in Hall 3, driving a pair of Kharma Exquiste Midi Grand. I had not only a chance to look at them closely, but also held an audition session for the exhibitor. Pity that they didn't bring me much surprise, I even found them a bit crude, not to say fidelity.

This time at the Audiotechnique audition room, I listened to the same model, but the sound quality and effect made great progresses, and were completely different from my experience in the previous encounter. I played "The Perfect Sound 2010" which I was so familiar with, in the most familiar venue and using the most familiar equipment. It surprised me greatly. It's never been so delicate and natural. The first song "Wish me Happiness" seemed a bit strange to me. There were more overtones in the guitar, and Cai Qin's expressions were deeper and real. "Memory" by Danny Summer had a stronger 3D sense; the presence of "High Life" was much enhanced and lively. All songs had more details, better sense of 3D and reality. I suddenly found that I was not so familiar with "The Perfect Sound 2010" as I had thought. There were details lost in previous amplifiers which I never realized.

I seldom listened to "The Perfect Sound 2010" lately, but this time I finished the whole disc and the melodies still lingered on my mind!

A Masterpiece of Culmination

TEXT | Duncan (鄧肯)

One day when I arrived at the Audiotechnique, Lincoln urged me to the audition room, saying there was a pair of power amplifiers I had to listen to. Looking at his excited expressions on the face, I knew it must be something special and I was ready to be surprised.

What I saw before me was a pair of mono block power amplifiers YSS-772JP. They had no glittering and eye-catching outlook, but the low-key chassis was colored in a rare light gold and grey. Workmanship was very fine, all edges and corners were smooth and seamless, very comfortable to the touch. Understated elegance described it best.

The first impression was very quiet, with a dark background. The vocal of "Send in the Clown" (original LP "Bill Henderson Live at the Times") was full of emotions and very lively. The piano of Joyce Collins was life-like and natural. The positions of backup vocals and soundstage were excellent with plenty of air. Such delicacy from a high power amplifier was totally unexpected.

Next was time for dynamic pieces. In "Big Silver Eagle", at the most vigorous passages, YS took everything under control and the Dynaudio Evidence Platinum reproduced it with ease. There was not a single trace of compression or distortion, and power was more than enough. The sound field and stereoscopic effect were the best I had ever experienced in our audition room. Lastly, I played a violin piece from 'Mutter Live', track 2, "Allegro ben ritmato e deciso". The tone, the texture and the harmonics were as real as could be. The strong rhythm and high speed made me breathless.

From my years of listening experience, not many power amplifiers were 'unforgettable'; YSS was one of the few. It combined the merits of many top models (both tubes and transistors) of various brands to itself. It's not exaggerated to say it a masterpiece of culmination.

Soaring up into the Sky

I heard about rumors on YS Sound three years ago.

TEXT | Leo

"Somebody says it is a knockoff of a world-famous brand name, with nearly identical circuits and components. Somebody says it is even better than the original and somebody has given up the original for YS."

"But the price of YS is close to the original! Is there such a fool?"

"Those who know YS say he is rich, he can make anything of the highest quality with the greatest of ease."

Such rumors kept coming to me, and people asked me what I thought. My answer was unvaried, "Wait till I have listened!"

Anyway, I expressed my opinion on the word "rich".

"Being rich could sometimes make things easy, but you can't make the best audio product just because you are rich. In making Hi Fi equipment, the European and American countries are a few decades ahead of us. Each and every brand has gone over many years of tests and improvements before they can make their success. Soaring up into the sky in a short time can hardly happen."

Fulfilling a Wish

There were more and more rumors, but I didn't have a chance to meet YS face to face. I thought if YS could just play even with those world renowned products, the designer should be a genius. Three years ago I read the reviews on YS, written by Lincoln, Paul and Thomas, who unanimously spoke highly of it. My first reaction was "It is true"! The rumor had come true. YS had made a miracle in the Hi Fi history of Hong Kong! Unfortunately I knew it too late and missed the chance to listen to it. But, unexpectedly, a few days before the Chinese New Year, I saw a pair of YS's latest mono power amplifiers, YSS-772JP, in the Audiotechnique audition room. They were big in size, and weighed 200kg/pair! I also noticed some stimulating figures in the specifications.

Output Load Impedance: 1 – 16Ω
Signal to Noise Ratio: >135dB
Frequency Response: 5Hz – 60kHz
Mono Output Power: 1500W



The rumor went that YS was a copycat; yet the outlook design of this mono block was 100% original. Material and workmanship were absolutely first rate, design was practical, very robust. Since a pair of Dynaudio Evidence Platinum, which I was very familiar with, was replaced at the moment by a pair of Meyer Amie bookshelf speakers (also one of my favorite speakers) on that day, and so I couldn't give an accurate comment on the performance of the power amplifiers. Until the ninth day of the Chinese New Year, when I returned to Hong Kong from a trip, I was able to find an answer to my doubts in the past years. I chose "The Perfect Sound 2010" for my reference.

Took My Breath Away

After listening to Cai Qin's "Wish me Happiness", Danny Summer's "Memory" and Sissel's "Shenandoah", I was confused! I was unable to tell how I felt at that moment.

The job of a power amplifier was to 'magnify' the audio signal from the preamplifier. A perfect design would keep the density of the hundreds of thousands details from the audio signal, without adding any 'grains' from electric current and various noises. The higher the power, the more difficult it was to keep the density. The output power of this amplifier was 1500W, it should certainly have some affection on vocal pieces which needed only a few Watts. Yet, the density was not reduced, but increased. What I heard was like a small power tube amplifier! What's the reason?

The placing of speakers by Lincoln was very precise.



The frequency extension, the depth of sound field, the imaging and positions were reference standard. I was deeply impressed from years of listening in this audition room. This time, I could feel directly how YS had raised the performance to another level, higher, more real, and more involving.

The imaging was not just the 'mouth', but also the 'body', which could only be experienced on panel speakers, and it was very holographic! Perhaps the arrangement of the speaker units of the Evidence could have such effect, but never so obvious and noticeable. The tone was very beautiful. If I didn't know beforehand, I would say it was from a tube amplifier, but couldn't say what tube it was using. The mids had never been so warm in transistor amplifiers, the smoothness of the highs and the ultra-highs were beyond imagination, completely out of my expectation!

Another unexpected feature of YS: it was extremely captivating. I had that feeling when listening to Cai Qin, but more so for Danny Summer. Emotions of the performers were actually there in the recordings, yet the dynamics and speed of each phrase and each word, were often distorted by various noises and the limited ability of the audio devices. I remembered before the audition, Lincoln turned the volume to normal position and asked me to put my ears close to the speaker units. I didn't hear any noises! The quietness of this amplifier was incredible. From that moment I knew YS was really something, and was more certain after listening to a few songs.

I then listened to "You Look Good to Me" which was an excellent recording from the Verve super Jazz series. It was

a Trio with Oscar Peterson at the piano, Ed Thigpen at the drum and Ray Brown at the Double Bass. At the beginning, when Ray drew his bow, I could smell the resin and hear every detail precisely, which I had never experienced before YS was there. Then he turned to plucking. The bouncing of the strings was strong and clear. In this recording, I could also hear the separations between the instruments were obvious. Each one was very vivid and surrounded with ambient sound. The accurate positions of the instruments together created a 3D picture. This was a single microphone recording made in 1964 and was a demonstration of such recording technique at its best.

Accardo used a Francescatti Stradivarius in "Bach Partita III", the recording venue being a small chapel and the microphone was an antique Neumann. I emphasized on this because YS had the ability to capture the characteristics of them. Beautiful tone, life-like, high speed, plenty small details, obvious ambience and space, it was unforgettable.

The imaging and 3D of "8 Harmonies", the distribution of instruments of a big orchestra in "Glinka", the presence of "High Life", all these refreshed my listening experience. The more I listened, the more I felt YS was an all-purpose amplifier.

"Picture at an Exhibition" from RR was one of the best recordings of this piece. The big dynamics, the tympani and bass drum were the favorites for all audiophiles. Again, with YS driving the Evidence, it was another new listening experience.

Before using YS, it sounded good, with big sound field and explosive dynamics. With YS added, the texture and density of the space were even better than ever. The separation of nearly a hundred pieces of instruments was so obvious, with distinct distances and 3D effects. Its continuous overtones were not only clear, but also separated with the instruments, without causing disturbances. The whole 'picture' was very transparent unparalleled by anything before.

In this recording, YS also showed its ability on handling phase accuracy. To reach such state, the matching of components was very demanding. Wasting was unavoidable. It would be very time-consuming, too, and of course, the cost would go up. I could understand YS had a very severe process in components matching, or had they some very clever methods?

Next, I tried to find out the possibility of absolute phase.

I slowly turned up the volume to an unbearable level. Normally, the image of each instrument would expand to a double size or even bigger. But this time, there was only a 30% increase. That was yet another feature out of my expectation.

Lastly, I listened to an LP, it's "A Whisper of Love" from Three Blind Mice. Needless to say, the performance was superb. What I wanted to hear was again the phase.

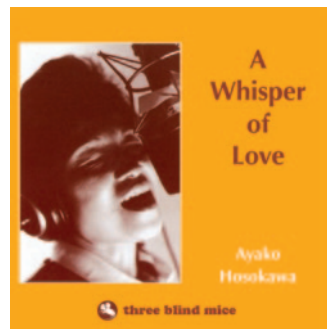
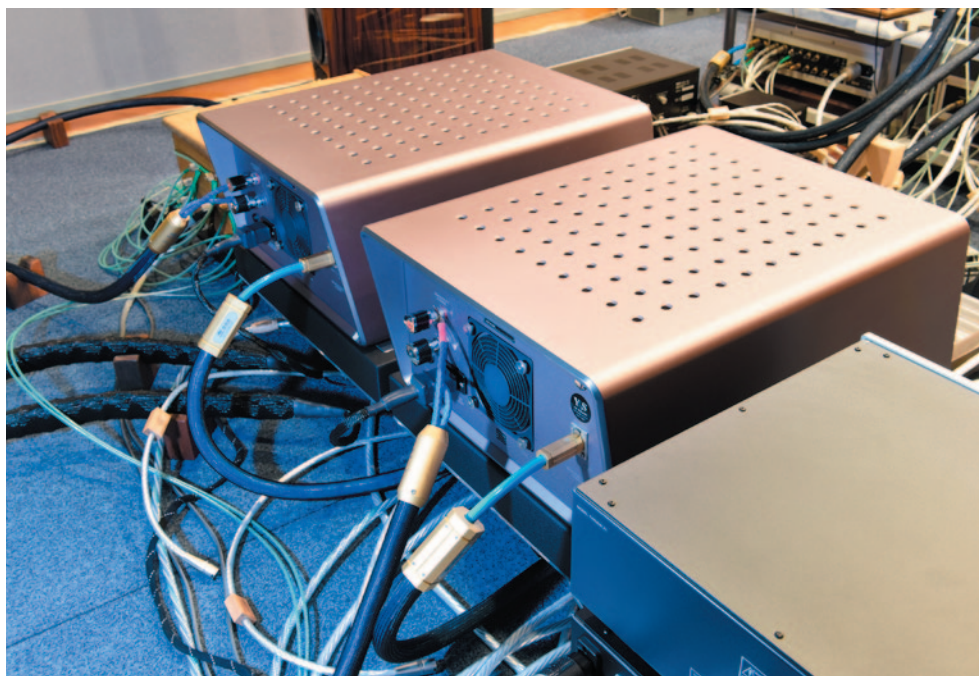
There was a special thing about this recording. The recording engineer Howard Johnston adapted the "X" two-microphone method for Ayako's singing. In addition to high density and more harmonics, the movement of her head could be 'seen'. This would be most obvious if the phase was correct.

Again, YS did not disappoint me. Ayako's head movements, slight or big, were clearly reproduced. 'Evidence' had great contribution, but the greatest merit went to YS.

World-renowned

The rumor about YS was not groundless. YS did create a miracle. I won't say it could beat any best amplifiers, but at least it was on a par with them.

In the past few decades, I had listened to numerous state-of-the-art power amplifiers, some were outstanding in density, some had beautiful tone, some highlighted the mids and highs, some had high velocity in transient, or high dynamics; but only YSS-722JP could have all these merits at the same time. Nevertheless, I believed I had only heard 80% of its best, because the preamplifier was not its best match, YSS-282JP. It was outstanding, but would it be even better for a whole 'suite'? This mystery wouldn't be revealed until the launch of the new YS preamplifier. 📺



Another Master Piece from YS Sound

A New Milestone :YSS-772JP

TEXT | Thomas Leung(披頭)

It was 2012 when I last listened to YS Sound products which were the 83W-130 preamplifier and a pair of 91M-615 mono power amplifiers. This time, there were only a pair of YSS-772JP mono power amplifiers. For output power, YSS-772JP was only half that of 91M-615, i.e., 1500W vs 3000W. But size-wise, 91M-615 would be ashamed of itself when placed beside YSS-772JP.

What? Even the strongly-built 91M-615 would feel ashamed? No kidding, YSS-772JP was made in Japan with the highest grade of workmanship. Each one weighed 100kg, anyone knew it's not simple just by one look. The price is sky-high, I should say. How it performed? We were eager to know.

Without the matching of a preamplifier from the same manufacturer, could the performance reflect its true value? Well, after listening to the power amp alone, I found it was even easier to find out its pros and cons. The reason was, since all our other equipment remained unchanged, it would be easy to tell anything different when the power amp was replaced.

I put in a Koji Kamaki SACD in the dCS Vivaldi player and played "To Me". The beginning piano introduction and the light violin at the back sounded quite different from what I was familiar with. They were more 'real', no exaggeration, but made me feel they were really there! When the bass came, the sound was never so true! Before Koji Kamaki sang, he took a breath, and again, it sounded very real.



When I had listened to just half of the song, my feeling was one word: REAL!

Then I turned to “Scottish Fantasy” played by Ning Feng. I was lost in the music on hearing the wonderful sound of the violin, forgetting my duty was to judge the performance of the YS. But, that already showed how good YS was! They said amplifiers of high power were not good for replaying violin music, they tended to be coarse. YSS-772JP was not coarse, both Koji Kamaki and Ning Feng told me it was fine, delicate and moving!

In these 2 discs, YSS-772JP had displayed its delicacy and more, which were the textures and bodies of different instruments. They were just superb. We always thought the preamplifier and not the power amplifier was responsible for reproducing all the small details in the music signal, YSS-772JP had showed us its analytical power was equally important, and it had crucial effect on the tone, too. Well, this I understood, but before listening, I never realized the effect could be so big.

For a 200kg pair of huge power amplifiers, needless to say, I won't be contented with its good performance in light pieces. We expected such amplifiers were at their best when replaying big scenes. Of course, I was full of expectation on this as well. I had no doubt on its power, but I was curious to know how its sound field was like at high volume.

“Belafonte at Carnegie Hall” was not exactly very big, but the introduction brasses were shiny, and there were big drums and a string ensemble, creating a brilliant stage. The sound was big, but not deafening. The sound stage was very open and wide. It came comfortably, without any stress. When Belafonte came to the stage, the applause were so real that I felt as if I was in the midst of the audience.

Next was Ernest Ansermet's “Russian Orchestral Works”. His “Polovtsian Dances” was barbaric! When I listened to it at my place, I thought the tympani could be more pounding. Yes! With YSS-772JP, the tims were fierce, pounding vigorously just a few meters in front of me. The orchestra and choir were majestic, full of energy. The sound was big, but didn't cause any irritation to the ears. It felt much like the concert hall. When replaying “Russlan and Ludmilla”, although a bit gentler, the momentum was still strong and the basses surged towards me like invisible waves, demonstrating what a high-power amplifier should be like.

Big pieces replayed with YSS-772JP were really big. It not only produced a high sound pressure, but a deep and wide sound stage, filling up the whole space with plenty of details. After listening to it, I was more convinced that a power amplifier was not just a power provider, it could do much more. Without a first-rate power amplifier, you never knew what your first-rate front end equipment could do. ㊦

