



PHONO STAGE OF THE YEAR (UP TO £2,500)

Hegel Music Systems V10



It's first ever phono stage, the V10 is quite a radical move for Hegel and a fairly radical phono stage in its own right. However, Hegel founder Bent Holter has apparently long been wanting to build his own phono preamplifier so why not go radical in its design?

The V10 features a bay that forms part of a barrier that separates the power circuit from the signal circuitry; a circuit powered by JFET transistors that offer up to 60dB of gain for moving coils (40dB MM) with the option to add up to 12dB more via dip switches on the back panel. If that's not enough there is the option to add a further 6dB by swapping a jumper inside the box. Likewise there are two standard settings for impedance on the back panel, 100 and 300 Ohms, but inside the box a tiny rotary allows you to choose any level between 50 and 550 Ohms. You can also adjust capacitance use a subsonic filter using

the same rear dip switch blocks. Inputs are separate for MM and MC but you are advised against connecting both simultaneously, while output is available on RCAs or XLRs. You can choose to have the V10 put itself into standby after 15 minutes without a signal which is quite handy. All of which makes the V10 surprisingly flexible given its single front panel button.

Jason Kennedy enjoyed the vibrant performance of the Hegel; "The V10 revealed the energy and intensity of the piece." In particular, he praised, "the taut muscularity of the rhythms of this piece being clearly defined " and felt it is, "good and open with a very live feel and decent low level resolution."

Jason loves a good sense of rhythm and said of the V10, "Timing is the key here; it's what vinyl does so well but not all phono stages manage to exploit. If the timing is right then the most complex passages make sense, I played a variety of records from jazz and rock genres and failed to trip it up, there is a slight forwardness in the balance but this doesn't get in the way of the music." He concluded the review by saying, "there has clearly been a lot of thought put into the V10 and it pays off with a dynamic and revealing sound that will suit the more relaxed turntables and cartridges on the market down to a tee." +

Reviewed in Issue **192**

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