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Awesome Drive Power and Joyfully User-friendly Operation

It was only 4 years ago when Aurorasound debut in the audio industry, like a comet, with VIDA (Phono Equalizer Amplifier) and PREDA (Preamplifier), which fascinated audio enthusiasts. Now, the company released HEADA, a headphone amplifier. The cosmetics resemble that of VIDA, an aluminum chassis is encased in a wooden cabinet, creating a traditional appearance.

In recent years, while the market is booming with varieties of headphones, balanced re-cable is getting a lot of attention. In the first place, input impedance of a headphone is relatively high; hence, it causes difficulties to drive headphones due to insufficient drivable power. On the other hand, speaker's input impedance is low; therefore, it is relatively easy to deliver sufficient power. For this reason, a balanced connection having plus and minus signal current is ideal for driving headphones.

One critical characteristic is how perfectly-balanced output can the amplifier deliver to the headphones. The core of HEADA is attributable to the 4 modular amplifiers (due to balanced design) installed in the main circuit board. The power supply employs a high-grade toroidal transformer. HEADA generates 0.8W at 600Ω impedance headphones. For your reference, I have used a headphone having 600Ω impedance, with balanced connection; the drive power was more than enough.

Operation of HEADA provides great feelings even physiologically. The feel of volume control is cool. The volume control is of pro-use type, manufactured by Tokyo Ko-on Denpa, widely used in recording equipment. The large size conductive-plastic potentiometer (27mm) has a very comfortable touch with right amount of resisting feel, which allows precise setting of the volume level you desire. With use of the High/Low gain selector switch, located at the right lower side of the volume control, a perfect volume setting becomes extremely easy for a listener.

Vast Amount of Information Produce Clear Sound for Full Enjoyment even for Single-end

A listening test conducted by using Sennheiser HD650 with single-end connection demonstrated that HEADA sounded extremely clear (transparent?), representing the sound of Aurorasound. It can be described as high-class sound. If an analogy is used to describe HEADA's sound, it tastes like delicious sushi at very high-level sushi bar, whereas a standard pre/main amp the sound “tastes” like conveyor-belt sushi. Freshness of sound is superb and the number

of color in sound is countless. In one piece of music, there exist so many sound colors which you can chase and enjoy with sense of hearing.

Jazz sounds extremely energetic which is attributable to enormous amount of information. Bass' scraping and varoom sound is superior to high-quality record playback. Yet, it has wide sound range in total, hence, trumpet and saxophone do not sound like piercing your ears. Melody line is vividly elegant. (This is in line with VIDA)

Vocal is flat out sexy. While the sound of HEADA is orthodox with a lot of information, female vocal's consonant is so real that you can almost visualize movements of her lips and tongue. It presents somewhat embarrassing feel because it is as if you are watching a lusty kissing scene closely. Of course, rather than being nitpicky like seeing through a microscope, just listen to "song" and you will get a sensationally impressive sound.



For Classical music S/N is outstanding. As HD650 is of an open-type headphone outside sound comes through, however, surrounding acoustic encompassing the music is so quiet a listener's sense in the brain, where music is interpreted, becomes more lucid. HEADA is immune to intervention from musical performance and composition, but at times it delivers hot expressions.

Remarkable Improvement with Balanced Connection/Rendering has Class and Stately

Here, I have changed the headphone cable to Oyaide's 3-pin balanced type. Again using an analogy, sushi tastes like the one served at ultra-high-class sushi restaurant in Ginza Japan. Rendering has such class and stately, the sound melts into your eardrums through the inner ear. Phrasing of jazz is feelingly fuller and richer, and the sound from trumpet and saxophone melted like snowflakes the moment it hit the eardrums, spreading inside your brain like honeydew. Vocal's consonant feels like tasting rather than visual perception-----, I cannot write any further than that. For classical music, it becomes easier to detect deficiencies of music performances. At the same time, it strikes again how great musical compositions are. HEADA is a work of art.

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