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Siltech SAGA

A Bold New Concept in Amplification

SPECIAL REPORT:
The Swiss Audio
Industry

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Technology
Breakthroughs
of the Year



EnigmAcoustics Sopranino

\$4000

While it would be reasonable to characterize the Sopranino as an add-on electrostatic super-tweeter, that's where the similarity to past designs ends. There is no external bias—nothing to plug into the wall! The Sopranino is self-biased and should be thought of as an electret tweeter using a permanently polarized diaphragm, whose dimensions (9 x 12cm) and thickness (25 microns) result in a moving mass of only about 1.6mg.

Electret microphones have been around for many years, but transforming a mike into a tweeter is no easy technical task. Horn-loading increases efficiency and yields a nominal sensitivity of 90dB. Built-in second-order crossovers facilitate integration with the main speakers. The Sopranino partners with the vintage QUAD-57 ESL in spectacular fashion. Using the 12kHz network, -3dB gain setting, and a slight toe-in, results in a far more neutral tonal balance, greater tonal color realism, as well as gains in transient clarity, soundstage transparency, and treble air. Performance wise, the Sopranino catapults the venerable QUAD-57 into the 21st century. (DO, 235)



Siltech SAGA Amplification System

\$112,500

This brilliantly engineered, three-box, Class A preamplifier and 360Wpc (into 8 ohms) Class A stereo power amplifier are not just a hybrid of triode tubes and transistors; they are also a hybrid of battery power and AC power, of conventional circuitry and pure light (the SAGA uses a beam of light to bias its output transistors). Though some of its many ingenious bits and pieces have been tried before over the years, there has never been anything else to JV's knowledge like the complete Siltech package. Nor does anything else sound like it. The tube preamp/amp for the solid-state maven, the transistor preamp/amp for the tube aficionado, the SAGA manages to combine most of the signal virtues of each amplification device into a preamp/amp with the color, dimensionality, and bloom of glass audio and the resolution, frequency extension, transient speed, low noise, and high control of solid-state. An instant classic and future collectible, the SAGA is that rarest of all high-end products—something genuinely new and wonderful-sounding under the hi-fi sun. (Reviewed in this issue)

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