

Gryphon Diablo 300 Integrated Amplifier Review (partial)

Haute Fidélité Magazine, France

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Listening to the Gryphon Diablo 300 Balanced Analogue Input

Our first audition of the Diablo 300 was via a balanced analogue input, our minimum recommendation for deriving the full benefit from its native balanced configuration. Connected to our new reference transport and converter, **it took only a few seconds to realise that the component had matured in comparison to the original version. It has lost none of the vitality and dynamic force that seduced us upon our first encounter with the Diablo. Listening to Francis Cabrel's "Animal", one finds a transient power and expansive energy in the impact of drumsticks on various metal percussion and drums.** It pulsates seriously, becoming almost physical as we turn up the volume, which we indeed do often since the device takes in stride any requests via the remote control. **The sensation of presence and stability in the stereo image is amazing, one feels close to the performers and virtually transported to the recording studio by the exquisite rendering of diverse and varied reverberations.** In a more classical genre, the differences between the old and new Diablo are more readily apparent, differences which elevate the 300 to an even higher level of authenticity, to an even greater level of realism. One could say it abandons certain spectacular or dazzling aspects of its predecessor to enter a sonic universe that is more real. To cut a long story short, the neutrality and texture of its sound have emerged. In Keiser's Passion of St. Mark, Diablo 300 reveals exceptional insight into the choral passages, with no loss of harmonic colours and vocal texture. The term "body" takes on an almost physical sense that we had not felt with the original Diablo.

Listening to the Gryphon Diablo 300 DAC Module AES/EBU Input

Simplification of the system in this configuration with the Nagra transport directly connected to the AES/EBU input of the optional Gryphon DAC module. **In repeating the same tracks, we experience sound very close to that obtained with our external converter. Impressions were extremely similar on "Animal". Dynamic capabilities prove excellent with realistic extreme transients on the one hand and a highly varied harmonic palette in the pianissimo and on the decay of notes (very fluid cymbals.** The slightly narrower stereo image remains firmly anchored before the listener with a credibility that cannot be contested. **Classical and acoustic tracks reveal timbral accuracy and admirable melodic flexibility. The precise rendering of microdetail lends a great deal of stability and width to the soundstage.** The dialogue between the harpsichord and soprano Simone Kermes in the opening of Antonio Caldera's "Ha Vinto Amor" is placed in a clear and natural ambience, as the voice rises to very high notes without any harshness.

Listening to the Gryphon Diablo 300 Phonostage Module

Our Diablo 300 was equipped with the dual mono phonostage option to which we connected a Rega RP10 turntable with Rega Apheta cartridge. When playing Jazz Variants by the O'Zone Percussion Group (Clearaudio audiophile vinyl), **we were surprised by the liveliness of the reproduction, far removed from the romantic tone usually associated with listening to vinyl. There is none of that here. Various percussion instruments are distilled with seemingly endlessly dynamic variations.** From the perspective of

your reporter, the overall performance is rendered with a little more warmth compared to other high end phonostages, but with undeniable gains in nerve and timing. Consequently, **the ultrafast attacks deliver an extremely open harmonic spectrum and very high resolution sound. Diablo 300 probably offered some of the most well defined vinyl playback that we have ever experienced in our listening room.**

VERDICT

The arrival of large-scale integrated amplifiers in the High End market was beginning to overshadow the Diablo. **With the evolution of the 300 and its optional modules, the Danish manufacturer returns to the forefront of the category with topflight technology and remarkable musicality.** The final cost of a version with all options is high, but also eliminates a lot of external wiring. **The Diablo is dead, long live the Diablo 300!**