



Renaissance Amplification RAP-02 Pre-amplifier and RA-02 Mono-blocs

Reviewed by Jason Hector in Issue 40

To say that the RAP/RA-02 combination was something of a surprise package is an understatement. Not only do these slim-line solid-state amplifiers come from a company best known for manufacturing pricey SET mono-blocs (and importing the even pricier LAMM and Metronome marques) but sonically they perform way beyond the level that their modest price and appearance suggests. The route from parallel single-ended 300B to bargain priced transistor amp might not be an obvious one, but manufacturer IES have applied the lessons of simplicity and short signal paths with a vengeance, leaving interiors looking sparse but the music direct, dynamic and transparent. Too many promising and affordable amplifiers are let down by their matching pre-amps, but the RAP-02 spends its budget wisely on a simple circuit and a really top-notch stepped attenuator. The end result

is a combination of bare-bones control unit and mosfet power amps that delivers astonishing clarity and authority at its price. Whilst the amps can't be described as power-



houses they don't suffer the crippling ills that go with jamming load tolerance out of a limited budget. Use them with sensibly chosen speakers and the musical rewards are astonishing. Discrete components and an overall circuit derived from the company's valve mono-blocs play their part, but it's the

skill with which the overall package has been balanced that really impresses. Classic examples of value engineering, these Renaissance amplifiers remind you just how much music there is on your discs – and that it doesn't have to cost the earth to get it off. ▶+



Price: £1999
as a combination

Manufacturer:
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