

SPECIAL
FEATURE

80

BEST
PRODUCTS
OF 2018

stereophile

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VERSATILE AUDIO ENGINEERING

AVM'S OVATION PA 8.2 PREAMP

TENOR
SAX PLAYER
**WAYNE
SHORTER**
AT 85

MY SONIC LAB
ULTRA EMINENT EX
CARTRIDGE
P.44



AWESOME ANALOG
FROM DR. FEICKERT,
EMT, KOETSU,
MY SONIC LAB,
ORTOFON, VPI

HIGH-VALUE
EUROPEAN SPEAKERS
FROM ELAC, HARBETH,
WHARFEDALE

DIGITAL FROM
AQUA, ATC

DECEMBER
2018

\$8.99
US

\$10.99
Canada



Editors' Choices (continued)

every instance I'm familiar with, the GAIs produced a marked improvement in overall clarity. But to be on the safe side, buy them from a dealer with a good return policy.—**Robert Deutsch**

LUXMAN MQ-88USE POWER AMPLIFIER

(\$5995; REVIEWED BY ART DUDLEY, SEPTEMBER 2018, VOL.41 NO.8 WWW)

Next to DeVore Fidelity's Orangutan O/93 loudspeaker, and Rega Research's Apollo and Métronome's Kalista DreamPlay One CD players—respectively, the least expensive and most expensive CD players I've fallen in love with—the product that most impressed me between November 2017 and October 2018 was the trim and tidy Luxman MQ-88uSE power amplifier, which uses two KT88 pentode tubes per channel to deliver a satisfactory 25Wpc. Its sound is beautiful, its build quality superb, its Japanese-perfectionist pedigree beyond reproach.—**Art Dudley**



MARK LEVINSON NO.534 STEREO AMPLIFIER

(\$20,000; REVIEWED BY LARRY GREENHILL, MAY 2018, VOL.41 NO.5 WWW)

My favorite 2018 product is the Mark Levinson No.534 stereo amplifier, for its fast, taut, neutral sound, wide dynamic range, transparency, and bass speed and extension, which don't change with different loudspeakers and/or preamplifiers. It delivers the sound and superb build quality of Mark Levinson's No.536 monoblocks (\$30,000/pair) for two-thirds the price.—**Larry Greenhill**

NAIM UNITI NOVA INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

(\$6995; REVIEWED BY KEN MICALLEF, MARCH 2018, VOL.41 NO.3 WWW)

The Uniti Nova combines the ultimate in usability and a ton of contemporary features with excellent sound and a solid remote control. Beautifully designed and beautiful to look at, the Nova sets the pace as the greatest all-in-one

integrated amplifier—streamer—media player I've ever heard. Its excellent overall sound was equaled by its ear-friendly way with Internet radio.—**Ken Micallef**

SONUS FABER AIDA LOUDSPEAKER

(\$130,000/PAIR; REVIEWED BY MICHAEL FREMER, OCTOBER 2018, VOL.41 NO.10 WWW)

The Aida won because, though big and complex, with a floor-firing sub and rear-firing "minimonitor" plus the usual front-baffle driver array, in a room seemingly way too small it held together and "disappeared," leaving a musically satisfying and viscerally exciting sound that validated SF's longstanding sonic traditions while successfully moving the brand forward into the next century.

—**Michael Fremer**

I second Michael Fremer's nomination of the Aida. Listening through the Aidas in Michael's room to Simon Rattle conducting Beethoven's Symphony 9 was the most involving musical experience I have had in recent months—and that includes live concerts!—**John Atkinson**



loudspeaker on earth. Now, it seems, the breathy, superdynamic ME1 can outdance, outsing, and perhaps even outresolve its heavyweight brother. Think lightning fast and brimming with lush harmonics.—**Herb Reichert**

WILSON AUDIO ALEXIA SERIES 2 LOUDSPEAKER

(\$57,900/PAIR; REVIEWED BY JOHN ATKINSON & JASON VICTOR SERINUS, JULY & AUGUST 2018, VOL.41 NOS. 7 & 8 WWW)

Almost a year after the Alexia 2 entered my system, I still shake my head in amazement at how naturally balanced and organic its sound is. As accurate and musical as the dCS Vivaldi D/A processor, the Wilson's ability to transmit the sounds of voices, instruments, and halls without added commentary has few rivals.—**Jason Victor Serinus**

TAD MICRO EVOLUTION ONE LOUDSPEAKER

(\$12,495/PAIR; REVIEWED BY THOMAS J. NORTON & JOHN ATKINSON, FEBRUARY & MARCH 2018, VOL.41 NOS. 2 & 3 WWW)

Until I discovered the Micro Evolution One, I had believed that TAD's more expensive CR1 was the finest, most precise-sounding stand-mounted

