

Right in the heart

The Magma M was first presented at the High-End in 2018. It is the slightly slimmed-down successor to Magma, which has been around for over a decade. With up to 130 watts per channel, however, it is still extremely well equipped and also tends to improve its sound. While you can have different opinions about its appearance (at least when it is switched off), what you can hear with this exceptional amplifier is beyond any doubt: an audiophile delight. Right in the heart. There you stand in front of me: two long battleship-like structures, which are a little smaller compared to their predecessor, but with an impressive depth of a proud 68 centimeters still pose special challenges to the dimensions of each rack. My own is simply overwhelmed by this, and so I am grateful that the German sales department sent me two Atacama bases with (just about) space for the powerful power amplifiers. But that is by no means the end of the constellation question. Since I do not want to unfold the passive cone radiating from the side of my loudspeakers, the place between the rack and the speakers is rather out of the question. Unfortunately, due to lack of space, I cannot comply with the recommendation to place them behind the loudspeakers as far as possible. In the end, I decide to simply position the Magma M in front of the rack.

As a result, the system now grows into the room in a slightly threatening way - and thus towards my listening position. However, this has the advantage that I am already very close to the directly heated triode on my sofa and can even look right into the heart of the power tube from a slightly reclined position. And if I felt like it, I could warm my feet a little on it (a whopping 250 degrees of heat radiation!). But of course that's only a minor side effect. And yet it is not switched on at all. I can only guess what a spectacular optical charm it is about to unfold. In great anticipation, I look down from a slightly elevated position at the expansive devices that lie in front of me in black and silver like a great promise. The arrangement of the visible structure reminds me a bit of a family constellation: right at the front, very close to the front panel, is the small signal tube ECC85, which looks out of the device with its baby head, as if it wanted to inspect the area first. Very close to her is the dominant "maternal" performance tube that piles up to full size behind her. Farther back: two black, tower-like boxes of roughly the same size (which are much closer to each other than the mother. Is the father a stranger?). But let's leave the ground of vague psychotherapeutic fantasies (behind the black boxes, of course, nothing but transformers and output transformers are hidden) and come back to the reality of a device that I will soon grow fond of. Pure Class A, single-ended, zero feedback, because according to NAT this is the superior concept when it comes to the purity of the sound (without negative influence from the speaker's impedance). Short signal paths and a deliberately simple circuit board design. Neither coupling capacitors nor inter stage transformers in the signal path. Instead: foil resistors according to space travel standards, HF resistors from the military sector, 0.1% resistors from the American semiconductor manufacturer Vishay and electrolytic capacitors. Silver

interior cabling, gold-coated tube socket. The hand-wound high-voltage output transformers, which the company boss Nikic describes as "the result of more than 20 years of research", have a bandwidth of 9 Hz to 70,000 Hz and are manufactured with 40 separate layers in accordance with NAT requirements. Primary and secondary windings are designed in such a way that they only generate the lowest possible capacity. Because the transformer is so large, says company boss Dejan Nikic, "it has both a low magnetic and a low current flow density". Even if the picture lags slightly, you can perhaps imagine it a bit like a river bed. If it is very wide, you can pour in a relatively large amount of water without causing turbulence. Accordingly, the electricity is "de-stressed" by the large transformer. It is sifted through regulators without feedback and some air core coils. While the standard version has pseudo-balanced inputs in addition to the unbalanced inputs, there are also two different upgrade options that are of interest when using XLR cables: The simpler one offers pure balanced inputs with hand-wound transformers on nanocrystalline core. The premium version available to me uses the finest pure silver-ofc wire for the winding. After I have read the warning notices in the operating instructions and now I think I know how reliably I can avoid a fatal electric shock ("Never touch the inside of the anode cap" - the tube is operated at 1300 volts!), I step forward I do it courageously. With a full "click" I press ON switch, which is located on the left side of the front panel, upwards. A soft start prevents tube stress during start-up. A barely noticeable transformer hum is combined with the noise of the almost inaudible fans. And the power triode 6C21 begins, Developer Nikic names three main reasons for choosing them ("very linear, high performance, easy to drive"), to glow and immerse the room in warm, almost mystical light that immediately lets me extinguish all other light sources. In my case, the tube comes from the US company Machlett (taken over by Varian, medicine products, in 1989), once the world's largest manufacturer of X-ray tubes, before he later also began manufacturing transmitter tubes. In contrast to the predecessor Magma, the flexibility in the choice of tubes is greater here: Instead of the 6C21, you can also use its equivalent US transmission triode 450 TH (Eimac) or the Russian military version GMI-30. The electron current glows in the vacuum glass bulb, the magma seethes inside the earth. I could watch this spectacle for hours. Note: These monos replace every fireplace. But you can - and that's what this is primarily about - to listen with it. And how. Maybe first of all, following the romantic lighting mood, something for the heart: "My Funny Valentine" A version by Chet Baker and Stan Getz who met on February 18, 1983 for a live concert at the Södra Theater in Stockholm. The song from the Live album Line For Lyons (Sonet SNTF 899, UK 1983, LP) begins with the clapping of the audience, into which a few loose piano chords are sprinkled, the bass kicks in and the cymbal, then the brittle one, but always Baker's still great voice. It deals mind you, the record is not a particularly audiophile recording, one would have wished for a few more highs and perhaps a little more deep bass. And yet these monos transmit the musicality of the intimate interplay excellently. The room opens up to great expanses and even the bass is more shaped (and above all deeper) than I know from my own power amplifier. The nuances of Baker's voice, his breathing and the lyrical tone of his trumpet when he starts to solo; when he plays a virtuoso (and of course completely effortless) run for a very brief moment, as if he had to overcome himself to do so only to fall back into his famous

minimalist style. When Getz, standing slightly to his left, kicks in as soft as butter with that silky, velvety saxophone sound for which one loves him so much. Blowing and flapping noises I've never heard before. With all legitimate objections to this pressing, this is already great cinema - lively and beautiful. Serbian hot. The tubes are specified (in practice you don't have to readjust the quiescent current, this is done by your own electronic circuit), but you determine the amplification yourself. At least a little. You have the choice between 50 and a whopping 130 watts. Now there are relatively many suppliers of tube sets who switch from Class A to AB depending on their performance but in Class A operation with a single power tube the wattage can more than double, is rather the exception. Dejan Nikic explains the principle: "We use the current driver for the output tube. That is, the driver stage acts as a small power amplifier within the main amplifier. Just as you can control the loudspeaker drivers with the damping factor, this is the best way to control a power tube. "Since my Sehning loudspeakers are not the most efficient for all their benefits, they sound even more controlled (in a positive sense) with more power, the bass gains in contour, but also in assertiveness, the entire performance becomes more natural. Even more confident. More effortless. The Dynaudio Confidence 20, which is still in my listening room from another test, have a slightly higher level of efficiency, but they benefit in a very similar way from the higher level of performance. Of course there are also other speakers that are satisfied with the lower wattage - which benefits the tube's durability. In the high-voltage variant, this is around 2-3000 hours; if you are satisfied with the moderate 50 watts, this time doubles. While there used to be a simple aluminum tube that you slipped over the tubes like a protective cage (which, however, had the disadvantage that you could only see the beautiful tube from above), the monos have recently started waiting in the standard version with one elegant stainless steel lamellar protective grille, which allows a largely unobstructed view, looks contemporary and, above all, any Protects against electric shocks (fingers away from the anode cap!). Especially when there are children in the household, I would strongly advise using bars. My device is already played in, so I can listen to music practically from the standstill. Before you demand top audiophile performance from him, you should still wait about ten minutes (in the instructions for use is half a minute Hour of break-in time, in my opinion it goes a bit faster). The little patience is more than rewarded by the device. Let's say Leonard Cohen's You Want It Darker (Columbia, Sony Music 88985365071, EU 2016, LP), his legacy LP, so to speak. A dismantled piano four chord, the rhythm guitar kicks in, and then the always melancholy voice of Cohen. At first the song is ballad-like, but then the rhythm suddenly picks up - and so does the background singer - and now it becomes a finest soul number. A Hammond organ sets gently, the drummer's hi-hat runs through triplets. The bass is dry and stable and very deep, the room is huge. The production seems even more intimate than I was used to before; on this record I always overheard it a little. Wrong, as I now have to find out. That makes me so happy that I have to continue listening to the disc right away. The next piece "Leaving The Table" definitely has to be mentioned, if only because the Magma M makes it seem "laid-back" in a positive sense. Not to mention the wonderful presentation of the space. To start with, a guitar with plenty of vibrato levers, a bass that plays a maximum of quarter notes, a steel guitar and synth. strings. And above all, equally enthroned, one voice that gives deep insights into

the soul of the old master via the Magma M, as free and detached as one can only be when one has understood the interrelationships of life. Great feelings from a gentleman who celebrates his worthy farewell here, and power amplifiers that support him with fervor, as if they were only built for this. "I'm Out Of The Game" is the last line of the song. This definitely does not apply to these power amplifiers. Of course, how you feed the Magma M is not entirely irrelevant. With my Audio Research preamplifier, they get along brilliantly, and the little Tom Evans phono slide already delivers excellent results. But since I am very lucky to have an Allnic H-7000 V and also a TomEvans Mastergroove in the current expansion stage with me, I get completely different results with these devices in connection with the Magma M . Resolution, space, timing, naturalness - it has to look something similar in the high-end sky. So let's stay with the fairy-tale and switch, because it makes sense, to the great symphony orchestra: The Duisburg Philharmonic under Jonathan Darlington play Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade (Acousence Records ACO-LP-20908, EU 2008, LP). The first movement of the Symphonic Suite, Op. 35, is called "The Sea and Sindbad's Ship". And now you can literally see it rushing over the crests of the waves. Dramatic brass prelude (which stands for the tyrannical sultan), then, in front of the pearling chords of the harp, the calm So-lovioline, irritatingly real with its overtones, its woodiness. Now the well-known string theme sets in and beams us across wide seas directly on board the ship. The kettledrums hit the stomach almost seamlessly - fast, dry and deep like dangerous waves. The staggering of the orchestra, which I have never heard with me with such spatial depth, is finely structured. The violin is playful, but storms and hostility are not over yet. Relentless the brass, dynamic explosions and a broad-band charisma down to the last corner. If I sit comfortably in front of the musicians with my own power amplifier, this mono combination pulls me right into them. The boundaries between auditorium and stage are literally dissolved. You practically play along yourself. What a pleasure! Yes, I probably wouldn't give these power amps outlook design award. But if you are "only" interested in music, it is difficult to avoid indulging your ears with these wonderfully musically playing monos. The relative ponderousness of their exterior is quickly belied by the total lightness, sovereignty and, yes, detachment of their music reproduction.

ND amplifier NAT Magma M principle: tube mono power amplifier tube assembly: 1 x 6C21, 1 x ECC85 inputs: symmetrical (XLR), asymmetrical (cinch) output: max. 130 watts per channel Frequency response: 9 Hz - 70 kHz (-3 dB) Special features: Class A amplifier with directly heated power triode, no counter-coupling, power switchable between 50 and 130 watts, surcharges for pure silver transformers (2000 euros) and Stainless steel grid 500 euros Dimensions (W / H / D): 30/41 / 68cm Weight: approx. 60 kg guarantee: 2 years (also on the tubes) Price: 29.900 Euro (standard version) Contact: Audio Offensive Hifi-Vertrieb, Münchener Str. 5, 14612 Falkensee, Telephone 03322/2131655, www.audio-offensive.de

Turntable: Artemis SA-1 Tonearm: Schröder No.2 Pickup: Lyra Scala, Soundsmith "Hyperion" Phono-Preamplifier: Allnic H-7000V, Tom Evans The Groove 20th Anniversary MKII, Tom Evans Mastergroove Preamplifier: Audio Research LS28 , NAT Audio Magnetic Power Amplifier: Pass XA-30.5 Loudspeaker: Sehring S903 BT Cable: JPS

Labs Aluminata Reference AC, Super Aluminata Reference (XLR),
Aluminata Reference (XLR), Harmonic Technology Fantasy III AC10,
Harmonic Technology Amour (XLR cable); Harmonic Technology
Amour(RCA); Harmonic Technology Pro-9 Bi-Wire (speaker cable)
Accessories: CT Audio Resonanz technik Mirage Bleu power strip,
Furutech wall socket FT-SWS NCF, GigaWatt automatic circuit breaker
G-C20A and flush-mounted cable LC-Y MK3 + 3X4, Quadraspire reference
rack, Atacama device bases, CT audio resonance technology - Steppness
I + II, Doppio, Pace, Songer; fastaudio Absorber, Woopies, Acoustic
Sys -tem Resonators, Audiophil Schumann Generator, Audio Magic Beewax
Ultimate T2A fuse, Lyra SPT needle cleaner, On-zow ZeroDust, Acoustic
Revive ECI-50 contact spray, Cardas Frequency Sweep and Burn-in
Record
