

Wyetech Labs Opal Linestage issue 143

Price: \$7900

See Issues 136, 1.37

If you want the in-depth touch, go back to my review of linestages in TAS 137.

The Opal is one of those audio fascinations that come down the turnpike every few years. It sounds quite unlike any of the other linestages I rounded up for that massive comparison. It is on the cool side, with dynamics that are shockingly wide.

You can tell it's a tube unit only because of the continuousness of the way it handles background texture, although its overall leanness might at first deceive you; its lack of noise artefacts do not give away its driving elements. And just wait till you hear the bottom end. While I can't say it is over-analytic in its reproduction of orchestral sounds, I can say its effect is an analytic one, since it lets you in on every detail of what's going on.

I wouldn't suggest using it without carefully matching it to the basic amp you have in mind. For one thing, its very wide dynamic capabilities, wider than any of the other units we had under evaluation, can easily tax an amplifier and drive it into premature clipping. This is almost the exact opposite of those linestages with that big, fat sound that some reviewers so love. In an imperfect (audio) world, I'd be hard pressed to choose if those were the only two kinds of sound I had at my disposal.