



ANALOG HIFI AND VINYL CULTURE







UPDATE BULLSEYE

It took me a while to understand what was happening here since I was convinced that the brand-new phono preamp flagship from Canor was designed from scratch. The sound did not permit any other conclusion. However ...



Canor has subtly upgraded the housing of the large new phono preamp

And so I spent a few weeks with this incredibly good machine, diligently plugging cartridge after cartridge into it, and was delighted that the designers had been able to grant the subject significant new impetus. When I finally referred to the test of the largest Canor PH 1.10 phono

preamp to date from almost three years ago for comparison, I was a little confused: the differences between the tried and tested machine and the new Asterion V2 are by no means as great as expected from a technical point of view. From a purely visual point of view, the devices even look very similar.

A quick look under the lid also reveals a strong relationship between the two models on the inside, and the differences are not even huge regarding the sales price: the new model is priced at EUR 7200, while the PH 1.10 currently costs EUR 6000. The only noticeable technical difference is on the rear panel, where a pair of XLR sockets for connecting MC cartridges have been installed next to the RCA inputs.

Casing and looks

With a net weight of 18 kilograms and fairly grown-up dimensions, the Asterion V2 leaves no doubt about its qualitative ambitions. The PH 1.10 is no different, but the Asterion V2 is even more beautifully packaged. The powdered U-shaped sheet metal cover has given way to constructing three individually bolted, much more solid aluminum plates so that the exterior of the top preamp/power amp combination is



Eight 6922 double triodes in the shielding can provide the amplification

closer to the in-house „Reference Line.“ In purely formal terms, however, Canor lists both phono preamps in the middle „Premium Line.“ The „V2“ suffix in the type designation is also unclear. This suggests there must have been an „Asterion“ model in the past, but I couldn't find anything to that effect. „Asterion,“ on the other hand, is perfectly fine; figures from Greek mythology always work.

Almost everything has remained the same in terms of operation: The superb plain text display in the form of orange LED dot matrix displays is probably the best readable display the hi-fi market has ever

produced. The controls are operated via an impressive rotary knob, also illuminated in orange, and several small buttons. The assignment of the buttons has changed slightly compared to the PH 1.10, as the switch between RCA and XLR input for MC operation has been added.

Features

The additional XLR input is a welcome and sensible feature that Canor could implement without any additional effort: MC amplification is handled by a pair of Lundahl transformers, which provide the symmetry virtually free of charge - all that

Teammates

Turntable:

- TechDAS Air Foce III / Reed 3p
- Transrotor Massimo Nero / Studio 12“

Pickup Cartridge:

- Transrotor Figaro
- van den Hul Colibri XGP
- Grand Cru Elite

Integrated amplifier:

- Thivan Labs 811 Anniversary
- Unison Simply 845

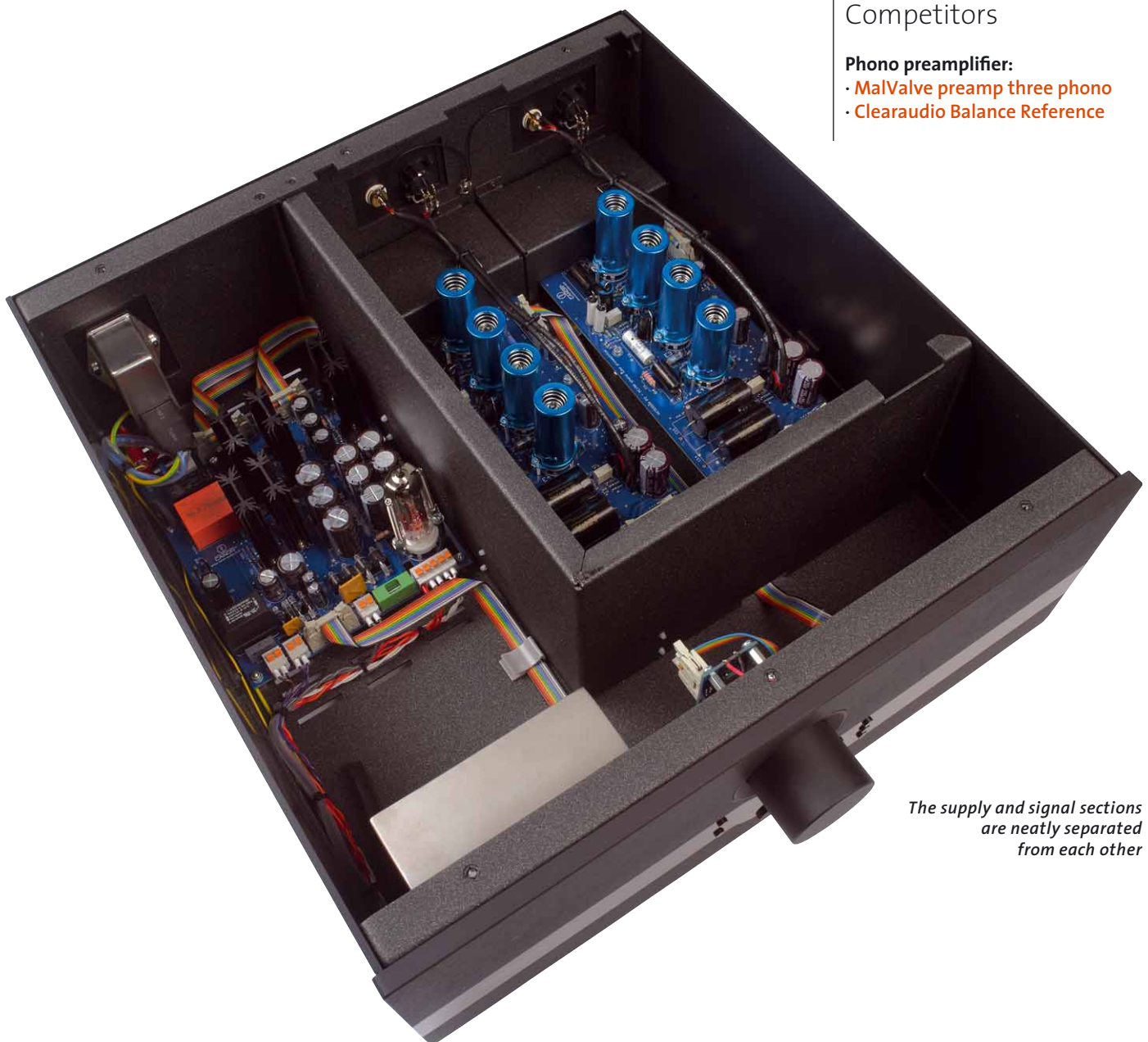
Loudspeaker:

- Rosso Fiorentino Certaldo
- DIY Focal / JBL

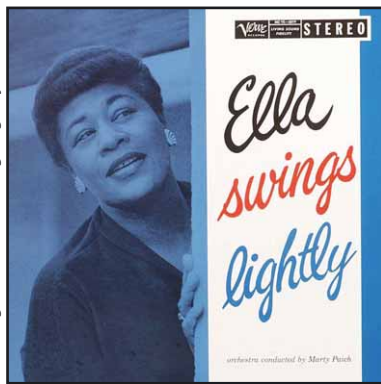
Competitors

Phono preamplifier:

- MalValve preamp three phono
- Clearaudio Balance Reference



The supply and signal sections are neatly separated from each other



What we played

Ella Fitzgerald
Ella Swings Lightly

Buffy Clyro
Ellipsis

Nina Simone
My Baby Just Cares For Me

Led Zeppelin
How The West Was Won

*Signal connections are now
symmetrical on both the
input and output sides*

was needed were appropriate sockets. These transformers can be configured in two ways so that either 70 or 76 decibels of amplification are available in MC mode. „MC1“ and „MC2“ are not two separate inputs but simply two different operating modes of the same input. The eight switchable input impedances are arranged behind the MC transformers, which has consequences for the pickup termination: for „MC1“, there are ten to 1200 ohms; for „MC2“, two to 300 ohms. In MM mode (without transformer), a robust 53 decibels of amplification are available. That's plenty, but it doesn't do any harm in practice, especially as there are sufficient overload reserves. Here, 47 kilohms of input resistance are fixed, but the rotary knob offers a choice of eight different termination capacities. A switchable subsonic filter completes the list of features. It cuts in nicely low down and protects bass drivers from excessive excursions. However, this never proved a problem in practice, so I didn't use the filter.

The nine tubes are primarily responsible for the device's 69 watts of power consumption. Each channel is amplified by four 6922 double triodes hidden under shielding cups. Back in the days when this was still possible, Canor had stockpiled

considerable quantities of fine glass from Electro Harmonix so that the devices could be equipped with finely matched goods. Linearity and channel balance are excellent, which could hardly be achieved otherwise. Tube number nine is an EZ81 rectifier, which supplies the high voltage for the signal amplifiers. I can see minimal changes to the circuit board layout compared to the PH 1.10, but otherwise, everything remains the same. The passive components used are still top-notch. I particularly like the tin foil output coupling capacitors from Mundorf. Only the feeding toroidal transformer has been moved to an even more massive shielding container of the kind we know from the Reference Line devices and now resides upright behind the front, giving it a little more distance from the circuit parts at risk of interference.

Sound

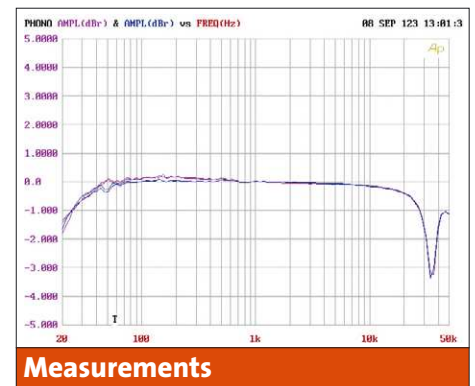
Sometimes, devices simply make their case. Without any effort or elaborate comparisons, just like that: plug it in, switch it on, put on some music, and drop your jaw. This rarely happens, but it was the case here. The Transrotor Figaro supplied the signals, the final impedance was set to an estimated 150 ohms, and I was simply stunned by what the combination conjured up





An EZ81 is used as the rectifier tube

from the groove of „Ella Swings Lightly.“ Of course, the 2010 reissue of the classic sounds excellent anyway, but this was a really serious affair. The rhythmic perfection is immediately noticeable; the singer and orchestra play together to a degree I have rarely experienced. The distribution of the instruments in the room is strikingly well-circulated, the stage is vast, and the singer is perfectly centered in the middle and gives her all. And all of this is achieved with that natural looseness that occurs when hi-fi stops and listening to music begins. Despite all its qualities, I don't want to offend the PH 1.10, but I don't believe that it played in such an unashamedly relaxed and light-footed manner at the time. How did the designers achieve this without any noticeable structural changes? I have no idea.



Lab commentary

The big Canor performs at a high level in terms of measurement technology. The MM frequency response is exemplary linear. In MC mode, there is also no significant drop in the bass. The transformers "deliver" down to 35 kilohertz without complaining. In MM mode, the amplification is a hefty 53 decibels; in MC mode, it is a maximum of 75 decibels, which is also plenty. The signal-to-noise ratios are 67/58 decibels(A) in MM/MC (5/0.5 mV), and the channel separations are in the same range. The distortion factor is 0.05/0.28 percent, which is also very good. The device consumes a steady 69 watts of power during operation.



The Scottish rockers from Biffy Clyro emphatically proved that this also works with less audiophile material. The Canor provides guts, power, fervor, excellent vocal delivery, and remarkable fluidity. Just between you and me, this is one of the best phono preamps I can remember. I only dare to make this statement after I have mounted a large van den Hul cartridge in my home setup and convinced myself that the extremely harmonious gait of the Asterion V2 was reproducible and that the perfect ease was also allowed to move in here.

Holger Barske

The thoroughly encapsulated toroidal transformer is located behind the front panel

Canor Asterion V2



- Price
- Distribution
- Phone
- Internet
- Warranty
- Dimensions (W x H x D)
- Weight

ca. 7,200 Euro
 IDC Klaassen, Lünen
 +49 231 9860285
 canor-audio.de
 2 years
 435 x 170 x 485 mm
 approx. 18 kg

lp

Canor
Asterion V2

International 1/24

» What a phono preamp! Canor's new one shines with stunning spatial imaging, excellent fine detail, and rhythmic finesse. It doesn't get any better than this!