

# CLASSIC AUDIO

*Analogue design far greater than the sum of its parts*

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

## **Spartan 5 by Michael Fidler**

***High-efficiency all-linear moving magnet phonostage***

**Kent, England, 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2022:** The Spartan 5 is an original design that carefully weaves stronger RIAA accuracy, a second order subsonic filter, a mono switch, and a split linear power supply into a single-stage phono preamplifier to obtain superb efficiency of cost, function, space, and power.

Hand made in Kent, England and utilising all through-hole technology, the Spartan 5 is intended as a significant upgrade over integrated phonostages. Hand selected film capacitors throughout ensure a very transparent  $\pm 0.25\text{dB}$  RIAA accuracy, vs the more common  $\pm 0.5\text{dB}$  that often colours the sound in the critical midrange. The first commercial product to integrate a subsonic filter into the input coupling network, low frequency disturbances from vinyl surface imperfections are prevented from reaching even the phono amplifier stage, let alone destabilising equipment downstream where they can cause shimmering intermodulation distortion. For cancelling distracting stereo field noise and distortion on mono pressings, a mono/stereo toggle switch is included on the front panel.

The amplifier sits in a high-quality IC socket on a carefully laid out double-sided ground plane PCB. It was exhaustively selected for very low noise with moving magnet cartridges, with an SNR of 76dB against 5mV when connected to a moving magnet cartridge. It promises a very quiet background for low-level detail to shine through. Similarly the RIAA network is very carefully matched to the amplifier to keep distortion as low as possible, below 0.0015% for a performance that never becomes vague and congested during complex musical passages. With a strong output that can drive a 5k $\Omega$  load (two 10k $\Omega$  line inputs in parallel) with 8.5V RMS, the Spartan 5 has plenty of headroom. Referenced to a 5mV cartridge output, it has an overload margin of 24dB, faithfully reproducing any transients a moving magnet cartridge can throw at it with ease, resulting in a beautifully crisp and unclouded rendering of attacks and percussive instruments.

Unlike many designs at this price, a linear split power supply is used, not only taking the power transformer and its troublesome magnetic fields out of the enclosure, but also providing the best mains isolation available. Splitting the internal power rails keeps amplifier power currents out of the sensitive ground path where they might generate distortion. No switching power supply hash can make its unwelcome way into the sensitive circuitry, and importantly into the equipment connected to the phonostage. Scrupulous RC smoothing, found in some of the best classic equipment, is used instead of conventional regulation for higher efficiency with the simple design. As a result, total power consumption is less than 0.5W so the unit can be left continuously powered. Ultra high reliability Panasonic electrolytic capacitors are used throughout, enabling the Spartan 5 to perform for many decades to come.

More info available at <https://classic-audio.co.uk/spartan/5/>

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## **Pricing and availability**

The Spartan 5 is currently available in the UK, directly from Classic Audio Ltd for a total price of £150. It is soon to be distributed on Amazon, and through authorised distributors in the UK, followed by Europe and North America in the new year.

Most of the first batch has now been sold in the UK from a waiting list - a second larger batch will be available mid October with a first-come-first-served waiting list.

## **About the company**

Formed from initial concepts in May 2020, Classic Audio Ltd is an objectively oriented audio company. Instead of using exotic and esoteric components Classic Audio realises analogue designer Michael Fidler's vision of exceptional performance, backed up by the spec sheet, using circuit architecture and refined layout above all things.

By designing from circuit architecture and using innovative techniques to reduce, noise, distortion, with real-world ruggedness, Classic Audio Ltd can deliver performance at prices tending towards an order of magnitude lower than competitors, offering a true taste of high end to those on a tight budget. All products are hand assembled in Kent using all through-hole technology, nowadays seemingly reserved for only the best products.

## **Images**

Please see the images attached to this e-mail.