

# MICHAEL FIDLER

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

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

## **SPARTAN 15 by Michael Fidler** *Low frequency crossfeed MM phonostage*

**Kent, England, 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2023:** The SPARTAN 15 is a complete re-design of the successful double-stage moving-magnet phonostage released as the company's first product in 2021. Exceptional transparency and technical specifications are derived from an original circuit architecture, as opposed to exotic parts, for a more affordable price, sitting in the middle of the product range.

Hand made in Kent, England using all through-hole technology, the SPARTAN 15 hangs a deep black background behind the music. The ultra-quiet classic Japanese 2068 amplifier ICs are specially chosen to match up to MM cartridge impedances, yielding a signal-to-noise ratio of 78dB. Hyper-accurate RIAA equalisation to 0.1dB has been implemented using 1% tolerance film capacitors to eliminate the colouration and channel balance issues of more common designs based on 5% parts, resulting in a perfectly balanced tonal character with great imaging.

Fully defeatable low frequency crossfeed reduces vertical noise to reveal new bass detail on stereo discs, particularly noticeable with headphones on. A superior 3<sup>rd</sup> order subsonic filter is used to prevent the nasty shimmering effects of infrasonic intermodulation distortion in loudspeakers caused by over-exursion. Polypropylene film capacitors in the filter are hand-matched during assembly to create an ultra-flat in-band response with none of the usual low-end inconsistencies that give such filters a bad name. Full mono switching on the front panel is included for greatly reduced noise and distortion on mono pressings.

Like its predecessor, the popular SPARTAN 10, special gain structuring is used to share the burden of amplifying the tiny cartridge signal by 110 times at 1kHz (40.8dB). By making up the final 10.7dB of gain in the second stage, the input stage only does a third of the work compared to a single stage design, producing less than 0.0006% THD from 40Hz to 22kHz, for a listening experience completely free of grain and harshness.

A maximum input of 95mV at 1kHz, rising 900mV at 20kHz thanks to the active equalisation, makes overload impossible with standard MM cartridges, keeping transients sharp and clear even at diabolical levels. At the other end, the socketed ICs can drive over 10V RMS into 3 standard 10kΩ line loads in parallel without loss of linearity, due to the extra headroom afforded by the upgraded ±17V internal power supply rails. Using a split double rail design also keeps distortion-causing non-linear amplifier power currents out of the ground path.

The linear power supply uses high-reliability Panasonic electrolytic capacitors with precise diode references and an external transformer to keep hum-inducing magnetic fields well outside of the main enclosure. Improved transformer magnetics limit standby power consumption to under 0.2W. The linear operation affords much better mains isolation than switching supplies and precludes switching noise from getting into audio path. A startup mute circuit operates a Panasonic telecoms relay on the line output at start-up and switch-off to restrain any unpleasant transients. A sandblasted anodised aluminium enclosure completes the fit and finish.

More info available at <https://michaelfidler.com/products/spartan/spartan-15-moving-magnet-phonostage/>

### **Pricing and availability**

SPARTAN 15s in black and silver case styles are now available to order worldwide direct from Classic Audio Ltd. for £330 in the UK, €400 for EU countries, and \$450 for the USA. Payments are also accepted in Australian and Canadian dollars. Prices are inclusive of shipping costs but not necessarily import duties which may vary from country to country, although the USA has so far not attracted any extra charges.

GB 240V, EU 220V, and US/NEMA external transformers are supplied as standard to respective regions. Units have now been shipped to the USA, Australia, Canada, France, Germany and Croatia to name a few...

## **About the company**

Having released its first product in 2021, Classic Audio Ltd is an objectively oriented audio company aiming to produce affordable original designs that offer the best possible real-world performance. Instead of using exotic and esoteric components, Classic Audio realises Michael Fidler's vision of exceptional performance using circuit architecture first and foremost.

By designing from circuit architecture and using innovative techniques to reduce, noise, distortion, with practical ruggedness, Classic Audio 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.

## **Contact**

Classic Audio Ltd  
64 Old Castle Walk  
Rainham  
Kent  
ME8 9TZ

E-mail [michael.fidler@classic-audio.co.uk](mailto:michael.fidler@classic-audio.co.uk)