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KEN MICALLEF

Zesto Audio Leto Ultra II

PREAMPLIFIER

What sort of audiophile are you? I think of myself as a critical listener, perhaps a purist, *definitely* an enthusiast, of music and audio, who enjoys both the journey and the nuts and bolts. I like my hi-fi direct, simple, and personal. Also, I guess I'm a little bit old-school: tube-driven amplifiers with point-to-point wiring; vinyl, preferably early pressings; spun with belt-drive or idler-drive turntables. I listen to digital audio, too—and when I do, I prefer nonoversampling DACs. I like high-efficiency, high-sensitivity floorstanding loudspeakers and prefer them horn-loaded.

Lately, I've reviewed conventional class-AB solid-state integrated amplifiers and overachieving low-sensitivity bookshelf speakers, finding them thoroughly enjoyable. My first *Stereophile* review was of a fantastic class-D power amplifier: the Spec RPA-W7EX Real-Sound. I can listen to lots of different kinds of things, and with pleasure—but give me a choice and I'll always come back to this preferred kit. I'm flexible, but my preferences are my preferences.



Record after record, the Leto Ultra II's neutrality, transparency, and recovery of the last iota of sustain gave fresh insight into familiar recordings.

I believe in careful system setup, but I'm not a tweaker exactly: I'll try most things, but I try not to stress over their use. Interconnect cables and power cords make a difference¹—of course they do—but I don't like interconnects

so heavy and stiff that they lift my preamp off its moorings. I believe in the efficacy of equipment supports and platforms, too, but I try to avoid treacherous, steel-pointed isolation cones that gash holes in feet and floors, and they don't need to be expensive to be effective. I swear by Ikea's Aptitlig

¹ As for me, I find conventional audio systems to be, well, quieter without speaker cables and interconnects. The same goes for power cords.—**Editor**

SPECIFICATIONS

Description Two-channel tube preamplifier with mono switch, "Presence control," and remote control. Tube complement: Two JJ Electronics ECC82/12AU7; two JJ Electronics ECC832/12DW7. "Energy Source Power Supplies": 1 high-voltage 300V and 1 low-voltage 12V toroidal transformer. Inputs: 3 pairs transformer-coupled

balanced (XLR), input impedance 10k ohms; 3 pairs single-ended (RCA), input impedance 100k ohms. Outputs: 2 pair transformer-coupled balanced (XLR), output impedance 150 ohms; 2 pair single-ended (RCA), output impedance 150 ohms. Maximum input level: 7V. Maximum peak output level: 10V. Frequency range: 10Hz–40kHz. Distortion:

0.03% with 1V RMS input. S/N ratio: 100dB below operating level. Gain settings: 9dB, 6dB, 3dB. (Manual gain switch, rear panel.) Channel separation: >90dB. Power consumption: 28W.

Dimensions 17" (431.8mm) W × 12" (304.8mm) D × 5" (127mm) H. Weight: 28lb (12.7kg).

Finish Black/silver.

Serial number of unit reviewed 190713. Made in USA.

Price \$10,900. Approximate number of US dealers: 14. Warranty: Two years, six months on tubes.

Manufacturer
Zesto Audio
3138 Calle Estepa
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
Tel: (805) 807-1841.
Web: zestoaudio.com.

bamboo chopping boards under amps and BXI Anti Vibration Isolation Pads under floorstanding loudspeakers, to tame the resonances of my 19th century suspended wood floors. I built a DIY stand for my Kuzma Stabi R turntable with 10 cinderblocks, eight 2x4s, and a really big Ikea board.

I don't go in for Tice clocks or photos in freezers. I avoid wacky accessories that make civilians think we audiophiles are off our rockers. As I wrote above: I like my audio direct and simple and human-scale.

Zesto Audio president and co-founder George Counnas seems to share my audiophile worldview, at least partly. With his wife, industrial designer Carolyn Counnas, George Counnas—a former musician, recording engineer, producer, and military-contractor employee—has brought to market several well-regarded tube-driven preamplifiers, phono stages, and power amplifiers, some of them reviewed in *Stereophile*, including the original Leto, a predecessor of the product I'm reviewing, which was evaluated by Bob Reina in 2014.²

All Zesto Audio products bear a common trait that I appreciate: a certain simplicity, nothing wasted, everything



Adjusting the Presence control by two clicks made the music more musical and listenable without removing anything essential.

is thought through, everything serving a purpose. No Zesto Audio component I'm familiar with follows that pattern better than the Leto Ultra II preamplifier (\$10,900).

Design

Wrapped in a 16-gauge, zinc-plated steel enclosure, which is said to “help isolate the electronic ‘chatter’ from nearby equipment,” the Leto Ultra II preamplifier includes some uncommon functions and control options: separate left- and right-channel ground-lift switches and a mono switch, which is said to help with troubleshooting but is also good for listening. It automatically mutes when powered on or off, “preventing any pops which could damage your speakers or surprise the hell out of you,” according to the website copy. A three-position gain dial—3dB, 6dB, and 9dB—allows various sources to be gain-matched so that you don't get a big surprise when you switch sources.

2 See stereophile.com/content/zesto-audio-letto-line-preamplifier.

MEASUREMENTS

The Zesto Leto Ultra II looks identical to the original Leto preamplifier that the late Robert J. Reina reviewed in April 2014,¹ although its two 12AX7 tubes have been replaced by 12DW7s. (The Ultra II also has two 12AU7 tubes.) The manual warns against installing the tubes incorrectly, so I made sure that I inserted each tube in its correct socket and, once that was done, I measured the Leto Ultra II's performance with my Audio Precision SYS2722 system (see the January 2008 “As We See It”²). There are three gain settings; the manual says to use the setting that allows you to use the volume control close to its 12 o'clock position. The maximum gain in the nominal 3dB setting was 3.95dB, balanced input to balanced output, and 2.83dB, unbalanced input to unbalanced output. With the nominal 6dB setting, the maximum gains were 7.5dB and 6.4dB, respectively, and with the 9dB setting, the gains were 11.5dB and 10.95dB. Even at the highest setting, the maximum gain is lower than that of

the original Leto preamplifier. Both sets of inputs and outputs preserved absolute polarity (ie, were noninverting), the XLRs being wired with pin 2 hot.

The unbalanced input impedance is specified as 100k ohms. I measured 44k ohms at 20Hz and 1kHz, dropping slightly to 38k ohms at 20kHz—lower but still high. The transformer-coupled balanced input impedances were lower than the unbalanced, at close to 9k ohms across the audioband, which is slightly and inconsequentially lower than the specified 10k ohms. Both the balanced and unbalanced output impedances were a low 100 ohms at 20Hz and 1kHz, rising to a still-low 163 ohms at 20kHz.

The unbalanced frequency response started to roll off at the top of the audioband, reaching -1dB at 20kHz into 100k ohms (fig.1, blue and red traces). The top-octave rolloff started a little earlier into 600 ohms (cyan and magenta traces). Note the superb matching between the channels in this graph. This graph was taken with the gain set to 9dB and the volume control set to its

maximum. The channel matching and the frequency response were the same at lower settings of the volume control and at the other two gain settings.

The balanced frequency response is shown in fig.2. The output at 20kHz is a little higher than in fig.1, but the ultimate ultrasonic rolloff is faster.

1 See stereophile.com/content/zesto-audio-letto-line-preamplifier.

2 See stereophile.com/content/measurements-maps-precision.

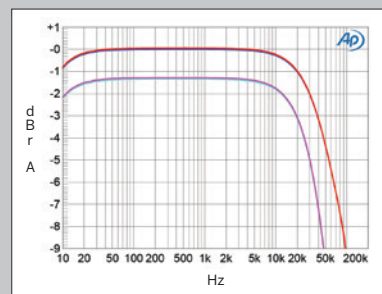


Fig.1 Zesto Leto Ultra II, unbalanced frequency response at 1V, with 9dB gain and volume control set to maximum, into 100k ohms (left channel blue, right red), and 600 ohms (left cyan, right magenta) (1dB/vertical div.).

The Leto's control dials employ concave sides, ensuring solid finger grip. Most unusual is a six-position "Presence" control, which "adjusts the harmonic balance in the mid and high frequencies allowing you to dial back what you may consider to be too bright, edgy or aggressive." The Presence control, COUNNAS writes on the Zesto website, "was born out of my frustration after finding some of my favorite recordings became unlistenable the more resolved my system became, regardless of the source."

The Leto Ultra II is curvaceous and good-looking, reflecting industrial designer Carolyn COUNNAS's aesthetic: droplet-shaped stainless steel and clear anodized aluminum sections of the preamplifier's façade, and a curved, mirror-finish transformer cover modeled after the graceful lines of a grand piano. Nothing here resembles a plain black box.

Measuring 17" wide × 12" deep × 5" high and weighing 28lb, the class-A, zero-feedback Leto Ultra II comes with two JJ ECC82/12AU7s and two JJ ECC832/12DW7 tubes, the latter replacing a pair of 12AX7s in the previous version.

"All 12-series tubes have two active amplifiers," COUNNAS explained by email. "A ECC82-12AU7 tube has two identical triodes. In a ECC832-12DW7, one triode is a ECC83-12AX7 and one ECC82-12AU7 in the same glass envelope. Otherwise, to achieve the same results the amp would need one ECC83-12AX7 and two ECC82-12AU7s per channel. In my opinion, the less circuits the music goes through, the less affected and purer the sound."

The big change from the previous Leto Ultra is in the power supply, which has been upgraded to what Zesto calls its Energy Source Power (ESP) supply. (The review unit was upgraded just after the review period started.) This upgrade replaces the earlier IE power transformers with two toroidal transformers: separate supplies for high and low voltage, both capable of more current than the previous supply. High



voltage supply was increased from 250V to 300V, providing more headroom and dynamic range. The amp's maximum output level before clipping increased, which COUNNAS says provides "more punch." The upgraded power supply yields "significantly less noise because it does a better job of concentrating the magnetic field," COUNNAS explained. It is also said to be "more resilient to power surges."

A small, nine-button plastic remote handles input, volume, "Presence," mute, mono, and gain. All functions can be adjusted either from the remote or from the preamp's front-panel controls.

Those front-panel controls are three silver dials marked Volume, Presence, and Input, with a power rocker around the corner on the chassis's right side. LEDs indicate the

measurements, continued

From right to left, the traces in fig.3 show the unbalanced response with the Presence control set to 0 (as it had been in figs.1 and 2), -1, -2, -3, -4, and -5. The -3dB frequency successively moves down from 39kHz to 12kHz, 10kHz, 5kHz, 2.3kHz, and 1.1kHz. These are close to the specified actions of the control, but other than Presence settings -1 and -2, these actions seem a

little too extreme to be of practical use.

The Leto Ultra II's channel separation was very good, at >90dB between 300Hz and 5kHz, reducing to 70dB at 20kHz. The Leto Ultra II was also very quiet. Even with the volume control set to its maximum and the gain set to 9dB, the wideband, unweighted signal/noise ratio, ref. 1V output with the unbalanced input shorted, was good, at

71.7dB (average of both channels). This ratio improved to an excellent 89.8dB when the measurement bandwidth was restricted to the audioband, and to 92.5dB when I switched an A-weighting filter into the circuit. The wideband, unweighted ratios were the same with the 6dB and 3dB gain settings, but the audioband and A-weighted ratios each increased by 3dB when the gain

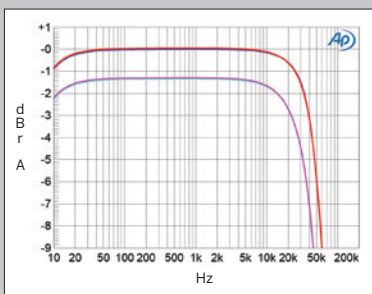


Fig.2 Zesto Leto Ultra II, balanced frequency response at 1V, with 9dB gain and volume control set to maximum, into 100k ohms (left channel blue, right red), and 600 ohms (left cyan, right magenta) (1dB/vertical div.).

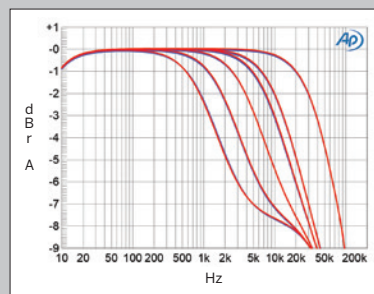


Fig.3 Zesto Leto Ultra II, unbalanced frequency response at 1V, with 9dB gain and volume control set to maximum, into 100k ohms with, from right to left, Presence control set to 0, -1, -2, -3, -4, and -5 (left channel blue, right red) (2dB/vertical div.).

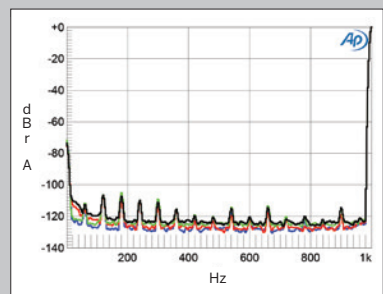


Fig.4 Zesto Leto Ultra II, unbalanced output spectrum of 1kHz sine wave, DC-1kHz, at 1V into 100k ohms, with gain set to 3dB (left channel blue, right red) and 9dB (left green, right gray) (linear frequency scale).

current setting of the Presence control, input, and the gain setting of the current input. The Presence control doubles as a mono switch; the Input selector also mutes.

What is a presence control? It's a tone control, but it's not the usual kind. "Presence is designed to gently reduce unwanted mid and high frequencies in 5 steps," Counnas continued in the email. "Each step changes the frequency that it starts working with, -1 the highest and -5 the lowest." The larger the number, the greater the effect.

Around back are six pairs of recessed inputs: three single-ended (RCA) and three balanced (XLR). These are followed by four pairs of recessed output connectors: two single-ended (RCA), two balanced (XLR). Separate left- and right-channel ground toggle switches are followed by a pushbutton for gain adjustment and an IEC connector.

Setup

Zesto says that every unit has received "50 hours factory burn-in on all circuits and vacuum tubes," but that "this Vacuum Tube Preamp can take 200 hours to break in." I found the Leto Ultra II required at least another week of almost continuous play to reach peak performance. The informative Leto Ultra II manual suggests thereafter allowing "at least 10 to 30 minutes for tubes to warm up to get the best performance from the preamp."

For my audition, I substituted the Leto Ultra II for my reference Shindo Allegro preamp, feeding my Shindo Haut-Brion power amplifier with Shindo interconnects. A 6' pair of Auditorium 23 speaker cables carried the signal from the Haut-Brion to my DeVore Fidelity O/03 loudspeakers. The main source was my EMT TSD 15 N Super Finesline stereo cartridge, attached to my Kuzma 4Point tonearm, mounted to my Kuzma Stabi R turntable, which sat atop the Kuzma

Platis 65 isolation platform. For digital, I used the Denafrips Ares II DAC, which Herb Reichert reviewed in the November 2020 issue of *Stereophile*. A 3.6m run of Furutech GT2 Pro USB cable connected my PC to the USB port of the Denafrips DAC. All this gear (except the speakers) was housed in my Salamander five-tier rack. I plugged the Leto Ultra II into my IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius line conditioner.

One fine summer day in the mid-2000s, while hanging with my hi-fi running buddies Michael Lavorgna (now editor of *Twittering Machines*), Jules Coleman (former 6Moons.com contributor and a professor of philosophy at Yale Law School), John DeVore of DeVore Fidelity, and Tone Imports' majordomo Jonathan Halpern, we headed to a downtown loft where Halpern had assembled a rig comprised almost entirely of Shindo Laboratory equipment: a Shindo-modified Garrard 301 turntable with Shindo-modified Ortofon SPU cartridge; Auditorium 23 T1 step-up transformer; Shindo Giscours preamp, Shindo WE300B Limited amps, and Shindo Latour speakers supported on a platform of rare tonewoods sourced for a rack.

This all-Shindo rig was a game-changing experience for me. I'd never heard such beautiful tonality, natural drive, textural authenticity, and palpable immediacy from a hi-fi system. Later, I'd head to Halpern's home, where he played classical LPs on an EMT 927 turntable, with Shindo separates. Each recording immersed me in effortless dynamics, tangible textures, and rich tone. I purchased the Shindo Allegro dual mono preamplifiers and Haut-Brion stereo power amplifier, and they remain my reference components.³

³ That's a slight oversimplification. Art Dudley and I both had Haut-Brion amps, but they were different versions. (Shindo designs sometimes change over time.) I preferred his, he preferred mine, and so, a couple of years ago, we traded Haut-Brions.

measurements, continued

was reduced by the same 3dB. This can be seen in fig.4, which shows the low-frequency spectra of the Zesto's unbalanced noise floor with the gain set to 3dB (blue and red traces) and to 9dB (cyan, magenta) while it reproduced a 1kHz tone at 1V into 100k ohms. Some very low-level harmonics of the AC supply frequency can be seen in both channels, but these all lie close to -110dB (0.0003%) and will be

inconsequential.

Fig.5 plots the THD+noise percentage against the Ultra II's unbalanced output voltage into 100k ohms. The distortion slowly rises above 300mV, reaching 0.1% at 2V RMS. With clipping defined as when the THD+N reaches 1%, the single-ended output clipped at 12V into 100k ohms. The unbalanced output clipped at 9.5V into the punishing 600 ohm load, but this

is well above the level needed to drive a power amplifier into overload. The balanced output also clipped at 12.5V into 100k ohms (fig.6). The output transformers don't limit the Leto Ultra II's output current.

I examined how the THD+N percentage changed with frequency at an output level of 2V, which is sufficiently high to ensure that I was measuring distortion rather than noise. Into 100k

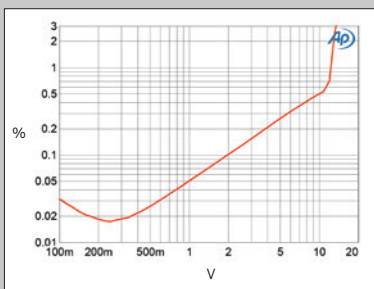


Fig.5 Zesto Leto Ultra II, unbalanced distortion (%) vs 1kHz output voltage into 100k ohms.

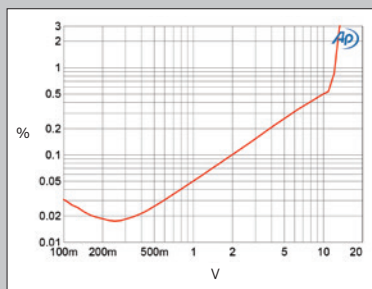


Fig.6 Zesto Leto Ultra II, balanced distortion (%) vs 1kHz output voltage into 100k ohms.

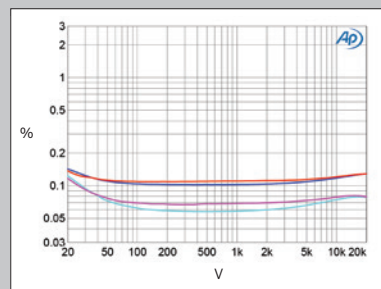


Fig.7 Zesto Leto Ultra II, unbalanced THD+N (%) vs frequency at 2V into 100k ohms (left channel blue, right red) and 600 ohms (left cyan, right magenta) (linear frequency scale).

Them's my tastes, my biases. Keep them in mind as you read.

Listening

The Zesto Audio Leto Ultra II preamplifier is one of very few preamps I've had in house that in some ways equaled my Shindo Allegro—indeed, in some ways surpassed it. The two amps are cut from different sonic cloth, with dissimilar origins, but both are capable of propulsive drive, excellent imaging, and musical realism.

The Shindo is the tone king, with superb immediacy and tactility, producing music that just always seems *right*. The more modern-sounding Leto Ultra II offered superior transparency and resolution, blacker backgrounds (after flipping the dual ground switches to remove some hum), impressive microdetail, and knockout clarity. The Leto Ultra II presented livelier music; the Shindo was lush, with more tonal color, midrange-focused mien and presence, with a darker demeanor. The Zesto seemed to propel music more forcefully as I raised the volume via its palm-sized remote. The Zesto was perpetually clear, light-filled, dancing. I could happily live with either preamp.

Record after record, the Leto Ultra II's neutrality, transparency, and recovery of the last iota of sustain gave fresh insight into familiar recordings. Though it lacked the ultimate warmth and liquidity of my Shindo gear, the Zesto did its part to produce a large soundstage with good imaging, first-rate resolution, and focus.

At first, I was wary of the Presence option; it seemed like a gimmick. Maybe so, but if so it's a useful gimmick: Dialing it in two clicks (–2) benefitted some 1970s recordings with especially nasty treble. On prog-rock quartet U.K.'s eponymous 1978 debut (LP, Polydor 6146), Bill Bruford's splashy

cymbals and pinched-sounding hi-hats grate like sandpaper; those two Presence clicks smoothed it out. I bought the late Art Dudley's copy of the Faces' *A Nod Is As Good As A Wink ...* (LP, Warner Bros 2574), which didn't need treble-taming as much as *U.K.* but benefitted from it anyway: Adjusting the Presence control by two clicks made the music more musical and listenable without removing anything essential; it could also reduce surface noise on noisy LPs. More than two clicks, and the music lost some vibrancy and sparkle, two key traits that make the Leto Ultra II so much fun. Still, the Presence control is a useful option that cured the hashiness of some older recordings.⁴

Moving beyond the Presence control and continuing on with vinyl, Sonny Rollins's epic *Volume 1* (LP, Blue Note BLP 1542) blasted sweetly through the Zesto. Rollins's tenor was dead-center—it's in mono—grand, and airy, carved in space, the Zesto's high-rez, midrange-to-treble illumination making the performance communicative and joyous.

Returning after my review of the Cambridge Audio CXA81 integrated amplifier to the remastered version of Radiohead's *OK Computer*, 2017's *OKNOTOK* (3LP, XL Recordings XLLP868), the new disc(s) sounded cleaner, without the distorted climaxes of the original LP. The Zesto played "The Tourist" with increased bass weight, more nuanced layering of Thom Yorke's vocal harmonies, and better realization of instrumental lines in recorded space. Greater texture from vocals, drums, guitar, and keyboards gave increased insight to this landmark rock disc. Though the Zesto's portrayal was slightly less enveloping than that of the

⁴ Having had a good, long listen to the Leto model that preceded the power-supply upgrade at the Toronto Audio Fest, I would argue that the Presence control is good for taking the edge off some more recent recordings, too. And when it isn't needed, it's completely bypassed, so it does no harm. I'm happy to see this rigorous rethinking of the traditional tone control.—**Editor**

measurements, continued

ohms (fig.7, blue and red traces), the distortion rises slightly above 0.1% at low and high frequencies, but I don't think this implies any problem. I was surprised to find that the distortion was lower when I reduced the load impedance to 600 ohms (cyan and magenta traces).

The distortion in the unbalanced output at 1V into 100k ohms was primarily the second harmonic at

–66dB (0.05%, fig.8), which would be subjectively innocuous even at higher levels. At the same 1V level into 600 ohms (not shown), the second harmonic dropped to –70dB (0.03%), but the third harmonic was a little higher than it had been into the higher impedance. The third harmonic also made an appearance in the balanced output spectrum (fig.9), but it was 20dB lower than the second harmonic.

Intermodulation distortion (fig.10) was very low in level, the second-order difference product at 1kHz with an equal mix of 19kHz and 20kHz tones lying close to –80dB (0.01%). Higher-order intermodulation products were negligible.

Zesto's Leto Ultra II offers measured performance that is excellent—and better than that of the company's 2014 Leto.—**John Atkinson**

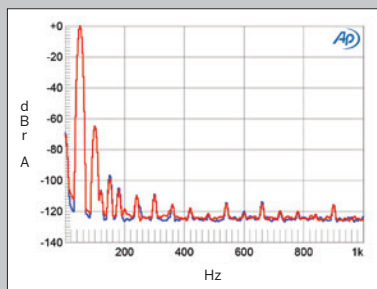


Fig.8 Zesto Leto Ultra II, unbalanced spectrum of 50Hz sine wave, DC-1kHz, at 1V into 100k ohms (left channel blue, right red) (linear frequency scale).

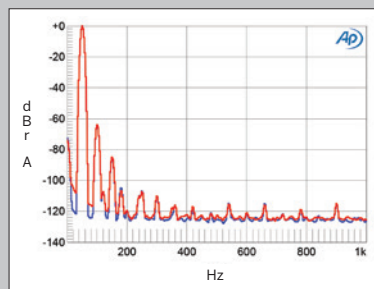


Fig.9 Zesto Leto Ultra II, balanced spectrum of 50Hz sine wave, DC-1kHz, at 1V into 100k ohms (left channel blue, right red) (linear frequency scale).

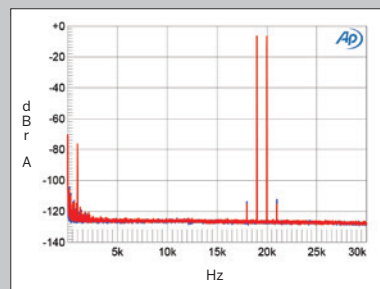


Fig.10 Zesto Leto Ultra II, unbalanced HF intermodulation spectrum, DC-30kHz, 19+20kHz at 1V into 100k ohms (left channel blue, right red) (linear frequency scale).

Shindo, its greater resolution, clarity, and note sustain were irresistible.

Similarly, the Zesto lacked the first-row presence of the Shindo when playing saxophonist Steve Coleman's trio outing *Triplicate* (LP, ECM 1373) with bassist Dave Holland and drummer Jack DeJohnette, but it resolved the character of the performance in more detail, with more air on drums and a tighter grip on acoustic bass notes. It performed a similar feat on Frank Sinatra's 1954 release, *Swing Easy!* (mono LP, Capitol W-587), every instrument focused, the master's voice big and well-defined.

The Leto corroborated my preference for original pressings and early reissues of jazz LPs—rarer and more expensive though they may be—over their modern, high-rez counterparts. Through the Leto Ultra II, the soaring, nasal notes of John Coltrane's tenor on *Traneing In* (1958 mono LP, Prestige 7123) echoed off the walls of Rudy Van Gelder's Englewood Cliffs studio, supported by Art Taylor's perky ride cymbal and Paul Chambers's resonant, deep-throated acoustic bass. Classical LPs were also reanimated—or perhaps I should say that their life was not obscured—via the Zesto, including the grand, brilliant piano of Vladimir Horowitz on *The Studio Recordings New York 1985* (stereo LP, Deutsche Grammophon 419 217-1), the purity and refinement of André Previn's London Symphony Orchestra in a concert performance of Ravel's opera *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (1982 LP, Angel Records DS-37869), and the tonal clarity and beauty of Karl Böhm conducting *Tristan Und Isolde* at Bayreuther Festspiele 1966 (1968 LP, Deutsche

Grammophon 136 433). The Zesto's refined, neutral character, apparent low noise floor, big soundstage, and clarity made the most of these and other classical recordings.

I was less thrilled with music streamed from Tidal and Roon. It's hard to blame the Leto for that when it sounded so good with other sources. Perhaps the Zesto's transparency exposed a certain sameness to the sound of streaming, even when using the Denafrips Ares II DAC, regardless of genre or era.

Conclusion

When your reference preamplifier regularly bests all comers, ticking off the reasons why lesser equipment can't compete becomes commonplace. The Zesto Audio Leto Ultra II preamplifier was a welcome deviation from that pattern. It blew out my preconceptions and expectations. For textural viscosity, tonal purity, first-row presence and overall naturalness, it couldn't quite match my Shindo Laboratory Allegro preamp—chosen precisely because Shindo is the best in those respects—but it brought its own important virtues. Superbly clean and transparent, the Leto Ultra II's midrange-to-upper treble focus and lucidity was off the charts, giving fresh insight to familiar LPs. Silky and smooth, its tone was also good. With its user-friendly, logical options, the Leto Ultra II is among the very best line preamplifiers I've heard, and it comes with a useful, innovative, fully defeatable tone control (the Presence feature), wrapped in an unusual, cosmetically striking frame.

Must be heard to be fully appreciated. Highly recommended. ■

ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

Analog sources Kuzma Stabi R turntable & Kuzma 4Point 11" tonearm; EMT TSD15 N MC phono cartridge.

Digital sources Asus laptop, Denafrips Ares II DAC.

Preamplification Shindo Allegro.

Power amplifiers Mytek Brooklyn AMP+, Shindo Haut-Brion.

Loudspeakers DeVore Fidelity O/93.

Cables Interconnect: Shindo Laboratory, Triode Wire Labs Spirit II, Furutech GT2 Pro USB cable. Speaker: Auditorium 23. AC: Triode Wire Labs Obsession NCF power cord, manufacturers' own.

Accessories Kuzma Platis 65 isolation platform, IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius line conditioner, Salamander five-tier rack; IKEA Aptitlig bamboo chopping boards (under preamp, turntable, power amps); mahogany blocks (2" × 2" × 0.5") under boards; 3"-thick studio-treatment foam damping (ceiling, walls).

Listening room 12' L × 10' W × 12' H, system set up along long wall; suspended wood floor, 6"-thick walls (plaster over 2×4), wood-beamed ceiling. —Ken Micallef



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