

Bound for Sound

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Martin G. DeWulf-Publisher

#6. *Doin' the Bottman: The PSE Studio V Mono Power Amplifiers*

STUDIO V by PSE, 1,990/pair. Professional Systems Engineering, 9755 Hamilton Road, Eden Prairie, MN 55344. ph. 612/943-1677. Product in loan from manufacturer. Mono amplifiers, 120 wpc-8 ohms, 230 wpc-4ohms

The Studio V monoblocks are the most recent offspring of the PSE evolutionary chain--a genealogy that reaches back to the mid-1970's. With this lengthy experience in electronic design and manufacture, the folks at Professional Systems Engineering are no strangers to amplifier design; and it shows. The Studio V's are refined products both physically and sonically. First, Let's get physical.

All PSE amps look alike -- the heat sink is on the front, and the On/Off switch is on the back. I've always suspected that this was caused by a Minnesota Norwegian being in charge of the design division (actually, I have no idea of who is in charge, I just like to poke fun at my fellow Norskies!). The PSE's are compact middle-weights, measuring just 17" wide x 3.5" tall x 10" deep, while weighing in at 23 lbs each. On the sides of each amp are thick pieces of glossy black plastic that add to each amp an air of high-tech elegance. A red "power-is-on" LED is placed right in the midst of those front-mounted heat sinks, resulting in an interesting visual effect when viewed in the dark. Overall, I found the physical appearance of the Studio V's quite

attractive. Inside, the layout was neat and component quality was very high, including a large toroidal transformer, WIMA caps, and AudioQuest Clear speaker cable connecting the output devices (on the front) to the 5-way binding posts (on the rear). Attention to detail was evident throughout.

During their stay in my home, I used the Studio V's with my Cary SLP-70 preamp as well as the Counterpoint Solid-8 line level preamp. Frontends included either a CAL Delta or an Audio Alchemy DDS 1.0 transport feeding either a Krell Studio 2 or the Cobalt D/A converter. Speakers were the Chapman T-7's or B&W 803 Series 2.

WHAT A PSE AMPLIFIER SOUNDS LIKE. These amps impressed me initially with their neutrality, clarity, stable image placement, and great extension at both ends of the musical spectrum, characteristics which remained constant during the months I used them.

The Studio V's revealed a landscape of fine musical detail in the midrange, with no perceptible veiling or grain. Transients were clean and exact.

For example, the piano, string bass, and brushed cymbals on Kevin Gibbs' killer CD, A Piano For all Seasons, were superbly defined by this amplifier. The cymbal work on more than one track showcases the PSE's treble, which I can only describe as pure, again, no grain or artificial texture. In the bottom three octaves, the Studio V's were full sounding with excellent pitch definition, cleanly reproducing every bit of bass energy requested of them. Current delivery was no problem with these babies.

The Studio V's set up a wide-open soundstage, with dimensional images. Soundstage depth was as good as I've heard recently, with noticeable layering front-to-back. This was dependent, of course, on the quality of the recordings, the transport, and the converter used.

Tonally, I found that the PSE's presented the music on a well-lit stage, cheerfully exposing any warts in addition to the beauty of each recording.

The PSE Studio V's are among the most refined and transparent amplifiers I've had the pleasure of reviewing. A pair of monoblocks this good for under two-grand is a massive bargain (for those of you who prefer a single stereo amp for less dineros, check out the Studio IV for \$950). The PSE Studio V's have my endorsement for a Component of Merit listing.

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The Bound for Sound Audioletter is published each month by Martin G. DeWulf, 220 N. Main St., Kewanee, IL 61443. Tel# 309-852-3022.

WANT A SECOND OPINION??? *(from customers who own Studio V's)*

James S. from Fort Wayne, IN.....

I LOVE THESE AMPLIFIERS!! There is no amplifier that comes close (including those at twice the price). These amplifiers are the heart and soul of my system.

Michael O. from Kenton, WA.....

*EXCEPTIONAL AND FANTASTIC!!
Thank You!*

Henry R. from NY, NY..

Beautiful Sound, EXCELLENT piece of Equipment.

Peter T. from Fountain Valley, CA.....

Well Built products! SOUNDS GREAT!!

Rick H. from Olympia, WA.....

*Neutral Sound, Depth & Fullness of tones,
Ample Power. Good Job!
I'M 100% SATISFIED!*

Edward F. from CA.....

Fantastic control of the subwoofers in my Vandersteen IV's. The base sounds REAL for the first time!

Steve H from SD....

EXCELLENT!!!

Ron S. from Marlin, PA.....

Congratulations on designing a truly BREATHTAKING PRODUCTS. The Studio V's are the perfect upgrade from my Studio IV.. FANTASTIC!! Once again, I am truly impressed by your fine products. Absolutely STUNNING!!!

Thomas L from WA....

Overall great in all ways including service.

Glenn S. from CO.....

ALL EXCELLENT! Dealer is Top Notch, also!

Lennis S. from CA.....

Sounds and looks GREAT!! MAJOR LEAP FORWARD IN MY SYSTEM!!!

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