



## **Audion Golden Night Review**

**by Chris Beeching**

Audion's kit has always elicited praise. It's aesthetically pleasing, both aurally and visually, and by and large the sound quality is very good. The renowned Silver Night (push-pull) monoblocks were hotly followed by the single ended stereo chassis version, and this has now been superseded by the £4000 per pair Golden Night SCSE which stands for Self-Cancelling Single Ended. The self-cancelling bit refers to the second harmonic distortion which is usually prevalent (though not in huge amounts) in single-ended amplifiers. Here, the second harmonic has been effectively nullified by some ingenious circuitry, and the effect is quite remarkable.

As with the Silver Nights, the Golden Nights are mono blocks, but this time with a single 300B output tube per channel yielding some 8-9 watts. The input and driver stages of the amp are something of a secret, using valves not normally found in audio circuits, and specifically chosen for this particular application. One is a single triode (as opposed to the more usual double-triode arrangement).

Low-power triode amplifiers (or any low-powered amplifier, if it comes to that) need efficient speakers if they are to give their best in both musical, and dynamic and loudness terms. Bearing this in mind, a pair of Audio-Note Ks were initially connected, and the amps were fed by an Impulse Moskito turntable, via an Audion pre-amp.

Starting from cold, the amps had a bit of treble glare, and the bass seemed a bit hard, but after half an hour of running these anomalies had ironed themselves out, and the system began to settle down.

The one thing which was immediately obvious was the sheer musical clarity of the design. I suppose for £4000 you'd expect a good product, but the 'see-through' character of the presentation was something for which I was quite unprepared. This effect was made all the more noticeable by the immense quiet in the background. Most amplifiers exhibit some background noise, but the Golden Nights were so quiet that I had to check they were still on, or that the mains fuse hadn't failed.

One interesting aspect of the Golden Night's performance arose on vocal jazz. The singer seemed to be just slightly brightly lit, acquiring a luminescence compared with the accompanying musicians.

The bass here was tighter than I'd known a 300B design offer before, and despite all the musical niceties and sweat in the performances, the Golden Nights were totally unflustered. They seemed to have much more power than their normal rating would suggest, and later with more inefficient speakers this was confirmed through listening - they drove a pair of original Quad electrostatics to quite surprising levels before they began to run out of steam.

There was no hint that the Golden Nights exhibited any slowness in the bass, and several recent dance hits played loudly in succession proved that not only can the bass keep up, but it's there in abundance. At the bottom end the Golden Nights are no slouches. They have weight, definition and agility; commendable out of a single 300B tube, though perhaps those who prefer behemoth solid state devices may find them a little lacking.

In conclusion, these amps aren't fussy about what sort of music you play, though they are critical of unsympathetic partnering equipment - speakers or sources. Any weakness in the source will be revealed and speakers need to be chosen with due regard for the amp's low output. Assuming those caveats are taken into

account, the Golden Nights will certainly convey the magic and music of every performance, and you'll enjoy music like you never have before.

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