

ROUGH RIDE TO THE STARS

by Vladimir Simovich

People say, in life things do happen for the reason... So what would be the reason of exceptional tube preamp, falling off the Toyota truck, somewhere in Colorado at the speed of 65 mph?

The story goes: In 2008 on the way back from the RMAF show in Denver, group of Serbian exhibitors including Mr. Solaja were rushing to San Francisco's festival Burning Amp. They had a full truck loaded with the gear that they successfully exhibited in Denver. Somehow at the full speed one package was blown away and fell off the truck. It was driver's blink of an eye that caught image of tumbling package creating the big dust on the side of the road. All they could do, was to pull on the side and to collect what was left over. Somehow package was still in one piece.

Later when they arrived to San Francisco, Mr. Solaja was curious to inspect the damage, almost positive that he will see just a big pile of broken glass. Instead it was just one corner of the front plate that had a visible dent. Inside of the case everything was intact, short of one wire that needed to be reconnected! The tube preamp with tube power supply, had all tubes intact! Right after that, one connection was replaced, the preamp had a warm glow and perfect sound, like nothing has ever happened. We used it with no problem for the whole Burning Amp show, as a house preamp that every exhibitor in need of a good preamp had it plugged in their system. So if anyone need to know about SA-R's build quality I do not think I would need to give any further explanation.

Now how does it sound? Lets fast forward one year. Burning Amp 2009. It has been a year that I have been the happy owner of that miracle preamp. I took the SA-R with me for the show. After the show a friend of mine and speaker designer wanted me, and group of friends I was with, to visit his studio and to hear his great new speakers he was making. His whole system was about breaking the \$ 100, 000.00 price tag in value. It sounded great by many aspects, but it was missing transparency at the top. We were almost positive that he would need to rethink the whole design. The preamp he was using was a big name brand priced high above \$ 10,000.00. At the end of the listening session I offered to bring from the car Mr. Solaja's preamp for the last listening session. After initial warm up we turned it on, and voila - everything we were missing it was magically present, right there. My friend's highly priced, highly regarded system really started showing all that we moments ago were missing blaming it on the lack of better tweeter / super tweeter. My friend was speechless. I do not have to add that I left his studio without my precious possession. He wanted to have it little bit longer to really enjoy his new speakers.

It is hard to describe the sound. I would just say that SA-R does everything that preamp has to do yet without pulling any attention to itself. It has clean uncolored sound, extremely transparent, yet with outstanding bass. It is fast and precise but still very emotional. It provides me with all benefits of having a preamp in the line of signal but without any disadvantages of having another piece of equipment added. It is all that preamp suppose to be.

I use to be the one that never wanted preamp in the line of the signal. I had CD to passive volume control straight to the amp. With SA-R I realized what a good preamp in the system does. It brings dynamics, it enhances bass, yet it doesn't smear the overall transparency.

Now if it wasn't for the rough truck ride, I would be missing this great piece in my system. Things do happen for the reason.

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