

Noise was never an issue, no matter what cartridge I matched it with. This is one of my favorite things about solid-state phono stages!

Thanks to the spot on tonality of the JLTi, each of these cartridges did a great job and stayed in character, revealing their strengths. If a phono stage goes too far on one side of the scale, it can make the detailed cartridge sound a bit dull or the romantic cartridge muddy. No problems here. If you are looking for your phono stage to be a system adjustment or tone control, this one's NOT for you.

One of the highest compliments I can pay the JLTi was that no matter which way I had it configured, I was just concentrating on the music, not nitpicking the sound. I was very pleased no matter what kind of music I was enjoying.

It's All About Power

To digress for a minute, we need to address the power options for the JLTi. With the standard wall mount power supply this is still an excellent phono preamplifier. However, after spending so much time listening to it with the additional outboard supply, I did hear the soundstage collapse somewhat when going back to the standard power supply.

The better your system, the more you need the upgraded power supply. Where does one draw the line? This one is always hard, because I'm obsessed. Don't look to me to be the voice of reason, because I'll fail you every time and tell you to just spend the money and live it up.

In all fairness though, I would suggest this as a ballpark; if you are more in the 800-2000 dollar table and cartridge level, you could probably live happily ever after



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with the entry-level configuration. More than this and you are probably in a grey area. If you have more than a few thousand dollars tied up in your analog rig, I think you will be shortchanging yourself if you DON'T get the upgraded power supply if the extra dough isn't a problem, because you will probably have enough resolution to hear the difference. This is very handy, because you can grow with the JLTi as your system improves.

Every aspect of the JLTi is improved. More weight, bigger soundstage, better imaging and a more refined presentation awaits you with the bigger power supply. But most of all, it's the bass performance; this preamp never ceased to impress me with its bass performance, especially with the external supply! The very first record I put on when I put the JLTi in my system was **Morph The Cat**, just because it has

so much LF energy and I was quite surprised indeed! But because this record has a bit of a loose, whumpy bass line it isn't the best to judge bass control and texture, so I dug out a few other jazz records with acoustic bass in a natural space so that I could get a better handle on things.

Again, no problem. Listening to all of my favorite jazz standards on DCC vinyl the JLTi did an exceptional job with texture and attack on this instrument.

The all important midrange was well presented too. This is what you get as you move up the analog food chain when they do it right; detail and musicality! As I said earlier, it's important to me for gear not to embellish too much in any direction (unless I'm putting a vintage system together...) so, I tried some of my more dreadful albums to see how that went. Much as I like it, Mark Ronson's new album still sounds thin and compressed, though I was getting some good detail that I did not get on my budget setup. *(continued)*