



## TEST FIRST ONE M v1.4



**Text and photo:** Marko Pecotić January 2017.

**Product:** ESL First One M V1.4 output amplifier

**Manufacturer:** ESL doo, Slovenia [\[esl@siol.net\]](mailto:esl@siol.net)

**Price:** EUR 120 per module, € 2,000 for almost amplifier (VAT)

In September 2015, I reviewed [version V1.3](#), this is now the new version V1.4. Behind the construction of this amplifier is standing firm ESL Ljubljana doo dealing with professional electronics, led the company's **Andrej Lakner**, and from him I got this in the mail some information on the organization of the amplifier:

*First One V1.4 is based on the CFA topology, compared with V1.3 are at first glance may notice much greater complexity of the module. Every part of the circuit is made improving the characteristics of implementing the best solutions that currently exist in the audio electronics. Intensive use of SMD technology has significantly reduced physical tokokrug a complete and all connections within the PCB is minimized, which significantly improves the performance and response of the amplifier compared to commercial projects. In short, the module V1.4 is diametrically different than the previous version - V1.3 version had only 8 transistors, while V1.4 has 26 transistors and much more complex scheme, ie. Topology. I can say that the version V1.4 result multidisciplinary integration of knowledge of the author of the project.*

*A small module of complete amplifiers, with features that has First One, practically does not exist on the market, but sales of the amplifier in the DIY community only confirm that the First One project on the right track. Most customers are from Europe, followed by the USA, Asia and Australia.*

*The amplifier is available in several versions: **The** version (70W / 8 Ohm, 110W / 4 Ohm, 50 x 60 mm - in preparation), **M** version (160W / 8 Ohm, 230W / 4 Ohm, 50 x 100 mm) and the **L** version (300W / 8 Ohm, 600W / 4 Ohm, 50 x 160 mm). Amplifiers are available in these versions: as a module or as a finished version, and there is a possibility of a VU meter. Ready amplifiers are available in black and silver finish, and amplifier for a warm-up should be a minimum of 50 hours.*

*With its operations do not stop at this amplifier, and I this year on the market to launch a new series, consisting of First One Server, First One DAC / preamp and the First One Amplifier.*

*More information about First One amplifier can be found at [diyaudio.com](http://diyaudio.com) page.*



## Sound

Like the previous version V1.3 M, and M V1.4 has declared 160W at 8 ohms, ie. 230W at 4 ohms. I think that the amplifier, instead of the declared 160W / 8 Ohm, in reality there are about 110-120W. The tested sample is my property. The amplifier I tested in two different systems in order to meet him for a number of different angles.

The amplifier is playing without pumping the bass, without shortening or highlighting high, without artificial ballooning stage, without any special highlighting a part of the frequency spectrum. It just plays! The sound of this amp's sound healthy, natural and unrestrained. I'm often asked what kind of sound I like. Usually I answer that love when out of the speakers (ie. The system) out what is on the CD or vinyl record. It seems that this amplifier in it and succeeds.

Stage is great, the sound is full and clear, the instruments are three-dimensional and physically tangible. And the space that lies behind such. Singers or piano is clearly illuminated and sketched (if available on tape). There are many details, but do not draw attention to themselves, not protruding, do not behave like a razor blade, a part of the music and musical composition.

The sound is rich and fresh breath. The focus is accurate, instruments are clearly positioned on the stage, there is no pulp or adhesive agents thereof. Each instrument has its proper tone, natural sustain, its dimensions, fresh breath.

The sound flowing from speakers without compression, without unnatural brightness or adding heat. No harshness or crudeness. The sound of the tape is clear and audible, the same applies to the breath of the hall, ie. The breath of its acoustics (if present in the recording).

Piano is real and natural. Dot. Large and powerful, impressive tone and sustain, impressive dynamics. Without that key sound glassy, mushy, distorted, raw and so on. The same applies to strings, winds, percussion and so on. The vocals are physically tangible, clearly spoken, healthy, have their own air, freshness, throat, sustain, etc.

The amplifier provides a clear insight into the recording, in the course of the action, all sounds so simple and natural with this amplifier.

Quiet or loud listening? No problem. This amplifier can play softly. Under quieter listening mean approximately 55 dB average volume, measured with an SPL meter from the listening position. Louder listening? Not a problem. Under louder listening mean of approximately 80 dB average volume, measured from the listening position.

The amplifier and the cables reacts, and this part needs attention.



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This amplifier can freely connect to speakers who exceed the cost, because with inadequate speakers amplifier will show everything you can (the same applies to the source).

There's not much to write, describe and philosophize. The amplifier works or does not work. This works.

## Conclusion

Given the price and displayed sound, my rating for the First One M V1.4 is: 10/10.

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