

Review of Grandinote Demone amplifiers, by Matej Isak, 03/2020 on :

MONO STEREO

GRANDINOTE DEMONE POWER AMPLIFIERS



It's always a pleasure and a thrill to receive an evaluation product from Massimiliano Magri from Grandinote. Magri belongs to a handful of high-end audio designers, that is thinking out of the box and is not afraid to speak and hands-on present what his proud creations are capable of.

I've already reviewed the Grandinote Genesi flagship preamplifier and like it very much. The logical follow up was to partner them with the Grandinote Demone, the brand's top tier power amplifiers.



After a few months of day in day out listenings, I was finally, to sum up, it up. There is a lot to say about Grandinote Demone amps, so let me start with a bit of history and technical background. These splendid amps surely deserve deeper digging into the subject matter to fully comprehend their qualities.

MAGNETOSOLID®

Magnetosolid® is a fusion of two words: "Magnetic" and "Solid". Magri describes it as the point of union of all Grandinote amplifiers.

The initial idea lurks back to the past millennium. Magri was more than happy with the sound of his tube amplifiers, but the little Red Devil in the mind was always contemplating with a timeless questioning of why the sound of tube amplifiers is richer than solid-state counterparts.



Magri perfectly mastered the physics of both tubes and the solid-state devices and the only logical conclusion that could be associated with the sonic warmth was pointing at particular circuits rather than the specific devices.

In 2000 the R & D started and the first amplifiers with Magnetosolid® Technology were ready in 2002.

This unique design implements tube amplifier schematics but in the complete absence of tubes. Mirroring the tube circuits logic Magri needed to develop proper signal output transformers. So, the basic concept resembles a tube amp approach, but with one major change, the tubes are replaced with solid-state devices.

As expected, this unique approach resulted in a rich natural sound. But... It didn't stop there. Magnetosolid® allowed a far wider frequency response than with the tubes, with much lower impedance and unexpectedly high damping factor. As you can read on, a major shift in the overall dynamic control, as well as the lower frequency spectrum formation, was achieved. Something that very few tube amplifiers are capable of!

There are more geniunites... Demone features no capacitors between the stages (only before output transistors) and there are only two output transistors in action acting simple push-pool mode. Everything operates in the absence of feedbacks and like with Genesi preamplifier, every device sports its dedicated power supply circuit.

Demone uses tube-like schematic amp schematics, but with much more improved execution.



Magri firmly believes how people generally feel that tubes give a better performance than solid-state components, but he explains how the tube-based performance is more connected with their inherited schematics and not particularly with the tubes.

MAGNETOSOLID-VHP OUTPUT STAGE

Magnetosolid-VHP unique output stage allows a maximum application of Magnetosolid® technology. Magnetosolid-VHP uses very expensive ferromagnetic components that are manufactured strictly to Grandinote's specifications.



Over the years and plentiful experimentations, Magri has tested many special materials and found a unique solution that is used for the output transformers magnetical cores.

The cost of this special core comes with a rocket-high price tag, but it offers one of a kind performance. A combination of throughout wires geometry partnered with the Grandinote's proprietary core allows primary inductance, which is ten times higher than the one associated with the ordinary core. The damping factor is higher and the frequency response is far better across the complete band.

But, fluffing this concept is not cheap by all means And this is why Demone costs so much.

SONIC DAEMONES

Grandinote Demones are fully balanced monoblock power amplifiers. Magnetosolid-VHP technology was designed to bring out the best musical qualities of both solid-state and tube tech. The control and extension of solid-state are blended with musicality, sweetness, harmonic richness and natural sense of tube amplifiers.



Demone provides 60W per channel (at 4 and 8 Ohm) with an impressive damping factor >230 and a highly extended frequency response (1,5Hz - 350 kHz).



Each monoblock offer one fully balanced XLR input. All the circuits operate fully in Class A, with no feedback and direct coupling stages use no capacitors between stages. Each amp draws approximately 220W, which is not that much compared to some tube amps and due to the pure Class A operation amps can get quite hot, so a proper space around is needed to provide enough ventilation.

THE MUSIC

Some products demand multiple and repeated listenings to produce meaningful listening notes. Others simply allow the words and sentences to find their place in my notebook by creating a life of its own. I'm not talking about poetic lyricism, but pointing to a simple, consequential momentum that some of the high-end audio products can put into the motion. Without the about Grandinote Demone amps belongs to a few of such potent devices that can effortlessly melt the heart with their harmonic richness and ability to preserve and provide the dynamic gist.

When partnered with matching components Demone provides a pure sensual input and sense of naturalness that is not exactly easy to achieve.



A great example of non compressed beauty a dynamic expanse is "Harvester of Sorrow" by Little Kruta, Jenn Mundia from the album The World's Greatest Audiophile Vocal Recordings Vol. III. Demone amplifiers easily materialized leading edges of notes, recreating the needed attacks that are crucial for the objective rendition of this track.

When musical passages are formulated with such highly prolific and bountiful solidity the usual traits closely connected with lower-level audio reproduction simply cannot form. And there is nothing low-level or mediocre about Demones

Demones overachievements were further carved in stone with Amrit Sond's "Spiritual Crisis" from the album Circular Motion.



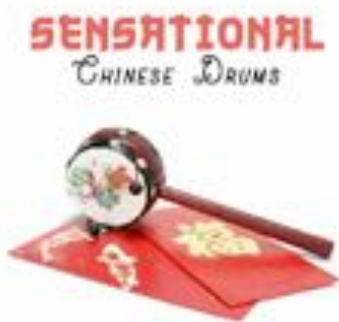
There is something about the Demone's lush nature that puts it in the league of its own. I'm not referring to any sort of over-sweating of the sound, but pointing at the Demones' capability of reproducing dark, natural timbre, tone and color of the music, as it is! Demones' unfaltering and un-altering nature instantly recognized and cherished for being true to the real music's DNA...

"Immigrant Song" By Vanessa Fernandez (When the Levee Breaks) steps up with it's call for the dynamic calling. Demone amps hold nothing back and go in full straight forward mode. Day in day out Demone amps provided the very same sensual

pleasure and impact unchanged. Not something I can say about most of the amps that crossed my path in recent years. These amps were created with high-octane passion and they distribute music's energy with a full swing.



For some reason, "Immigrant Song" somehow reminds me of Janis Ian Breaking Silence album. Full of energy, straight no chaser performance and without holding back anything. Just for the reference, I'm referring to the fantastic last track on Fernandez's album with only vocal and guitar. Demone amps really expressed Ian and Fernandez's in their best without getting in the way. A splendid affair without any headache caused by fatigue!



And talking about the sonic journey. Alisa Woody - Sensational Chinese Drums "Chinese Journey" evokes something essential outwardly. There is so much energy congested within this song. But... Not only that. One of the kind out of the box escapade unlocks the world of its own. Demone amps simply follow the trails of "Chinese Journey" unconditionally. Many splendid remarks can be given to Demones' unique narrative. Perhaps most importantly, these Italian gems get you in the heart of the matter and simply won't let it go.



Albeit of different origins Jen Chapin (Reckoning) "Don't Talk" might not sit well with everyone, but it touches yours truly at its bone. A Reggae, slow-paced escapade call for the amplifiers with potency to decipher the essentials of the timing.

Grandinote Demone amps simply followed the groove without any self-imposing. They could form the primary groovy essentials eloquently. When all of the attributes locks with all the primaries the groovy and picturesque illusion can be formed and Demone renders it splendidly.



Kaya Project - Dust Remixes, Pt. 2 "Soul Sanctuary" three-dimensionality and energetic impact is quite a hard task for any amp. Yet... It's not all about the dynamic. The "Soul Sanctuary" spatiality is intense and expands far beyond the usual scope. Demone amps allowed the unexpectedly vivid formation of this multilayered composition. I love how the countless details were never hidden behind the countless layers of sounds. It was easy to fully pinpoint the single notes, embrace the mystical atmospheric mood. Too easily any extreme multilayering projects a far fetched sonic projection. Not the Grandinote Demone amps! They could easily formulate a higher grade of density and had no problem

with keeping the pace with non-ordinary spatiality. Even some of the top tier amps fail to keep a sense of an extended depth with the rendering of the basic left and right bouncing.

On the contrary, the Demones refreshing ability to seamlessly cope with the music's force and density is a remarkable feat!

Grandinote Demone amplifiers ensured exceptional aural journey across all sorts of music without getting in a way and with a non-ordinary harmonically rich and dense nucleus. From song to song, the music draws me in and I always just wanted to get more of the sonic intoxication, explore more albums and dig deeper into what kind of a message was intended to be deciphered.

Despite all of the tech talks, mystification and proprietary it's a fact that not every high-end end audio amplifier can the complexity of music' chaotic fluctuations and idiosyncrasies.

Demone majestic inner core allows all of the music asymmetries and irregularities to formed with a power of primary structure and qualities. Quite an achievement alone worthy of highlighting. Much ink has been spilled about our sensitivity to second-order harmonics and I have little doubt that much attention was paid to get this particular attribute right with Demones which translates into a true to the source nature that was so vividly and repeatedly exhibited over the evaluation period.

Over the review, The Demone amps never entered euphonic realms or misconstrue the real message.

CONCLUSION

Grandinote Demone amps present the music unapologetically bold, passionately and puissantly as their designer Massimiliano Magri - Max.



I have a little doubt how Magri proud creations have gotten the particular name to point out Demone's intrinsic qualities, that are not kitten by ordinary norms and attributes.

DEMONE

Magri started a mission impossible and succeeded without twisting the objective reality. Demone encompasses the timeless tubes qualities infused by the solid-state advantages with a higher degree of performing ability.

Even a seasoned audio aficionado and trained ears music lovers will have a hard time to recognize the Demone non-tube inner heart, but will straightforwardly discern exuberant details, dense harmonics, lighting fast speed, natural/life-like tone, and unreserved dynamic impact. This is undoubtedly the result of Demone's unexpectedly high damping factor (>230) and the very reason for hard to achieve a cogent emotional realism. Demone amplifiers are not dealing with missives... They cut straight to the case...



Unlike many so-called pure audiophile amplifiers, the Grandinote flagship monoblocks present music as a coherent whole. This is the result of years of research and Magri's painstaking efforts to unite solid-state components with ferromagnetic principles. All of these efforts culminate in the majestic presentation that paints the sonic canvas with true and natural colors as well as with the spot on pigments (details). Demones are true to the source and when everything is matched properly, they're true to reality.

The Demones' unaltered rawness translates with the music's purity, unexpected lighting fast speed, tube-like (but not saturated) natural warmth and impressive horizontal and vertical expanse...

These pure Class A power amplifiers are sounding nowhere near their specified 60 W, but almost double the power! Music is presented with an instantaneous and extreme exclamation point. These amps are no déjà vu affair, but a stand out statement! But, then again I wouldn't expect anything ordinary or mediocre from Max...

With true Italian DNA, Demone amps can materialize the magic of music's beauty regardless of presenting either the joyfulness or sadness. Demone's ability to present the big enough portion of emotional impact is of the stand out qualities and comes with unusual abstract metrics.

We're living in the 21st century where even most bizarre ideas and their manifestations find their actual habitat. The present is so complex and far fetched, that it allows the manifestation of ideas, that were simply not possible even to tinker with a few years back. One of such is for sure tube alike amplifier with solid-state devices replacing the tubes. And oddly enough it does exist and it performs beyond what one could call just fine.

I like and respect Max's endeavors. In the world of countless naysayers and never-ending so-called objectivism, he's practicing the art of music satisfaction backed up with an epistemological foundation. This is a rare quality not only in our industry but generally.



Like with many ultra-high-end audio products, not everyone will understand and hold dearly these gems. Yet... Ones, that have an open mind and heart will appreciate how daringly these Italian amps can ignite a series of most cherished events, that are by all means no happy accidents. They are a result of something profoundly complex being trickled down into the product that is not exactly affordable but still reachable to more than a few mortals...

The rewarding emotional impact of Grandinote flagship amps serves the senses with rare completeness and enriched impact, as all of the genuine and authentic Italian pleasures do...

Like a perfect Italian coffee, sports cars, pasta, fashion, pizza, red wine, etc., Demone amplifiers are as Italian as it gets. These unalloyed seducers were made for pure music intake and designed by a person who loves music and life for what it is.

More than any amplifiers I've come across, the Grandinote Demone amps embraces a genuine Dolce Far Niente... You don't have to plan ahead of the listening but just turn on the amps, immerse into pleasant idleness of sweetest music intoxication and forget about the time and space. Unabridged sensual and emotional voyage, that captivates the senses is only possible when the original music potency is not twisted and distorted.

Life is and can be good when it's enriched and served by perpetual pleasures, no matter of big they are. Grandinote Demone amplifiers do serve a grander than usual portion of "La Dolce Vita" palpably. These amps are a clear reminder that passion and technology can mingle along when the right ingredients are in syncro.

Grandinote Demones represent something unique among the high-end audio amplifiers on the market. Their unforeseen ability to embraces and fuse the qualities of two opposite concepts is remarkable and worthy of highlighting. For what Grandinote Demone amplifiers represent technically and music-wise I'm more than happy to grant them a rare and exclusive 2020 Mono and Stereo Editors Choice Product Award!

Grandinote flagships amplifiers are the epitomes of music reproduction done right. Period!•

Matej Isak