

many recordings over the hill into shrillness, but I have yet to find a loudspeaker system that didn't respond to that forwardness by merely sounding more alive and realistic. This is one case where I have to say I'm more impressed by sheer seductive listenability than by accuracy. I keep telling myself that accurate is better, but accuracy by itself isn't why I derive so much pleasure from listening to the PV-5.

Interestingly, when driving C.J.'s Premier One power amp, this latest PV-5 almost seemed to disappear. I had the feeling that all I was hearing was the power amp (which, while superb-sounding on many top speaker systems, is more colored than the preamp).

In short, this has to be one of the

world's great preamplifiers. It floors me that Conrad-Johnson has a still better preamplifier in their line, the Premier Three (see AHIC's report elsewhere in this issue). It has not prompted me to turn in my Berning (for which my attachment is more than emotional; I paid good money for it), but it *has* made it clear that my 4-year-old TF-10 is overdue for an overhaul and upgrade.<sup>1</sup>

A honey of a preamp!

**JGH**

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<sup>1</sup> Those who have witnessed JGH's loyalty to the Berning over the last 4 years will appreciate what a large step it has been to find a preamp that outperforms it in a number of ways. Interestingly, Berning has just announced their first official updating of the TF-10 (although it's been modified in minor ways all along), and it's described as making "significant" sonic improvements. **LA**



## THE KLYNE SK-2A PRE-PREAMP

Moving coil stepup device with separate power supply. Bandwidth: .8 Hz to 350 kHz. Gain: 26 dB. Power consumption: 5 watts. Switchable input impedance (with 5 DIP switches per channel): 47k, 1k, 200, 120, 80, 65, 50, 40, 30, 25, 20, 15 ohms. Switchable high-frequency rolloff (with 5 additional DIP switches per channel): 50, 35, 25, 20, 18, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10 kHz (-3 dB point). Price: \$695. Update from SK-2 to -2A: \$160. MANUFACTURER: Klyne Audio Arts, 721 Howard Ave., Olympia, WA 98506. (206) 943-5420.

Anyone who's played around with head amps, moving coil cartridges, and preamps knows that the results you get with any particular device depend to a large extent

on what it's used with. All the different components interact strongly, making absolute recommendations very hard to come up with. Stan Klyne has addressed this problem by making his SK-2A head amp both very neutral in tonal balance and very flexible in use. There are areas where the SK-2a may be bettered sonically (in my opinion, by a narrow margin) in use with a particular cartridge or preamp; I doubt if there's any product out there which can equal its sonic excellence in a wide variety of situations.

Head amps, of course, wouldn't be around if it weren't for the low output of the best moving coil cartridges. There's a major debate in the high-end industry as to the necessity or desirability of a