

Internet illimitato

24,95€ /MESE
TUTTO INCLUSO

amazon prime
IN REGALO PER 1 AN

STAFF | CONTACT

GO Search Dagogo

HOME EQUIPMENT REVIEWS AUDIO NEWS EVENT REPORTS SPOTLIGHT MUSIC THE COLUMNS DAGOGO CLASSICS



Amplification

Tektron TK 211S Tube Integrated Amplifier Review

Jack Roberts imparts insights on the \$9,995 Tektron TK 211S Single-Ended Tube Integrated Amplifier

By: [Jack Roberts](#) | July 2009



I first met Robin Wyatt of Robyatt Audio at the Rocky Mountain Audio Fest. He had a really nice sounding room and I really enjoyed visiting with him. So, when Constantine called and asked if I would like to review the Tektron 211S amp that Robin was importing from Italy, I said most certainly. Robin has proven to be just as nice to work with during the review as he was to visit with in Denver.

The 211 Tube

The 211 is the tube of some legendary amps, and it creates a rather wowing first impression that I think comes from both the tubes size and shape. Most people who see them think they look very retro. An amp using 211 tubes creates a challenge for all involved, because it requires such high supply voltage. Still there are several amp designers who believe that only big triode tubes with high voltage can give big realistic tones and dynamics. After listening to this amp for two months, I have no doubt to the specialness of this tube, and this amp.

Description

The Tektron amplifiers are by Attilio Caccamo of Italy, where they are hand-built and hand-wired. The fact they are from Italy should be enough to tell you they will be beautiful to look at and listen to, and they are. Looking at the Tektron 211S tells me that Mr. Caccamo or someone at Tektron has that wonderful Italian flare for beauty without

Latest Reviews & Audio News



Sonore Signature Rendu SE & Small Green Computer sonicTransporter 17 for Roon DSP Review
(June 8, 2018)



Ideon 3R Renaissance and Wyred4Sound Recovery re-clockers Review
(June 1, 2018)



Zu Audio Omen Dirty Weekend speakers Review
(May 31, 2018)



Furutech NCF Boosters Review
(May 19, 2018)

Commentary

My Lifetime
(May 8, 2018)



TriangleArt Maestro turntable Review
(May 9, 2018)



Analog Survey, Part 2: Spiral Groove Revolution turntable system Review
(May 8, 2018)



CAS Exhibitor Profile: Studio Electric
(May 1, 2018)



Burp Hollow
(April 25, 2018)



BorderPatrol DAC SE USB + SPDIF Review
(May 2, 2018)



CAS Exhibitor Profile: Unisinger Speakers
(May 1, 2018)

Commentary

Brendan Jan Walsh/Mr Van Walsh: Two Sides of the Same Cello
(April 5, 2018)

making it look overdone. Tektron amps are imported by Robin Wyatt Audio as I mentioned before. Another thing that tells you that someone affiliated with this amp knows tubes is the quality of the NOS tubes that came with my Tektron 211S. If memory serves me right, the GE JAN-CGs are the same ones that Kondo used in his iconic SET amp. The other NOS tubes I listed above are equally impressive and way cool to look at.

The 211S Integrated Amplifier is a 15-watt-per-channel, single-ended, direct-heated, no feedback design with a fully active preamplifier section. The very fact that the 211 tubes produce a very big and powerful fifteen watts means we actually have a little more range in our choice of speakers. Still, as with all SET amps it will work better the more efficient the speakers are, and the more closely their impedance matches the amp. I would like to think most people who make the decision to spend this kind of money on an SET amp have already decided they like, or hopefully love the sound of SETs. These people should have already found speakers they like that work well with low powered SETs. I definitely fall into this camp. This is not a review by someone who is trying to decide about SETs. I “drank the kool-aid” years ago. So it’s no surprise that my 103dB-efficient Teresonic speakers are a great match for this amp.

Before I get into the review I want to say a few things about the looks of this amp. It has a rather unique combination of retro tube amp and fine Italian design. The hardwood bass kind of reminded me of a beautiful classic turntable plinth. Mine was finished in a beautiful warm cherry that looked stunning with the electrolytic copper top plate. Combine this beautiful base with the tall glass towers surrounded by highly polished cooper rings, the big, heavy black transformers, the retro knobs, the glass eye in the center with numbers in it, and you get one of the nicest looking, least overdone amps I have seen.

Listening

There seem to be two different design goals with SET amps. First, is the stereotypical sound that has a glorious midrange, slightly soft bass, slightly rolled of highs, and is sort of sugary sweet. Then there’s the unbelievable transparent, lighting quick, and wonderfully alive sounding amps like the Wavac MD 300B and especially the EC 300B, the Shindo Cortese and their 300B amps, and Teresonic’s Reference 2a3. I would say the two different sounds were more budget-based than design-based except there are a few very expensive SETs that fall into the stereotypical group. Now I know I have overstated the case, but I think it needs to be said, because there are a lot of non-SET users who think the stereotype is really what all SETs sound like.

The TekTron 211S may be the most successful SET amp I have heard at falling right in the middle of these two sounds. I think for many this will be a beautiful thing. For as I listened I never once thought it sounded like the stereotypical SET, yet it’s bottom-end is just a touch soft and as beautiful at the top-end is, I still feel it’s ever slightly softens it. I ‘m not sure that’s a bad thing, by the way. The midrange had all the magic I have come to hope for from really good SETs. So let’s break it down and see if I can let you know how it sounds.

DYNAMICS

When I breakdown the sound of a piece of equipment I most often start with the bass or treble, but I think with this amp we should start with dynamics. The Tektron 211S is the epitome of what tube designers call “Big Tone”: it has a big, powerful, dynamic sound with lots of punch. This “Big Tone” sound from the Tektron 211S combined with the Teresonic’s big speakers brought a sound with life-size scale and lots of dimensionality into my listening room. This sound is not quite as transparent nor does it have the kind of lightening fast micro-dynamics as my Wavac EC 300B. Still, it’s quite an intoxicating



REDGUM Articulata Integrated Amplifier Review
(April 24, 2018)



CAS Exhibitor Profile: AIX Media Group
(April 3, 2018)



Remembering Buck Clayton (2018)
(March 21, 2018)

Spea

highend
made in

Liedtke

sound that for many music lovers will be a sound they will fall in love with. Of all the amps I have had in for review the only other amp to have this kind of really big sound was the deHavilland 845s. This should be no surprise as one of their core design goals is to have that “Big Tone”. The difference is that the Tektron 211S has a little more of that SET magic as we will talk more about below.

SOUNDSTAGE AND IMAGING

This is one of several areas where the Tektron 211S excelled. The soundstage is very wide and deep; in fact as I mentioned above it's a big, dimensional soundstage. Not only is the soundstage big, but the Tektron 211S has a way of placing individual bass instruments in their own individual space that is just uncanny. I especially enjoyed how this allowed a standup bass, a bass drum, or even the bass-end of a piano to have their same space, and each have different dynamics all at the same time just like live music. Most importantly, it gives you this big, dimensional soundstage without seeming the least bit unnatural or distracting in any way from the music. The Tektron also has a good vertical soundstage that I really enjoyed. One thing I liked a lot about the Tektron's soundstage was the way images seem to come into my listening room with such ease.

BASS

There is no doubt about it, the bass of this amp is big and powerful, but not as fast and nimble as my Wavac. Truth is, with a really fast speaker such as Lowthers or Feastrex this could be an advantage. I understand how easy it would be for many music lovers to fall in love with this sound. It's so clean, powerful, and with such startling dynamics! On the other hand, the Tektron 211S doesn't have quite the same ability to unravel the textures of the bass instruments like the Wavac and Shindo amps do.

MIDRANGE

The midrange has that magical presence of a really good SET. The Tektron 211S's midrange is luscious, relaxed, and has plenty of detail. It's not quite the ultimate word in transparency, but unless you are coming from something like the Wavac EC 300B or maybe the Shindo 300B Limited, you will probably think it's the most transparent amp you have heard. Like the bass, the dynamics of the midrange are really quite exceptional. Drums and horns just explode into your room. This amp also gets the timbre and harmonics of the music correct to my ears. It has as rich a harmonic structure, but I did not find it overly warm.

I was pleased with the way voices seemed to just appear in my room with the Tektron 211A. It allowed voices to have a good weight and mass to them, making you feel as if there is a person singing or an instrument playing in your room. This is a very important trait to me, I don't like them to sound like they are just notes floating in air. If a system can't do this, I find it much more difficult to listen with the same intensity or to become as emotionally involved. Emotional involvement is what I expect from SET amps, and the Tektron 211S really comes through in this area.

TREBLE

As I have often said, the most important thing about the treble of a system to me is that it does not draw attention to itself. Maybe I should take a minute and explain what I mean by that. For example, if the top-end is bright it's just irritating; if it shimmers too much it's beautiful but just not correct; if it's too rolled off then you will lose inner detail and image specificity; and lastly if it's too soft the music will lack some of its natural sparkle. Having said all that brings me to my point: if the top-end is right you probably won't notice it at all.

Now back to the Tektron 211S, it has a very beautiful top-end, but it does ever so slightly soften the treble. Truth is this is actually a good thing with most digital and lots of recordings. I don't want you to overreact to this statement. This softening is not nearly as noticeable as it is in many tube amps, whether single-ended or push-pull.

Conclusion

I feel I need to say in conclusion that there are many tube lovers, most probably do not value speed, and transparency like I do, in fact some think my system lacks warmth. For them, this may be about as good as an amp gets. I also want to say I could be perfectly happy living with this amp for the rest of my life. That's quite a thing to say when you consider my amp and preamp that the Tektron stood in for cost four times as much. The reason I can say this is because voices, strings, woodwinds, drums, and especially cymbals just sound so right on this amp. The Tektron 211 set music free and gives it great soul. I will miss it very much when it's gone.

U.S. Distributor's Comment:

WOW thanks Jack, a really nice study on a great amp! I can only add two things.

First, this amp is hand built one at a time by a true artisan in Cattania, Sicily, and reflects a lifetime's intimate knowledge of electronic parts, as a salesman, combined with love of fine music, Italian style. Second, if Jack were to substitute the GE 211's I sent him, as chosen by Kondo (which he correctly pointed out), with the United 211's, he would get that extended treble with tighter bass but he would lose that incredible, unmatched midrange warmth and inner light!

Tube maketh the amp!

Robin Wyatt

Robyatt Audio

(Page 1 of 1)

0

Mi pi

Tweet

G+

One Response to *Tektron TK 211S Tube Integrated Amplifier Review*

GEORGES CLASEN February 8, 2015 at 1:29 am PST

If I am ing this review of TEKTRON 211s I must agree fully,first time I listen to especially pre amplifier and amplifier in a normal price range who is sounding like that!!!

Reply

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment

Name *

Email *

Website

Post Comment

**Internet
illimitato**

24,95€ /MESE
TUTTO INCLUSO


IN REGALO PER 1 AN

Categories

Amplification

Digital
Integrated
Mono Block
Preamplifier
Phono
Solid State
Tube

Analog Sources

Cartridges
Tape
Tone Arms
Turn Tables

Digital Sources

Digital Disc Players
DACs
Music Servers
Streaming Music
Services

Speakers

Floorstanding
Bookshelf
Subwoofers
Home Theater
Computer Speakers
Mini Systems
Powered Speakers

Cables

Interconnects
Speaker Cables
Power Cables
Digital Cables
Turn Table Cables

Accessories

Power Conditioners
Room Acoustics
Racks & Stands
Audio Software
Other

iPod

iPod Speakers
iPod Headphones
iPod Transports

Headphones

Over Ear
On Ear
In Ear
Headphone Amplifier

Site Sections

Forums

Login
Sign Up

Main Page
Speaker Forum
Amplification Forum
Analog Source Forum
Digital Source Forum
Cable Forum
General Audio Forum
Beginners Forum



Search Dagogo

Audio News

Spotlights

Dagogo Classics

The Columns

Staff

Sponsors

Contact

RSS Feed