

Reference Phono 3

Bringing Vinyl to Life



“...when listening to the Reference Phono 3, one gets an underlying sense of agility. It reacts to the most subtle changes in timbre, tone, or dynamics without the least concern, and to such an extent it makes many rivals seem slightly ponderous...The term ‘reference’ still has meaning for Audio Research, and it doesn’t use the term lightly. The Reference Phono 3 is a true reference point in turntable replay, as it extracts a remarkable amount of information from the cartridge, and yet plays it in a manner that invites you to listen to more and more albums... the Audio Research Reference Phono 3 is one of those rare devices that gets closer to ‘best’ than most. Highly recommended.”

Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi+ 136, August 2016

For those seeking a world-class phono preamplifier, we suggest the REF Phono 3, which offers as much performance as we can pack into a single chassis. Six high current 6H30 tubes in the gain stage makes for wider dynamic swings and a greater ease in reproducing musical nuance. Numerous custom components, including proprietary capacitors designed in-house, allow the REF Phono 3 to create a playback experience similar to hearing master tapes. Musical realism and palpability are striking.

The REF Phono 3 is flexible and easy to use; gain is selectable, with 45dB or 67dB via single-ended outputs, or 51dB and 73dB via the balanced output, allowing compatibility with most cartridges. Loading “on the fly” adds to the ease of use. This flexibility is available for two sets of inputs, along with equalization settings for RIAA, Decca and Columbia LPs, assuring compatibility with your record collection. Rich harmonic texture, soundstage spaciousness, and fine resolution of detail are hallmarks that emerge from a velvety black background.

After nearly 50 years, our focus remains the advancement of the state-of-the-art in music reproduction. Every component is meticulously hand-crafted and personally auditioned before it leaves our factory. Our attention to detail, customer service, and product support create unprecedented value. An Audio Research component is more than a purchase, it’s an investment.

If you are a vinyl aficionado, we encourage you to stop by one of our dealers to experience the Reference Phono 3 magic for yourself.



SPECIFICATIONS

Frequency response

± 2 dB of RIAA, 10 Hz to 60kHz; 3 dB points below 0.3Hz and above 300 kHz

Gain

Selectable 51 dB (Low) and 73 dB (High) at 1kHz BAL; 45 dB (Low) and 67 dB (High) at 1kHz SE. (MC and MM compatible)

Noise

0.28 μ V equivalent input noise, IHF weighted.
Shorted (Low Gain) input (71 dB below 1mV 1kHz input). 0.082 μ V equivalent input noise (High Gain).
(62 dB below 0.1 mV 1kHz input)

Input impedance

47k Ohms and 100 pF SE. Selectable loads: 1000, 500, 200, 100, 50 Ohms, and Custom

Distortion

Less than .002% at 1.0V RMS 1kHz output

THD

Less than .002% at 1.0V RMS 1kHz output

Tube complement

6 - 6H30 dual triodes, plus 1 - 6550WE and 1 - 6H30 in power supply

Dimensions

Width: 19" (48 cm)
Height: 7.8" (19.8 cm)
Depth: 16.5" (41.9 cm)
Handles extend 1.6" (4 cm) forward of the front panel

Weight

32.5 lbs. (16.6 kg) Net; 49 lbs. (24 kg) Shipping

Complete technical specifications can be found on our website.

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