



Amplification

PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium HP power amplifier Review

By: Paul Mah | January 2015

PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium HP power amplifier Review

International union—a confluence of four countries for the sake of high-end audio

Question: What do you get when you have Dutch, Chinese, American and Italian joined together?

Answer: Mighty good eating if I'm referring to international cuisine. But since I'm writing about food for the soul, the new PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium HP power amplifier is the tasty audio dish that I am referencing. PrimaLuna has been a company since 2000, started by the Netherlander Herman van den Dungen who coined the Italian brand name in honor of his grandfather. For the uninitiated, one can get the origin of the company name from the back of any PrimaLuna owner's manual. To achieve high quality and dependability at reasonable prices, Mr. van den Dungen turned to Chinese manufacturing but with an eagle eye to strict quality control and adherence to design standards.

Operation fail-safe

I'm sure many Dagogo readers are familiar with the PrimaLuna brand, but for those who are not, the company offers audio components which are value-packed with forward thinking safety and convenience features at relatively affordable prices. The new DiaLogue Premium HP power amplifier retails for \$3,899.

Much have been written about the various features, either in the high-end audio press or on the PrimaLuna USA website, so rather than rehash the available information I refer readers who are unfamiliar with the company to satiate their curiosity by doing a Google search.

Specification:

Output Stereo: 72 watts x 2 EL34 & KT88(ultra-linear)
 85 watts x 2 KT120 (ultra-linear), 42 watts x 2 EL34 & KT88(triode)
 45 watts x 2 KT120 (triode)
 Output Mono: 148 watts EL34 & KT88 (ultra-linear)
 175 watts KT120 (ultra-linear), 85 watts EL34 (triode)
 89 watts KT88 (triode), 94 watts KT120 (triode)
 Freq. Response (+/- 1dB): 9Hz-59kHz (stereo), 8Hz-69kHz (mono)
 THD (1W/1kHz): < 0.1% (stereo), < 0.1% (mono) S/N Ratio: 99 dB (stereo), 105 dB (mono) Input Sensitivity: 1.2V (stereo), 1.1V (mono) Input Impedance: 100k Ohm
 Power Consumption: 280 watts Dimensions: 15" x 8.3" x 14.2" (WxHxD) Weight: 66.3 lbs Inputs: 1 pair RCA

I will, however, mention some of the more important cool safety features. With the DiaLogue Premium HP power amplifier there is a new board for its famed Adaptive Auto-bias (AAB) circuit. Not only does the new AAB monitor and adjust the bias, but it will also indicate which output tube has gone bye-bye when a red LED lights up. Other new items include a larger power transformer, and silver plated Swiss made OCC wiring used in the signal path. Because of the humongous hand wound transformers in the PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium HP, an installed soft start circuit prevents initial current rush upon turn on from frying them. There is also separate power and output transformer protection circuits to further safeguard what are the most expensive components of the unit. Transformer noise or hum is basically non-existent thanks to its AC Offset Killer circuit. Little or no transformer noise with a tube amplifier is a very good thing! I also didn't hear any noise with any of the stock tubes.

At the request of Kevin Deal of PrimaLuna USA who wanted me to see the layout, I removed the bottom panel and was happy to see the excellent execution and built quality, not unlike that of a fine automobile. Befitting a premium model, there are premium parts galore and the point-to-point wiring is all neat and tidy. So neat and tidy that I thought the wiring was performed by a machine, but Mr. Deal assured me otherwise. With the PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium HP, there's a lot of really nice and expensive stuff one does not usually get with other amplifiers for this amount of money.

With its design philosophy, PrimaLuna has endeavored to minimize the fear of owning tube equipment. While it is still possible for something to go wrong, a faulty capacitor, resistor, or tube for example, the occurrence of a major catastrophe has been reduced to a very low probability. Even solid state or digital components can develop problems, so it is commendable that PrimaLuna have taken steps to make tube equipment that is as trouble free as possible.

More watts, Watson!

The HP stands for High Power or nearly double the watts of the standard DiaLogue Premium power amplifier, depending on the type of tube. With the stock EL34 output tubes, the standard DiaLogue Premium amplifier delivers 25 triode watts and 42 ultralinear watts, while the new HP version bumps up the watts to 42 triode and 72 ultralinear, respectively. 34, 77, 88, 120, hut, hut! Snap the ball already! You can use any of these output tube types or a combination even, as the famous PrimaLuna photo shows; but I wouldn't recommend it, unless you want a weird-looking tube complement.

I requested from Kevin Deal a review sample with the black faceplate (also comes in silver) and received one of the first imported units, which was literally fresh off-the-boat.

My review unit arrived with a complement of six 12AU7 tubes and eight EL34 output tubes (four per channel). The tube layout reminded me of chess or checker pieces ready to do battle. In this instance the amp was ready to tackle the musical apexes. The two innermost 12AU7s are input tubes, while the four outer ones are employed as drivers. I asked Kevin why four drivers instead of the usual two and he answered four provides a wider dynamic range. Wider dynamics is always a good thing in my audio book, thus bringing reproduced music closer to the dynamics of a live performance.

I also requested an optional octet of Russian Tung-Sol KT120s to try in place of the stock EL34s, which Kevin sent in a separate package.

This power amplifier is a heavy beast at almost eighty pounds, given my ninety-seven pound, kick-sand-in-the-face frame. For even more power, one can buy two PrimaLuna

Outputs: 4, 8 , & 16 Ohm output taps (stereo), 2, 4, & 8 Ohm output taps (mono) Tube Compliment: 6 - 12AU7, 8 - EL34 KT88 or KT120 tubes also available

MSRP:

\$3,899

PrimaLuna U.S.A.
1042 N. Mountain Ave #B
PMB406
Upland CA 91786

909-931-0219
info@primaluna-usa.com

Latest Reviews & Audio News

-  [Tales from the Golden Age, Chapter 2](#)
(July 7, 2017)
-  [Interview with King Ip of KingKo Audio \(Hong Kong\)](#)
(July 3, 2017)
-  [KingKo Audio KA-101 integrated amplifier Review](#)
(July 5, 2017)
-  [CAS7 Exhibitor Profile: Zesto Audio](#)
(June 26, 2017)
-  [CAS7 Exhibitor Profile: Audio Federation](#)
(June 24, 2017)
-  [CAS7 Exhibitor Profile: Syncopation](#)
(June 24, 2017)
-  [AVM Ovation SA 6.2 stereo amplifier Review](#)
(June 24, 2017)
-  [Magico Q5 loudspeakers Review, Part 2](#)
(June 12, 2017)
-  [Magico Q5 loudspeakers Review, Part 1](#)
(June 12, 2017)
-  [KEF Blade loudspeakers Review](#)
(June 10, 2017)
-  [47 Laboratory 4739 Fudou power amp Review](#)
(June 5, 2017)
-  [Straight Wire Audio System Evaluation Process Review](#)
(May 17, 2017)
-  [Streamers – A Comparison](#)
(May 11, 2017)
-  [My Dad's 16-Foot Wide Speaker, 1965](#)
(May 8, 2017)
-  [OPPO Digital Sonica DAC Review](#)
(May 17, 2017)

DiaLogue Premium HP and they become mono-block behemoths, essentially doubling the wattage. While no lightweights to begin with, PrimaLuna gear keeps getting heavier with each new model and in the case of the HP, a beefier power transformer added several more pounds to the standard DiaLogue Premium version.

The DiaLogue Premium HP is outfitted with high quality speaker connectors for 4, 8 and 16 ohm loads, depending on your speakers' average impedance. To change from stereo to mono operation and double your pleasure, buy another DP HP, then perform the following for both: flick a switch on the back panel; connect an RCA cable to the left input (marked mono) and speaker cable to the right output for 2, 4, or 8 ohm use, again depending on the speaker's average impedance. The 2, 4, and 8 ohm labels are clearly marked at the bottom of the right output section.

The DiaLogue Premium HP required a fairly long break-in period before reaching full stride. I estimate approximately 100 hours of operation were required before changes in sound came to a screeching halt.

(Page 1 of 3) [Next page →](#)

[Tweet](#)

168
[Like](#)

1
[G+1](#)

8 Responses to *PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium HP power amplifier Review*

John chaney

January 19, 2015 at 9:30 am PST

This is one of the few amps I am interested in. Quality and value. I bet they sound fantastic in a great analogue system.

[Reply](#)

Nigel Marsh

January 21, 2015 at 2:25 am PST

Great Review.
As the owner of a three year old trouble free Dialogue 5 power amp,I can say PrimaLuna makes Really musical gear.
As for tube selection,I have tried KT88,KT120,El34 etc.
The one tube to me that is the most musical top to bottom is the... TAD 6L6 WGC STR.
Can the reviewer at some time try these and report back?

[Reply](#)

Paul Mah

January 21, 2015 at 2:28 pm PST

Hello Nigel,

Thanks. It's difficult to borrow loaner tubes for audition from dealers/importers/manufacturers. Kevin is the rare exception. But if I do come across 6L6 outputs I will certainly write a follow-up to this review.

Cheers,
Paul

Reply

Robert

January 21, 2015 at 7:08 am PST

Another informative and entertaining review. Thanks Paul!

Reply

Ron N.

January 21, 2015 at 8:10 pm PST

Great review Paul keep up the good work !

Reply

SUNIL LEKHI January 22, 2015 at 10:47 am PST

Paul, I enjoy your honest and informative reviews. Excellent job as always 😊

Reply

MIKE GUTHERIDGE March 10, 2016 at 4:46 pm PST

Paul, Thanks for the informative & honest review of the PL Dialogue H.P. Amp. I personally own a PL Dialogue Premium Preamp & PL Dialogue Premium H.P. Amplifier. The performance & quality of this gear is outstanding, particularly given It's price. I have not found anything with the circuitry & design that is employed within the PL Dialogue Premium gear, that say's a lot about the core of the company's commitment values towards "Musicality First" principles. I love "Tube Rolling", it really lets me dial in the sound according to material, taste, mood, etc. I like the Mullard cv4003, Cifte 12au7, Tungsol KT 120 combo in the amp. The Philips 5R4GYS rectifier, Mullard cv4003, Cifte 12au7 combination in the Preamp also sounds excellent, to my ears anyway. Kevin Deal at Upscale Audio really knows his stuff, he suggested these particular NOS tubes for my PL gear & was spot on as to the sound i was looking for. The music has dynamics, authority, warmth, detail, etc., something i did not know was possible with tube gear.Keep up the reviews, audio gearheads can never be too informed! Thanks, Mike

Reply

Paul Mah

April 1, 2016 at 11:02 am PST

Hi Mike,
I recently tried some CV4003 and I agree with you, they sound great!

Paul

Reply

Leave a Reply

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

Comment

Name *

Email *

Website

Post Comment

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