

AUDIO FILE

Integrated amplifier. Rated at 2x110W/8ohm
 Made by: Exposure Electronics, Lancing, UK
 Supplied by: Exposure Electronics
 Telephone: 01273 423877
 Web: www.exposurehifi.com
 Price: £1495



Exposure 3010S2

Exposure Electronics was founded by John Farlowe in 1974 and has remained committed to two-channel music reproduction. The company is largely famous for its big black pre/power amplifier combinations of the 1980s, when it sold to people who wanted punchy solid-state amps that sounded smoother and creamier than rival Naim products.

Nowadays, the sound hasn't changed much but the size has, and most of its wares are more affordable products such as this one – Exposure's top integrated. The 3010S2 series comprises a CD player, mono and stereo power amps, a preamplifier and a phono amp. The integrated is available with silver or black casework.

It's a nice device, with a decent finish and clear ergonomics that contrast with the fiddly nature of some UK-designed models. Styling is pretty conventional – its fascia is a thick slab of brushed aluminium and

'In "Humdrum" the rich, sonorous timbre of the pianoforte was lovely'

the knobs have a smooth and silky action. It has six inputs, and there's also the option of a moving-magnet or moving-coil phono module.

The manufacturer says that much attention has been paid to squeezing the best sound out of its circuitry. To this end, special capacitors feature in the signal path and the circuit topology has been mapped with a view to keeping

signal and power supply paths short. Cascode circuitry is used for improved power supply immunity, says Exposure, and there are high quality relays fitted in the preamp section with high-speed bipolar transistors in the output stage.

Our lab tests revealed distortion decreasing slightly as the amp warmed up. As for power output, the 3010S2 beat its rated 110W at 2x135W and 2x225W into 8/4ohm loads. Output is short-circuit protected and output impedance is also usefully lower than with previous-generation Exposure amps.

A NATURAL EASE

Right from the off, the Exposure proved a highly impressive performer, offering a well-rounded tonality. As well as its even-handed balance, it was big-hearted and bold too – the stereo soundstage was spacious and the amp had lots of easily delivered power on tap.

The result was an expansive rendition of Peter Gabriel's 'Humdrum' from the Virgin album *Peter Gabriel 1* (a clean, even and dry 1977 rock recording carefully transcribed from the analogue master tape).

But it wasn't all about size, because the 3010S2 also had delicacy and detail in spades. The rich, sonorous timbre of the piano was lovely, the instrument coming across in all its ringing glory.

The all-electronic 4hero track 'Universal Love', from *Parallel Universe* [Selector], offers a powerful slice of drum and bass music that blends warm-sounding

ABOVE: This is a rather minimalist looking amp: source selection and volume knobs are your lot. However, they have a fine, silky action and the brushed alloy fascia looks sleek. In addition to six RCA line inputs, the Exposure's back panel offers two sets of preamp outputs for bi-wiring, and two pairs of speaker outputs, plus IEC mains in

analogue synthesisers with powerful electronic beats and a pile-driving sub-bass. It is an exhaustive workout for any integrated amplifier but it didn't change our impression of the 3010S2 – here we had a crisp and open midband able to throw up every element of the mix into sharp relief, but it didn't sound edgy or forced in any way. Rather, the music flowed with a natural ease that some rival amps struggle to match.

By way of comparison with a few likely challengers, the clear and explicit Naim Nait XS2 didn't gel quite as well, sounding a little less natural, while the Rega Elicit-R made this recording feel slightly opaque and veiled.

Randy Crawford's 'You Might Need Somebody' from *Secret Combination* [Warner, 1981] is a beautiful soul recording, where she displays her amazing voice to great effect. It's a warm and inviting cut with plenty of air. The Exposure showcased those beautiful vocal chords, and conjured up a wonderfully relaxed yet stirring performance dripping with feel.

Rather than suffering any obvious weak points, this integrated amp is surprisingly strong in most areas. This makes it a truly satisfying listen, offering rather more than its modest price would suggest.

VERDICT

Exposure's 3010S2 has a special charm of its very own – big-hearted, powerful and expansive. Every type of music played through the Exposure gets a good airing as it not only communicates very well in hi-fi terms – soundstaging, depth perspective, detail, dynamics, etc – but blends all the elements together cohesively. ☺

HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Power output (<1% THD, 8/4ohm)	135W / 225W
Dynamic power (<1% THD, 8/4/2/1ohm)	175W / 325W / 555W / 30W
Output impedance (20Hz–20kHz)	0.017–0.032ohm
Frequency response (20Hz–100kHz)	–0.16dB to –12.7dB
Input sensitivity (for 0dBW/110W)	25mV / 265mV
A-wtd S/N ratio (re. 0dBW/110W)	80.4dB / 100.8dB
Distortion (20Hz–20kHz, 10W/8ohm)	0.005–0.027%
Power consumption (Idle/Rated o/p)	23W / 265W
Dimensions (WHD)	440x115x300mm