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EXPOSURE 2010 S

Beauty is a lot more than skin deep with this revamped classic

Exposure has never been much of a brand for visually remarkable hi-fi. But 'slightly unadventurous' is not the same as 'ugly' and, in fact, this silver-fronted box is highly presentable. On closer inspection, the 2010 S has some deceptively attractive touches, such as the small chamfer surrounding the knobs. Indeed, the general standard of fit and finish is high, this having evidently been a priority in Exposure's overhaul of the original 2010 range. A new 2010 system remote control is also now available. The most obvious internal change to the amp is an increase of nominal output power from 50 to 75 watts.

The box's contents bear witness to thoughtful, cost-conscious design. A relatively meaty power supply bodes well, as does the near-exclusive use of discrete transistors and uniformly good quality passive components. Both the volume control and the selector switch are good old-fashioned mechanical parts, but motorised to allow remote operation. There's no attempt at a heatsink, merely a thick metal bar to distribute heat evenly over the base; this should allow plenty of margin even for party use, although unrealistic sinewave testing could cause some awful hot running.

Facilities are basic, with six line inputs (one can optionally be turned into a phono input) plus tape and preamp out, and twin sets of terminals for bi-wiring. Set against the more fully-featured Marantz and Cyrus, this clearly sets out its stall in terms of sound first and foremost.

SOUND QUALITY

It had better sound good, then! And rest assured, it does. Even from cold (our sample arrived just before the test began), it managed to put in a performance which was generally considered equal best, tied with the (dearer) Electrocompaniet. Listeners enjoyed its bass weight, which added depth not just in terms of frequencies but in musical interpretation. And it's not just weighty, but punchy and agile too, with no trace of flab or waffle.



Allied to that is a high standard of imaging depth and precision, with the various groups within an ensemble clearly and stably positioned. Rhythmic drive also impressed at least one listener considerably, and in the end the feeling was that there was an essential, highly enjoyable 'rightness' to the sound.

Again, this was borne out in extended listening. One of the greatest and most subversive hi-fi evils is the effect of making real acoustic instruments sound like synthesised versions, and while none of the amps in this group suffered badly from that, the 2010 S was notably far from it. It has a high credibility factor, if you like – there is a real woody weight and resonance to piano, for instance, and properly reedy saxophones.

Compared with the Electrocompaniet, the 2010 S is more forward in its presentation and some listeners may find its balance less comfortable in the long run. That's largely a matter of taste, however – after all, to many people 'comfortable' is a term of hi-fi abuse. We'd rather not be pedantic on the subject. Rather, suffice it to say that this amp gives an admirable degree of musical insight and communication, and altogether fulfils the criteria of high-fidelity sound. All-in-all, a clear Best Buy. **HFC**

VERDICT	
SOUND >>> 88%	A fine example of how a hi-fi amp should be – it doesn't draw attention to itself, it just gets on with its job and does it very well indeed. Unless you seek vast power or flashy looks, this is a prime contender.
FEATURES >>> 78%	
BUILD >>> 85%	
VALUE >>> 92%	
HI-FI CHOICE 90% OVERALL SCORE	

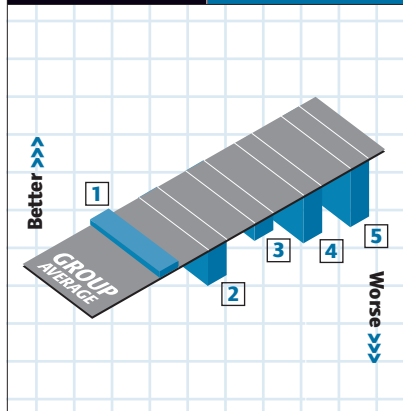


LAB REPORT

This amplifier's nominal power rating seems right on the money, our measured figure of 2x74W before clipping agreeing closely with the manufacturer's figure. Peak power is nearer 100W, a very healthy figure, and the specified peak current output of 12A is fairly conservative – our testing indicates that the protection circuitry limits out at exactly 15A.

The frequency response is flat in the bass but slightly rolled off in the treble, 0.8dB down by 20kHz (-3dB at 45kHz). Many manufacturers prefer to limit frequency response a little for various reasons, and this amount of roll-off is often just about audible in side-by-side comparisons, slightly sweetening the sound. It's short of SACD's enormous bandwidth but not worryingly so. Likewise, the distortion and output impedance figures, unimpressive by this group's standards, are still fine in the general scheme of things.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> +5%
- 2] Frequency response >> -30%
- 3] Dynamic range >> -15%
- 4] Distortion >> -40%
- 5] Output impedance >> -50%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	75W	74W
Distortion (1kHz/8 ohms)	0.3%	0.016%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	+/- 0.5dB	+/- 0.8dB

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