



Exposure 3010S2 £1,350



A great integrated from a great British amplifier brand, this sparsely appointed product promises much

DETAILS

- PRODUCT**
Amplifier
- ORIGIN**
UK
- TYPE**
Integrated amplifier
- WEIGHT**
12kg
- DIMENSIONS**
(WxHxD)
440 x 115 x 300mm
- FEATURES**
 - Quoted power output: 2 x 110W RMS into 8ohms
 - Silver or black finish
 - Preamplifier output
 - 6 RCA line inputs + optional MM/MC board
- DISTRIBUTOR**
Exposure
- TELEPHONE**
01273 423877
- WEBSITE**
exposurehifi.com

Back in the heady hi-fi days of the eighties, Exposure made its name for cleverly designed, sweet-sounding high-end transistor amplifiers that were just a little bit more palatable than the rival big Naims of the day. The company is now focused more on the affordable end of solid-state amplification, which warrants the inclusion of the 3010S2 here. This is the second incarnation of Exposure's top integrated, and it comes with six line inputs, a MM or MC phono module option, and there's a separate preamplifier output for biamping via an Exposure power amplifier – this is an obvious and easy upgrade path to take when funds permit.

The claimed 110W RMS per channel (into 8ohms) power output is very healthy in this group, if not quite exceptional. The company says much attention has been paid to the circuit design. This includes high-quality capacitors used in the signal path, a printed circuit board that is "uniquely tuned" with short signal and power supply paths, and cascade circuitry for improved power supply immunity, plus a fast bipolar transistor output stage. This all slots into a very attractive aluminium casing with a clean-looking, extruded front panel. Overall fit and finish of the amplifier is excellent, extending to the cleanly laid-out back panel – although gadget fans should look elsewhere; this is about as minimalist as they come.

Sound quality

From almost the first bar of the Central Line track, it is clear that this is one of the best amplifiers here. The sound is big, bold and musical, but never harsh or uncouth, meaning the Exposure plugs right into what's going on in any recording and has a whale of a time – as indeed does the listener. Whereas some musical sounding designs achieve their speed and pace by forwardness of tone or even grit and naked aggression, the 3010S2 is a model of sophistication – showing you really can have it all!

REM's *Maps and Legends* is a thick, gloopy sort of recording, but the Exposure cuts through it like a knife through churned milk. It serves up a vast soundstage with guitars and vocals wide left and right, inside which large amounts of detail bristle out. Compared with the equally impressive Creek, there is less sense of space around the instruments, with images pushed a little closer to the plane of the speakers instead of hanging back, but the 3010S2 makes up for it with a slightly stronger and purposeful bass line, which hooks up with drum-kit work much better. Both are wonderfully expansive and vast in scale.

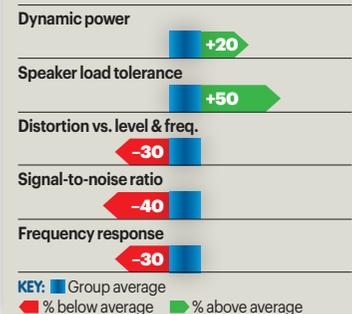
The rich Central Line track shows the Exposure to have a slightly less warm sound to the Creek, but it is nowhere near the Yamaha which errs too far in the opposite direction. Along with a marginally thinner upper midband, treble comes over

ON TEST

Distortion really does decrease as the 3010S2 is left to warm up – from 0.015% to 0.010% over 30 minutes at 10W/8ohm. Once toasty, the 3010S2 holds to -0.01% from 1-100W/8ohm although THD in our sample did increase more sharply through the treble via the right channel (0.020% vs. 0.10%, L/R).

As for power output, the 3010S2 beats its rated 110W at 2 x 135W and 2 x 225W into 8/4ohm with sufficient dynamic headroom to accommodate 175W, 325W and a huge 555W into 8, 4 and 2ohm loads. Output is short-circuit protected to 335W (18.3A/1ohm), but it's still the most tolerant here of difficult speakers. Output impedance is also lower than earlier Exposures at 0.015ohm and the frequency response consistent at 8Hz-23kHz (±1dB). The 80dB S/N ratio (re. 0dBW) is lower than average, but this is white noise rather than hum and likely to have a flattering subjective influence. **PM**

RESULTS AT A GLANCE



with a touch more sparkle via the 3010S2. This works particularly well with classical music, giving a slightly more breezy, atmospheric presentation than the Creek, even if the depth perspective isn't quite there. Dynamics are excellent, and the Jam track shows that the Exposure can go loud or quiet quicker than a blink. Overall, this is a slightly rockier, although less polished and nuanced version of the Creek, which itself is often the best here – making the 3010S2 an absolutely fabulous performer across the board.

A compulsory product for prospective purchasers to audition, don't let this pass you by! ●



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

- SOUND QUALITY**
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Delightfully open, expansive and enjoyable sound; superb build and finish
- VALUE FOR MONEY**
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Nothing
- BUILD QUALITY**
★★★★★ **WESAY:** A wonderful sounding amplifier that makes listening to any kind of music a real pleasure
- FEATURES**
★★★★★

OVERALL

