



## PRE/POWER AMPLIFIER COMBINATION OF THE YEAR AGD Andante/The Audion



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**Y**ou would be forgiven for thinking AGD Productions ‘The Audion’ power amplifier used valves, thanks to that orange-glowing glass device in the middle of the diminutive power amplifier. You’d be wrong; it’s called ‘GaNTube Technology’. This is a PWM switching amplifier using very high-speed Gallium Nitride (GaN) power MOSFETs housed inside a KT88 sized glass tube. Knowing that, you’d be forgiven for thinking it a bit of a gimmick, but you’d be wrong again; it’s a means of upgrading the amplifier to new, bigger and better Class D modules. Finally, you’d be forgiven for thinking with all this technology crammed into a small box, the Andante preamplifier could ‘coast’ its way through life, but... guess what? It’s actually a clever and sophisticated, full preamplifier with a fine phono stage and a well-engineered streamer and DAC.

From a technical standing, this is clever stuff. GaN transistors are not a cheap option, nor are they especially easy to implement in an audio context, but they have the sort of slew rate that most amplifiers can only aspire to. They also deliver close to textbook resistance to parasitic effects of altered resistance, capacitance and inductance even at comparatively high power across the audio frequency range, meaning the AGD’s MOSFETs of choice are inherently lower noise and higher power designs than their more commonplace silicon oxynitride brethren.

In our test, Alan Sircon felt that, “This combination is every inch the audiophile’s dream. It’s incredibly detailed and gives an extremely precise soundstage with all that inner microdynamic detail and presence that makes well-recorded acoustic instruments in a live environment come to life.” He also felt that, “the amplifiers are also outstanding at taking control of a loudspeaker, controlling the drive units in an authoritative, but not authoritarian, manner.” And summed up by saying, “The Andante is a fine preamplifier with a ‘first, do no harm’ streamer on board, and The Audions are some of the fastest, most expressive amps you’ll hear this side of the audio’s super league.” **+**

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