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PRESS RELEASE

AFFORDABLE VALVE AMPS WITH VA-VA VOOM!

Mystère's stunning ia11 and ia21 valve amps deliver bold, exciting sound at a wallet-friendly price



Mystère ia11 and ia21 integrated valve amplifiers

Beautiful design, enthralling sound and a price tag that won't make your bank manager weep - that's the enticing package delivered by Mystère, a new name in high-quality hi-fi components. The brand specialises in valve-based audio technology and its first products are a pair of integrated amplifiers: the ia11 and ia21.

Valve amps have long been an object of desire for audio enthusiasts. They have a reputation for creamy, effusive music making, flowing with the music in a way that solid-state amps rarely can (see below for more about the differences between valve and solid-state amps). Their physical form is typified by a clutch of valves (or 'tubes', as they're known in the US) that often protrude from the outer casing and glow invitingly as the music flows, giving them an *objet d'art* appeal that's hard to beat in the world of consumer electronics.

High-class valve amps are beautiful to look at and wonderful to hear – like vinyl records, they have a distinctive appeal that's undeniably retro yet fabulously chic.

The downsides? Well, good-quality valve amps are often priced at a level that even die-hard audio enthusiasts might consider prohibitively expensive. And while the creamy valve sound that typifies the breed can prove eminently seductive with laid-back music, many valve amps struggle when it comes to the deep, taut bass and crisp, precise treble supplied by their solid-state counterparts. Valve amps tend not to be so good at things like pace, rhythm and 'slam' – rock and dance music fans, it is often said, need not apply.

But the new Mystère amps are different. First, they have been cunningly tuned to deliver a sound that combines the best bits of the archetypal valve sound – effusive warmth and fluidity, realistic timbre and dynamics – with the kind of pace and drive that is often assumed to be the preserve of solid-state amps. Second, they deliver these qualities at an exceptionally affordable price point: just £1,250 for the ia11, and £1,850 for the ia21 (which offers an even higher level of performance).

Both amps benefit from excellent build quality and a gorgeous black piano lacquer finish, showing off those valves to stunning effect. And all on the wallet-friendly side of £2k!

The Technology

Most audio amplifiers use solid-state (transistor) technology to amplify audio signals. Instead, valve amps use vacuum tubes (otherwise known as thermionic valves, or just 'valves' in the UK): distinctive glass tubes that are often proudly displayed as they protrude from the top surface of the amp's outer casing. This technology predates the invention of transistors (in 1947) by some decades, yet valve amps maintain a loyal following among audio enthusiasts for the unique sonic qualities they bring to the table. A modern, well-designed valve amp using high-quality audio valves can deliver an engaging musical warmth and flow that is quite distinct from most solid-state amps; for many music fans, once you've heard a good valve amp, there's no going back!

If you've already discovered the musical delights of a good valve amp, you may well be familiar with the company responsible for the new Mystère brand. Prima Luna has received much praise in recent years for

its high-quality yet comparatively affordable valve amplifiers, and the company has decided to launch Mystère as a sister brand in order to cater for customers with slightly different tastes. While Prima Luna amps tend to offer the warmth and smoothness that many valve fans crave, the Mystère models are tuned to deliver a little more pace, rhythm and impact, without sacrificing the mellifluous nature of the valve-derived sound. Verily, these are valve amps that rock!

Both amps are based on a full pentode push-pull output topology, with a modest amount of feedback. Premium-quality parts are used throughout, including high-performance power and output transformers and high-purity copper conductors. Both amps also sport Prima Luna's proprietary Adaptive AutoBias circuit, which monitors and smoothly adjusts bias consistently and instantly, reducing the need for maintenance and increasing sonic performance because of a dramatic reduction in distortion.

Both the ia11 and ia21 sport eight valves in total: the ia11 combines four 6SN7s with four EL34s; the ia21 offers an identical complement, or the option to switch the EL34s for KT88s, thus tuning the sound further according to taste. The ia21 is a little larger than the ia11 and offers a number of upgrades including a beefier output stage; the ia21 delivers 50W per channel, compared to the ia11's 40W per channel.*

Audio valves have a finite working life, but they are replaceable. Mystère goes to great lengths to extend the working life of the valves used in its amps and reduce the chance of valve failure by incorporating a soft-start circuit. Tube plate fusing is also used to protect the output stage – other amps might need a trip to the dealer if a valve fails, but with the Mystère amps you just plug in a new valve and fuse, and away you go!

**A note to anyone unfamiliar with valve amp technology: In most cases the power output of valve amps is lower than that of solid-state amps. An output of 40W or 50W is actually pretty high for a valve amp, but alongside today's solid-state designs it might seem a little weedy on paper. However, there's much more to good-quality sound than on-paper power specifications; 40W is more than enough to drive most modern speakers to high volume levels with ease, and while valve amps may not be able to compete with big solid-state amps in terms of sheer grunt, the best designs make up for it in terms of the utterly absorbing quality of their sound.*

Key Features – Mystère ia11 and ia21

- Full pentode push-pull output topology with modest amounts of feedback
- Fully optimised, dual-mono Adaptive AutoBias circuit with integrated plate fuse

- High-quality 24-step volume attenuator
- Fully hard-wired
- Double layer polypropylene coupling capacitors
- Robust low-noise resistors
- High-purity copper conductors
- Large, premium quality power and output transformers
- Fully vented, heavy-gauge steel chassis
- Stunning black piano lacquer finish
- Inputs: 4x line level
- Valves – ia11: 4x 6SN7 and 4x EL34
- Valves – ia21: 4x 6SN7 and 4x EL34 or KT88
- Power output – ia11: 40W per channel
- Power output – ia21: 50W per channel
- Dimensions – ia11: 370x200x320mm (WxHxD)
- Dimensions – ia21: 420x200x430mm (WxHxD)
- Net weight – ia11: 20.5kg
- Net weight – ia21: 27kg

Price and Availability

ia11

£1,250

ia21

£1,850

Both amplifiers are available now.

More about Mystère

Hailing from Holland, Mystère is new brand of valve-based audio equipment from the same stable as Prima Luna. Mystère products take the high-performance, high-value valve amp blueprint to a slightly different place: while the Prima Luna amps deliver a smooth, warm, 'classic' valve sound, the Mystère models are tuned to produce a faster, more up-front performance. And they look lovely, too!

More about Pistol Music – the UK distributor for Mystère products

Pistol Music is a division of Absolute Sounds Ltd, formed to cater for the distribution of a handpicked range of hi-fi products that offer excellent value for money, without sonic compromise.

Absolute Sounds is the UK's premier importer of high-quality hi-fi and home cinema equipment. The company was formed in 1978 by Ricardo Franassovici, who left a successful career in the music industry to become one of the world's leading hi-fi entrepreneurs. Ricardo's burning desire has always been to give UK-based music fans the opportunity to experience audio at the highest level, cherry-picking the very best components from around the globe to deliver a 'hi-fi boutique' overflowing with highly covetable, high-performance products. Like the finest watches and most prestigious motorcars, these brands deliver finely tuned, supremely engineered products that simply ooze desirability.

If you are seeking the world's best hi-fi and home cinema equipment, Absolute Sounds is your first port of call.

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