



Aavik Acoustics R-580

WINNER

PHONO STAGE (COST NO OBJECT)

Aavik Acoustics' R-580 phono stage is RIAA only and has one RCA input and output. It has an 18-step impedance load adjustment that runs between 50ohms and 10kohms, while the gain is fixed at 65dB; the first 40dB of which is amplified with zero negative feedback, while the final 25dB uses local feedback only. The phono stage breaks with tradition by using a fully floating balanced circuit because an MC cartridge is inherently fully balanced and has a floating ground. It also breaks with tradition by eschewing J-FETs in favour of bipolar transistors. These are exceptional bipolars of course, with a claimed signal-to-noise ratio of 94dB at 1kHz. Similarly, bipolar transistors are used in the RIAA section, maintaining a floating, balanced topology throughout the phono stage. Like all models in the 580 series, the R-580 bristles with the company's noise-busting Tesla coils and features a copper inner sanctum.

Alan Sircom felt that, "one of the things I really like about the Aavik R-580 is its ability to be every inch the high-end masterwork when called for, packed full of detail and precision, with beautiful high frequencies, a liquid midrange, wonderful coherence and a walk-in soundstage, constrained only by the intentions of engineer and producer." Alan also noticed that, "It's almost as if the rest of the LP chain doesn't matter, as seeming differences between devices are reduced to a bare minimum."

He also felt that, "those extra levels of noise-reduction and interference control makes this a truly ear-opening vinyl experience. The degree of precision and control it extends is incredible and the active noise reduction (inside a product that naturally spends its days trying to prevent the ingress of noise on a very low-level signal) is striking."

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Manufacturer • aavik-acoustics.com

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