

BLUE AND WHITE TALES



Window shutters in the Bavarian town of Krailling were recently thrown open, allowing a fresh breeze to waft through the small, but expert audio manufacturer Lindemann audiotechnik. And a whole slew of remarkable decisions were made.

Just this once, permit me to start with some news on the subject of digital technology: Lindemann has said goodbye to SACD. Which is only remarkable in that the manufacturer remained loyally faithful to this medium for many years, and was considered one of the most fervent champions of Sony's highly promising successor to the CD. But now no more. Norbert Lindemann knows which way the wind is blowing, and when it comes to digital source devices, is making... never mind. If you're interested, I recommend you read our sister publication, "EINSNULL", which devotes its exclusive attention to analyzing such matters, including Norbert Linde-

mann. The man has just shaken his company to its very foundations – after all, the contribution the digital players make to earnings is far from insignificant. The creative energy of the engineer best-versed in electronic matters both digital and analog (which reminds me – he makes speakers too) was still a long way from being exhausted at this point. And so the fight was then taken up with its own range of amplifiers. And the first fruit born of careful consideration is the integrated amplifier 885, which showcases the effect of injecting a few refreshingly new ideas into the Lindemann circuit philosophy. And I think that I'm not stretching the truth when I claim

that the two power amplifier models in the 800 series might need to start fearing for their existence. The 885 is a classic, analog integrated amplifier with an output cable of a good 100 watts at eight and around 200 watts at four ohms. It is not exactly a less expensive representative of its kind, however does, in turn, have a lot to offer. Starting with a fully balanced configuration, the characteristic feature of all 800-series devices. The consequences can be seen at the back of the device: Of the five pairs of symmetrically mirrored input sockets, two are XLR models; the same applies for the preamplifier outputs. And while we're at the rear of the device, we can also take pleasure in the brand-new WBT Nextgen loudspeaker terminals, which in my modest opinion are the best thing which you can currently clamp or plug loudspeaker cables to. A power input socket, a switch for standby power supply unit, one fuse per channel, connections for the company's own control bus system – that just about covers the basics. At the front, two rotary knobs and a blue, welcomingly large, plain-text display dominate the picture. The device's elementary functions are activated using the six buttons below it – or, of course, using the remote control provided as an alternative – and more advanced settings can be made using the microcontroller, operated via the menu navigation. Balance, display brightness, type of volume display, level reduction for muting and any number of other playthings. Loud and quiet is on the right, as custom would have it; the encoder behind the button operates an electronic gain control which allows the volume to be set in one-decibel increments. Luxurious, with a definition more than precise enough. The device is clad in a two-color anodized aluminum housing, and

makes an extremely high-quality impression. Its weight of 20 kilograms does the rest to inspire an instinctive reverence for the device. For once we have decided not to subject the device to the usual disassembly marathon, while photographing every corner. This is because there are at least three layers of technology stacked up inside, making disassembly of the device a challenge – not least because the output stage part is also firmly obstructed by the cooling fins. We will therefore have to make do with the images provided by the manufacturer as well as its descriptions of the functionalities. When it comes to the 885, three aspects essentially define the technical profile: the consistently fully balanced design, the use of current feedback and an output configuration known as “single ended push pull” which harks back to valve technology. The latter has been implemented in the form of a so-called “H-bridge” and is comprised of eight power transistors per channel. The sophisticated circuitry combines two single-ended amplifiers which together form a balanced push-pull power stage. This principle has been applied elsewhere, however Norbert Lindemann was inspired by a clever idea which allowed him to use the current feedback he favors. The result is an extremely short signal path with a minimal number of components. In principle, this means there is indeed a feedback network; efforts by a whole series of engineers to try to eliminate it is not one of Lindemann's priorities. In the 885, it is used very moderately, and is also balanced, which produces a completely floating output. The fact that the actual amplifier can operate practically free of interference on the ground circuit is one of the biggest advantages of a balanced concept. The device, configured to have strictly separated chan-

Also playing along

Record player:

- Transrotor Fat Bob / SME 309 / Lyra Kleos
- Clearaudio Master Reference / Universal / Goldfinger Statement

Phono preamps:

- MalValve preamp three phono
- Audionet PAM G2/EPC

Loudspeakers:

- Manger msmS1
- Klang + Ton “Nada”

Accessories:

- Mains power supply by PS Audio and HMS
- Signal cable by van den Hul and Transparent
- Phono cable by van den Hul and SME
- Loudspeaker cables by Transparent
- Record cleaning machine by Clearaudio

Counterparts

Integrated amplifier:

- Quad II Classic Integrated

Preamps:

- MalValve preamp four line

Power amplifier:

- Accoustic Arts Amp2 MK2
- SymAsym

The 885 has a fully balanced configuration and therefore features a series of XLR connectors





Music played

Willy de Ville
Unplugged In Berlin

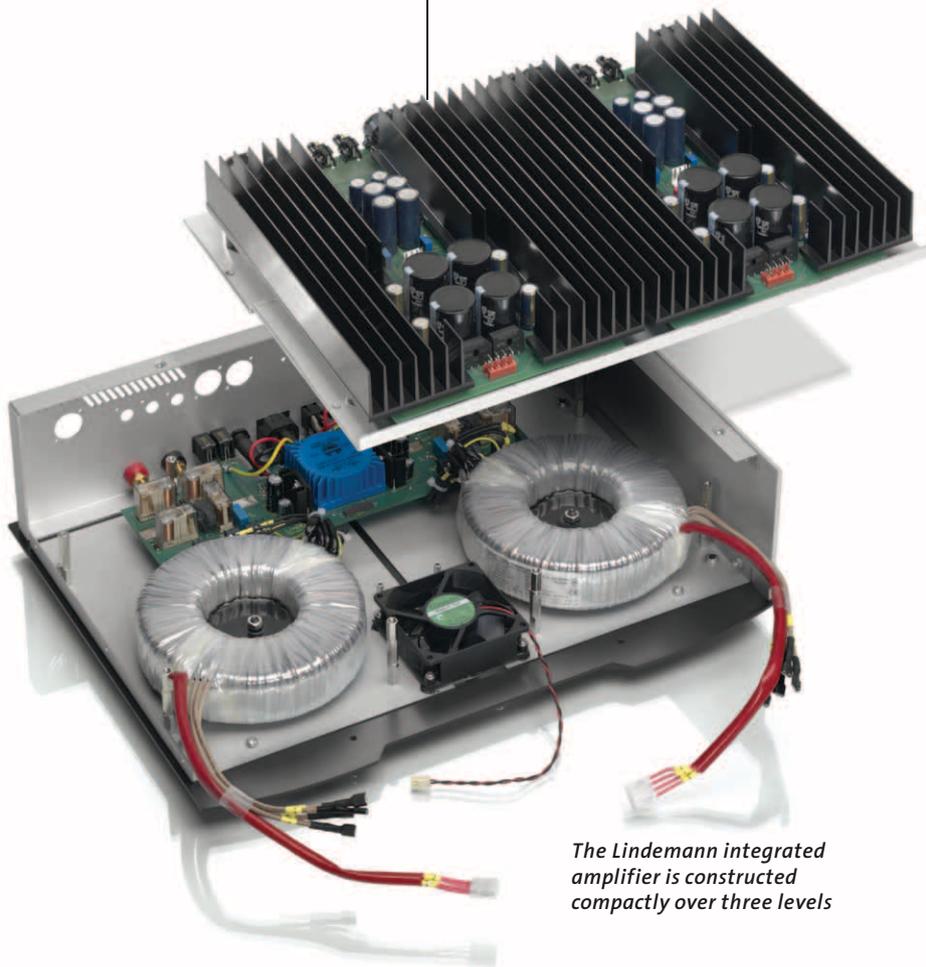
Nina Simone
Black Gold

Neil Young
Live At The Filmore East

James Taylor
Dad Loves His Work

Dillon
This Silence Kills

nels, is fed by two 500 VA transformers; a controlled fan provides ventilation in the housing when required. If I didn't know that one had been installed – I wouldn't have noticed. So much on the subject of background noises. No dramatic cooling is required of the fan, the 885 operates using moderate quiescent current – which the idle power consumption of less than 50 watts clearly indicates. Sonically, however, there is absolutely nothing to suggest any of this austerity. In fact, the device actually reveals a whole series of strengths which are generally associated with class-A amplifiers. Fortunately, the 885 does not require a breaking-in marathon, so its strengths come to the fore straight out of the box. A few minutes of warming up will not hurt, after which it can really get going and easily outperform all the other amplifiers place alongside it. This becomes particularly conspicuous when playing good live recordings. The Lindemann makes Willy



The Lindemann integrated amplifier is constructed compactly over three levels



Measurements

Measuring technology comment

The 885 also knows how to conduct itself in the laboratory. Configured for a broad bandwidth, its frequency response reaches beyond our thresholds. At 100 kilohertz, in any case, the level only dropped by around 1.5 decibels. The 885 provides a stable 125 watts at eight ohm and 200 watts at four ohm, which should suffice for all circumstances. There is hardly any distortion: We measured 0.004/0.001 percent at four/eight ohm, at five watts respectively. The signal-to-noise ratio at five watts is just under 100 decibels(A), the channel separation not significantly below it – all excellent values. When not operating, the device consumes a moderate 46 watts, at five watt this is 125 watts. When fully applied (maximum level at four ohm) then it may also be 740 watts.



Lindemann 885

- Sales Lindemann audiotechnik, Krailing, Germany
- Telephone +49 (0)89 89136790
- Internet www.lindemann-audio.com
- Guarantee: 5 years
- W x H x D 44 x 13.5 x 36 cm
- Weight: 20 kg

The bottom line ...

» Lindemann's new integrated amplifier simply plays sensationally well. It sounds extremely detailed, emotional, substantial and involved. Definitely one of the best in its class!



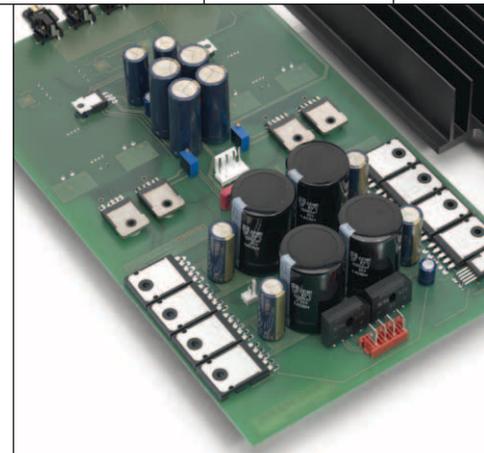


The 885 comes with a Lindemann remote control

de Ville's 2002 concert in the Berlin Columbiahalle an experience of the highest order, the amplifier playing unbelievably directly, convincingly and compellingly. It becomes even more impressive when the musical material is quieter and more trying. At the top of my current list for situations like this are a range of live recordings by the fantastic Nina Simone. Radiant, energy-filled notes on the piano, a wonderfully unrestrained voice positioned at the right level, perfect definition of the "almost mono recordings" on "Black Gold". In this case, the stereophonics reveal the coughs from the audience which the 885 scatters throughout the room with bravura. These noises are, however, so quiet that very few amplifiers allow them to be heard at all. What I assume is an occasional collision with the microphone also reveal that both channels are active. Absolutely remarkable: the reproduction of highs. A singing voice which really is positioned in the middle, significantly above the guitar standing further back – the Lindemann masters the illusion perfectly. With an unbelievable fluid performance, also smooth

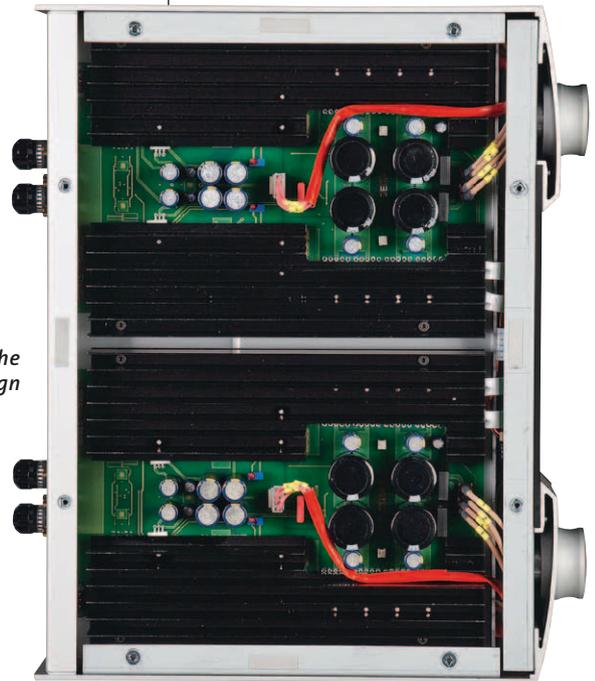
and delicate, with a perfectly realistic diction in the voice and breathing which sounds amazingly real. The opener "This Silence Kills" from the album of the same name by Dillon. Well suited to finding out about bass response. The Lindemann can do it. It combines pressure with contour and profundity, allowing the fragile singing voice to retain its brittleness, and does not lose the track during the baser electronic low-frequency eruptions. Nevertheless, it seems to be accelerated, demonstrating swing and substance. The James Taylor MFSL edition? Absolutely impressive. Fast, solid, warm, nimble, effortless. I could keep going like this for a while – the tenor remains the same, just like the verdict: I consider the 885 one of the best integrated amplifiers I have ever encountered. Compliments!

Holger Barske



Eight five-leg transistors with integrated temperature sensors form the power stage

The view from above reveals the strict channel separated design



LINDEMANN.

high fidelity excellence