

Vioelectric HPA V181

courtesy DannyBouy <http://www.head-fi.org/products/vioelectric-hpa-v181/reviews/5918>



A Review On:

[Vioelectric HPA V181](#)

Rated # 25 in [Desktop Amps](#)

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Audio Quality

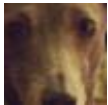
Design

Quality

Value

Purchased on: 04/04/11

Price paid: \$1,050.00



By [DannyBuoy](#)

Posted 12/2/11 · 5008 Views · [1 Comment](#)

Pros: Sound Quality, balanced, POWER!

Cons: Can't auto switch from balanced to unbalanced

I went from yamamoto HA-02 to WooAudio WA6SE to the Vioelectric to support my move from Denon D500 to LCD-2 HP's.

The WA6SE just sounded stressed trying to drive the bass and sound levels I wanted from the LCD-2. The bass sounded thick, and sloppy without distinct punch and oomph between notes, and instead just sounded kind of blended together and presented poorly to my ears. I must admit that I chalked a lot of this up to the fact that I typically listen to music loud, and this may have driven the amp beyond the normal levels of the WA6SE so I hunted for an amp with a track record of driving low impedance, ortho-dynamics like the LCD and HifiMan headphones to outrageous listening levels.

First I bought the Vioelectric V181 and used it with the Audio-gd Ref-5 but then I got hooked on the balanced output of the V181 (which the Ref-5 lacks) and decided to go with the V800 Balanced DAC as well. The combo of V800 and V181 is quite good. I do miss a little of the dynamics that the Ref-5 had that the V800 does not (I think this was due to the over-engineered power supplies which Audio-Gd is famous for) and without going into long explanations, suffice to say that the ref5 packed more lively dynamics and detail into hard/fast demanding music than the V800 is able to. The V800 comes off a bit more

analytical and dry in comparison but it may be due to the Wolfson DACs (known to be less analytical, and more musical) and big power supply in the Ref-5 that made the match between the two sound better to my ears than the V181 & V800 does.

But I will probably stay with the v800 and V181 combo for some time because when the day is done, I enjoy the more detailed analytical sound of this combo because what the V800 DAC lacks in bass and dynamics is made up for in the raw power output of the V181 running in balanced mode. I must admit that the marriage of V800 & V181 is so substantial with the LCD-2 that I find myself enjoying music I have listened to for years, with a "fresh ear" and I really love the experience of finding new details in songs that I have loved for some time, and listening to them again, as though they are new again.

My only wish is that the V181 did not require me to disconnect the balanced XLR to listen to the RCA input of my Turntable and back to XLR when I want to switch to the digital library. I sent them an email asking why it required me to do this mad cable swapping, and they told me this was designed this way, and it was a matter of economics and price point. The system could not switch from balanced to unbalanced or reverse without unplugging the input for the current source. Not a big deal, just though they could have taken care of it a little more elegantly somehow.