







CHANGSTAR JULY 4, 2015

Supplement to the Buying Guides on the "other" site.




WARNING: Not Science

PRODUCT	RATING	STD DEV	COMMENTS
Chord Hugo TT	 0.8	0.354	<p>Colossal rip off. The TT probably stands for "Titty-Twister". A \$4795 DAC for wankers with too much money and bad ears. Hugo with more warmth. Supposedly, the galactically isolated USB solution is improved significantly with a \$119 Schiit Wyrd or \$175 Uptone Regen.</p> <p>Better than the Hugo. Better power supply, blacker background, better amp section. Sad day when your flagship all-in-one is stomped by a \$299 product.</p> <p>Mediocrity at its best.</p>
Chord Hugo	 0.5	0.500	<p>Bugger off you little wanker of a DAC. 26000 tap filter gives you a lifeless grainy out of the head experience in terms of width but with no depth. 7 billion more taps wouldn't help.</p> <p>Even more mediocrity.</p>
STAX SR-009	 3.4	0.331	<p>I would own this today if my electrostat journey had been at a time when USD was this strong against the JPY. These are not my favorite STAX, but sounds amazingly effortless.</p> <p>Nice but pricey.</p> <p>Top 5, likely top 3, headphone ever made. Top notch build quality, detail, clarity, speed. Very good neutrality. Some sub bass roll off compared to some planars, a little upper mid shout compared to HE90/HD6x0.</p> <p>Expensive, but uniquely excellent. A better value today based on strength of the dollar. The something about "gossamer" sounds right - read the HF Guide.</p> <p>The sound of plastic, which is a good and bad thing. Ultra smooth and ultra clean</p> <p>Top stat (at the moment) and a viable endgame headphone; not the best value, nor the most impactful bass.</p> <p>Lower price from strong USD has made it more appealing. Gave it another listen on that Russian amp and I've liked it a lot more this time.</p> <p>Personal favorite. Smooth sound with effortless detail and \$DEITY-tier separation but losing value proposition again modded Lambdas. As a 'stat, it's biggest weaknesses is lack of bass impact.</p> <p>Very clean and capable headphone. Lacks a little bit of weight and impact. Very quiet background. Unique synthetic sound signature. Not cheap. Technology is not very practical nor the most affordable. Prefer the SR-007.</p>
Audio-GD Master 7	 2.6	0.479	<p>The best ultra-warm DAC I've heard.</p> <p>Good warm amp. Yggy is better for the price now.</p> <p>Price increases and mediocre USB make this not the value it used to be. Audio-GD crying wolf about lack of PCM1704s every year is extremely annoying and ruins trust. Chassis construction utter shit.</p> <p>Meh.</p>
Schiit Ragnarok	 3.5	0.332	<p>Fantastic solid state amp at a very fair price point.</p> <p>Kicks you in the balls. Would be my preferred speaker amp.</p> <p>Great at everything except for immersion. Very flat staging.</p> <p>Phenomenal amp that really shines with speakers. Bested by some dedicated headphone amps, but still holds it's own when performing double duty.</p> <p>Exceptional value and flexibility. Great sound for solid-state.</p>
Schiit Yggdrasil	 4.0	0.000	<p>Amazing sound and a fantastic value.</p> <p>Ridiculous price for a high-end DAC.</p> <p>Best all around DAC I've heard to date and the price makes it even sweeter.</p>

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HiFiMan HEK	 2.8	0.447	<p>Great value at 2K, but not so great at 3K. Decent compromise between stat and ortho qualities, but bested by HE6 in bass impact (not extension). Wide yet kind of shallow soundstage.</p> <p>Amalgamation of certain good qualities of stats and isodynamics. I like it. Price is a bit high which I think has led to some disappointment from experienced ears.</p> <p>Depends on which version you get. Really loved the one at CanJam. Haven't really liked the others. Still better than any Audeze.</p> <p>Tonal and staging issues add up. So does price.</p> <p>Pseudo 'stat. Presumably for people who don't want to invest in a 'stat amp or who live in very humid areas. Nice but pricey.</p> <p>Poor build quality. Bass extension and texture is excellent but pronounced. No presence at all. Nebulous imaging. Soundstage super tall but no depth and just average width.</p>
Audeze LCD-2 Fazor	 2.0	0.861	<p>Fazors improve certain aspects, but also take some things away. This would be my reference dark sound due to high technical ability.</p> <p>Excellent bass extension, lots of impact. Overall too much bass, ends up muffling the sound. Too dark. Poor resolution. Soundstage is small, claustrophobic. Treble sucks. Intimate sound.</p> <p>Fazor is for losers with iPhones. The non Fazor LCD2r2 sounded better without the smeared bass and strange timbre.</p> <p>The Audeze tuning is a little boring, but these are still a good value. After owning the LCD3s I see no point in going any higher in their lineup.</p> <p>Smooth treble, good bass slam, above average imaging and separation.</p>
DNA Stratus	 3.6	0.492	<p>2A3 euphonics in top notch form.</p> <p>Pairs very well with certain dynamics, particularly HD800. Also liked this a lot with the R10 and HD6x0. 2A3 sound isn't for everybody, but probably the best 2A3 amp on the market.</p> <p>Good synergy with dynamic cans. Well executed relaxed warm sound. Love everything about it except the color. Needs to be black.</p> <p>Fantastic amp with HD800.</p> <p>Very nice warm and smooth sound. Goes well with the HD800.</p> <p>A touch of tubey sound. Inner warmth and soapy suds all over titties. Donald is awesome.</p>

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Sennheiser HD800	 2.8	0.458	<p>Too bright for me. Prefer the Anax Mod.</p> <p>An awesome deal given today's escalating prices. Resolving but bright. Avoid most modern popular music. Anax mod makes it more bearable.</p> <p>Best dynamic, provided you tame the 6khz peak through EQ or mods. Diffuse soundstage.</p> <p>Needs mods, not worth considering stock (unless you're 50+ or have hearing damage). Still the most capable headphone on the market.</p> <p>Very detailed, but can sound lean without the right amp. Treble somewhat etched stock. I've heard great things about Anax 3.0 mods but have yet to try. Was floored by how stock HD800 sounded from modded EC Super 7.</p> <p>Most technically proficient dynamic driver but stock is bright and sharp sounding .</p> <p>Way too bright/piercing stock. Best technical qualities of any dynamic not named the Qualia, almost stat-like. Bass texture is great. Soundstage huge, can be distracting with some music. Absolutely needs mods and tube harmonic distortion to take off some of that sterile edge.</p> <p>It's not that bad...</p> <p>Too bright, piercing and analytical. Anax mods help.</p>
Fostex TH900	 1.6	0.585	<p>Big bass. An unapologetic dynamic drive sound.</p> <p>It looks good.</p> <p>Fun headphone with a ton of bass and spike in treble. Amazing clarity for a dynamic. Three stars if you can get a deal on it. Don't pay retail.</p> <p>Great headphone for \$50.</p> <p>Pretty cups. Not worth the upcharge over the TH600.</p> <p>Bit of a V-shaped sig. Looks beautiful, sounds ok. A little sizzle in the treble. Great for certain tastes.</p> <p>Super clean Beats.</p>
HiFiMan HE-560	 2.9	0.585	<p>A 2 star might be generous, but I know some people love these. And I've read that some pairs sound better than others. The two pairs I heard were almost unlistenable due to the 4-6kHz spike. Like icicles in my ear.</p> <p>Middle-of-the-road ortho, good but doesn't excel at anything. Tonal issues at 4khz can make it tiresome.</p> <p>Slight lower treble bite kills it for me. Competent although I question value.</p> <p>Not perfect, a few bumps in the upper mids and treble, but can be tamed with mods. Needs power.</p> <p>A great isodynamic that requires a great amp to really shine. Not perfect but far from bad.</p>
AKG K812	 1.1	0.418	<p>Blows.</p> <p>Absolutely disgusting.</p> <p>Sizzle, my god the sizzle.</p> <p>Could have been worse. Not very resolving.</p> <p>Piece of shit. Treble is horrible. Ragged and too hot. Not very detailed. Just sounds wrong. Bass and mids might be OK for less than \$100. This headphone shouldn't exist.</p> <p>AKGs lame and feeble attempt at a high-end headphone. Resolves less low level information than practically all other headphones in this list. Awful treble worse than measurements would suggest. Get HD600 or HD650 instead.</p>

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Audeze LCD-X	 1.5	0.371	<p>Not bad, but the LCD-2 Fazor is better and cheaper. Why does this even exist?</p> <p>Off timbre kills it for me. Still an Audeze.</p> <p>Good, but the LCD-2 can be a better phone for less.</p> <p>No comment.</p> <p>Fazor is for losers with iPhones. The classic LCD2 sounds better without the strange timbre.</p>
Audeze LCD-XC	 1.1	0.629	<p>Take the LCD-X, and then fuck up the midrange.</p> <p>See above.</p> <p>What Marv said.</p> <p>Congested, rough treble, cups echo like you're lost in a cave.</p> <p>Not as good as the X, but not that many decent closed orthos out there.</p>
Koss ESP950	 3.2	0.374	<p>Very nice midrange, a bit rolled off at the extremes. A little veiled for a stat. Must use with anything but the stock E90. Best warranty in the business.</p> <p>The once I have tried do not fit me well. Perhaps due to fit and lack of seal I found these too rolled off around the edges. Mids are good though.</p> <p>A great stat deal if you can buy it for \$600. Rolled off both ends.</p> <p>Smooth, detailed, and fairly neutral. Warranty makes up for the build quality.</p> <p>One of my favorite stats. Build quality isn't amazing but the warranty is.</p> <p>Good luck finding another amp/headphone combo to compete at the \$600 sale price these go for brand new during the annual Koss sale.</p> <p>Speaker-esque neutrality with stat signature.</p> <p>Best value in stat sound for those who find the Lambdas shouty. Smooth, if not terribly exciting.</p>
Beyer T1	 1.1	0.816	<p>I liked it when I started my journey. Haven't heard it since though.</p> <p>Sounds like someone put a DT880 through the wash. The T1 has a deeper soundstage but that the only thing it's better at.</p> <p>Imaging and comfort are the only decent qualities. Sterile sound sig, piercing highs. A step back from the DT880, which is a step back from the DT911. Awful.</p> <p>WTF!</p> <p>Mediocre, outdone by the DT range.</p> <p>Screwed up spikey treble and metallic timbre. Buy a DT880-250 instead. Way too expensive for what it is.</p> <p>See what Marv said.</p> <p>Not even once.</p>

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Mr. Speakers Ether	 2.5	0.345	<p>Dan's best headphone.</p> <p>Best thing Dan has made. Makes no sense to buy at that price.</p> <p>HD800 tonality copy-cat (in a bad way).</p> <p>Not bad. Tiny bit bright, not the best bass quality, but open and airy. Slightly too expensive.</p> <p>Really should be 1K, at which price point it would be one of the best. Terrific soundstage for an ortho.</p> <p>Sounds good to me. Too expensive. Balance was decent.</p> <p>Ortho bass with a lighter and airier presentation than Audeze or any HiFiMan but the HEK.</p> <p>Super comfy, nice open soundstage. Tonality nice but a little bright. Less impact than a Stax Lambda. MrSpeakers' best HP.</p>
Fostex TH600	 1.2	0.274	<p>Get an M50.</p> <p>Basically the new Denon Dxxxx. Fun bassy sound, slightly fatiguing.</p> <p>Save up for urushi TH900 if you like this sound.</p> <p>Great headphone for \$50.</p> <p>Two sisters with unique look, but one of them just as nose or mouth slightly off making her the ugly one. That would be the TH600.</p>
HiFiMan HE-6	 2.8	0.608	<p>Amazing performance for the price after mods have been done. If it had more transparency and resolution, it would be the perfect headphone.</p> <p>Too picky on power. A little fatiguing. Good bass response.</p> <p>Amazing bass, annoying treble, so-so soundstage. Needs an inordinate amount of power.</p> <p>Amazing bass impact and separation but let down by etched treble.</p> <p>Top notch bass impact. Treble is very fatiguing and unrefined. Soundstage and imaging both good for an ortho. Absolutely needs mods.</p> <p>In stock form a bit etched, but serious potential if modded, which everyone and their grandmother seems to do. Stupidly inefficient. Good price.</p> <p>Something is not quite right here.</p> <p>Decent price but requires gobs of power.</p>

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Sennheiser HD600/650	 3.8	0.236	<p>The headphones that Jude will never let you know about because he won't make any money off of it. A seriously fraking great deal. HD600 is more neutral. HD650 has more bass. Latest revisions do not have the veil so often mentioned 10 years ago.</p> <p>Awesome headphone. Very resolving and pleasant sounding at the same time. Lower bass isn't the best, but the rest is fairly accurate. A personal favorite.</p> <p>Very neutral overall, not the best bass extension. Bass is wooly. Signature is on the veiled side. Scales very well but never quite reaches that upper tier. Drivers don't disappear well. Becoming a better value as more overpriced "high end" HPs come out.</p> <p>My favorite dynamic. Smooth treble and mids with very few errors of commision. Super cheap untill Senn starts enforcing MAP again.</p> <p>Still a standard in many studios with good reason.</p> <p>Still the best reference for a neutral headphone sound. Highly resolving with the right tubes. Bass is muddy relative to modern options.</p> <p>Should be the first stop for all newbies. Smooth sound you can just cuddle up in. Slightly soft bass.</p> <p>I could have saved so much fucking money starting here. Excellent headphones. Scale like crazy. Hard to find such nicely balanced, do-it-all headphones regardless or price. HD600 was a bit too hot in the upper-mids for me. HD650 is best for my ears. Bass isn't the cleanest around, but it's a minor complaint.</p>
Eddie Current Black Widow	 3.7	0.462	<p>Warmer-leaning solid-state done right.</p> <p>Great performance for the price but it's not my sound.</p> <p>One of the best sounding solid state amps out there at the moment.</p> <p>The Eagles will reunite and play at the Staples Center before EC would ever pay Jude a dime.</p>
Geek Out V2	 3.8	0.354	<p>Significant upgrade from GO450. Not Sabre-y at all. A little wanker who knows to use use it right.</p> <p>Awesome sound at an awesome price. Hard to beat.</p>