

# icon Audio

Award winning Valve Amplifiers

## Stereo 40i



**NEW CLASSIC  
& KT88/KT66  
Versions**

**"Editors Choice" Hi Fi News  
Award Winner for 2nd Year!**

KT88 version pictured

**Built to our own Design, Tested and Finished in Leicester UK  
Now with British & European valves at no extra charge (limited offer)**

### What the press say:

#### **Awarded Hi Fi News "Editors Choice"**

**"Icon Audio offers sensible, well sorted valve amps, with adequate power for most users and built to a good standard"**

#### **Rave review in Hi Fi News Jan 2004:**

**"I was impressed not only by the almost tangible three-dimensionality of performers but the depth and width of the soundstage..." "ample, deep, rhythmic, tuneful bass, underpinning a lucid and effortless midrange and treble".**

**"I liked the impeccable finish and feeling of bomb-proof solidity as well some of the most natural sounding music that I have heard at home". Tony Bolton**

#### **"One might expect the Stereo 40i to cost in the region of £2000"-Hi Fi Choice**

**"The sound has a lovely spacious and airy quality with plenty of depth"...The amplifier itself is thoroughly practical as well a very good looking device, confirmed by its solid measured lab performance...The frequency response exhibited extended bass response below 10hz and fell only 0.3db at 20khz."**  
**Paul Messenger & Chris Bryant June 2004.**

### Launch of New Stereo 40i "Classic"

With the launch of our new Stereo 60 and Stereo 300 amps, we have taken the opportunity to do a few upgrades to the Stereo 40i. These include: Incorporating a large "Choke" to make the background even more silent. Adjusting the driver circuit and reducing feed-back. Changing the valve line-up so we can now offer an "all Mullard" version.

**At still only £899.95 with European valve upgrade, the Stereo 40i Classic is exceptional value for money!**

### A "High-end" integrated valve amplifier under £1000!

Our Stereo 40i (EL34) has a enviable reputation following the outstanding reviews in Hi Fi News and Hi Fi Choice also winning "Editors Choice" award in Hi Fi News two years in a row. We are now delighted to announce new KT88 & KT66 versions by popular request! Whilst the Mullard EL34 is without a doubt the best value and all rounder in power output valves, pre-dating this a new standard was set by GEC in the late '30s with their "Kinkless Tetrode" the KT66. Having very low distortion and a more 'refined' sound compared to the EL34, its lower output and smooth sound would lend it more towards bringing out the fine detail of the best recordings. In 1957 the KT88 was the final development of the audio output valve by GEC having the highest power rating and probably the cleanest sound of any valve available. Very dynamic & solid sounding, still with

warmth & colour it is probably the most neutral sounding valve.

Building a valve amplifier is relatively easy, the difficulty is getting it to "hang" together well. We use tried and tested circuits excellent transformers and have refined them further with top quality components, solid build quality and stylish looks to give amazing sound quality and performance at many times the price.

**We even give you the choice of either 40\* watts in Ultralinear mode or 20\* watts in Triode mode (KT88) with its more relaxed sound quality. Almost like two amplifiers in one.**

**What's the difference?**

All early valves were triodes (three elements), They are highly regarded for their smooth, musical qualities, but lack the higher power of pentode valves.

We also like to keep things simple without circuits like tone controls, filters, balance etc which can affect the purity of sound (even when not in use), that way the delicate audio signal has the shortest path and less chance of degradation.



**With valve cover. "Point to point" internal hard wiring  
1950's Technology Brought up to date!**

In recent years it has become accepted that a good specification on 'paper' in no guarantee of a good sound. E.G. lots of modern 'solid state' equipment sounds 'harsh' and 'clinical', losing natural 'warmth' and 'colour', with the dreaded 'listening fatigue' which can ruin your listening pleasure after a short while.

**We developed the Stereo 40 with the following design criteria:**

- 1, To have a musical, easy listening, "warm sound".
- 2, Having adequate power to drive modern speakers to a good volume level on all types of music.
- 3, To have a total absence of 'listening fatigue'
- 4, To work with any modern input source.
- 5, To be reliable and easy to live with, using easily obtainable valves. (All the valves we use are in production).
- 6, Easy for owners to do a valve change if required.
- 6, To have excellent build quality.
- 5, To be excellent value for money.

We have not used primitive Chinese circuits, but have developed our designs and refined them over time based upon the excellent research and ideas by Mullard, GEC and Williamson in the 1950's, to mirror

the traditional British designs using modern audiophile components.

Most importantly we consider HARD WIRING very important as this has advantages for cool running, simple service and easy upgrade. With no expensive printed circuits to burn out and bullet proof build quality. This method of high quality construction ensures the shortest signal paths, low impedance, low capacitance, low inductance signal paths, with low noise, which promote clean sound quality. Nothing gets hot under the chassis and therefore component life is prolonged.

The amplifier is built to last a life time.

Operating in 'Ultralinear'\* 'push pull' mode, the Stereo 40i gives around 40 watts output of beautiful valve sound. Triodes are generally recognised as giving the best sound, but when used as output valves triode amps are usually expensive and low powered. Now at the flick of a switch the EL34/KT66/88's will also perform beautifully as triodes giving around 20 watts\*, which is usually ample power for average efficiency speakers, remembering that valve watts work out to be about double those of transistor amps. Using a 'passive' pre amp with the famous blue ALPS volume control to preserve the purity it is sensitive enough (350mv) to work well with any modern input source. TV & video etc.

\*Halfway between pentode and triode

### **Speaker matching**

With 4 & 8ohm taps the Stereo 40 works well with virtually any modern or vintage conventional speaker.

### **Sound Quality**

The STEREO 40 offers a very open transparent detailed sound stage, which is warmer, and more involving than solid-state counterparts. The sweeter treble makes for very easy listening, whether jazz, classical or dance music. The bass is has more "timbre" and is capable of delivering power down below 20Hz (see Hi Fi Choice Review). A big plus is the amazing way that small details may be heard in complex passages.

The Stereo 40 is all 'analogue' and sounds great with any source inc LP's, FM radio and tape, it will also 'calm' digital sources such as CD, MP3, DVD etc.



### **Why 'Push Pull' output and not 'Single Ended'?**

'Push Pull' is very efficient and produces a very good output from two valves working in opposition. Giving the power to drive modern speakers 'Push Pull' also cancels out nearly all even order harmonic distortion hum and noise. This also keeps the transformers smaller because they don't get saturated with lots of DC. This is why 'single ended' amps are expensive, large and rarely produce more than about 15 watts often with poor bass performance. A small amount of feedback makes our amplifiers very linear able to

deliver full power across the full frequency range and lowers output impedance.

### **STEREO 40i construction**

We use a polished stainless steel chassis, chosen for its non-magnetic neutral sonic qualities. The front plate and transformer cover are 10mm solid anodised alloy plate. The transformer housing is sectioned inside to eliminate noise between transformers and has an enamel crackle finish. Underneath the chassis there is a painted steel sub chassis. The knobs are gold plated alloy. It is supplied with a very attractive valve cover, (see photo).

**This gives you an amplifier with excellent performance that has superb build quality, it is easily upgraded, and easily serviced. We keep a full range of spare parts in stock.**

Input and output terminals are audiophile gold plated RCA phono and oversized speaker terminals, which will accommodate the largest of cables as well as banana plugs.

Only one capacitor per EL34/KT66/88 is used in the signal path. These are high quality Solen polypropylene. Resistors are oversized 2w metal oxide and wire wound chosen to suit their application.

The unique attractive cover made from stainless steel and high density Perspex gives added protection for more vulnerable situations whilst retaining good looks.

### **Valve Life**

We have recently tested the valves in several models over 5 years old and found them to be good condition. We would recommend out HT delay to extend this.

### **Replacement valves**

Icon amplifiers only use valves currently in production. This gives you choice & keeps the price low. Current cost is under £95 for a matched set.

### **Where can I hear one?**

If you are able to travel to Leicester you are welcome to call at our premises by appointment. Or contact your dealer.

We also offer you the chance to audition our amplifier in your own home! This would give you the chance to audition with your own ancillary equipment and your own acoustics. Also having your own music collection to hand.

At Icon Audio we are very serious about quality control and customer service. Each amplifier is rigorously tested and listened to for at least 6 hours to ensure that it sounds as good as it should. We want you to get the best out of our amplifier.

### **Why valve amplifiers sound better!**

There are many and varied reasons why valve amplifiers sound so good, some of which are not fully understood even today. In the same way that many expensive solid state designs don't sound as good as expected.

- Valve amplifiers are comparatively simple. With a shorter signal path and fewer components to preserve that delicate audio signal intact.
- This gives the opportunity to use much higher quality full sized components (not tiny surface mount), e.g. resistors, capacitors etc.

- Valve amps sound better if constructed without using printed circuit boards which often add noise, distortion and can degrade sound quality.
- Valve distortion is very benign and less noticeable compared to solid state which even at very low levels can be noticeable.
- Valves have a much greater overload capacity than transistors, essential as music is so transient.
- This give massive 'headroom' so the loud passages can be reproduced with distortion.
- Valves are more musical than transistors giving more 'colour' and emotion to the recording.
- Valve amplifiers 'warm up' much quicker therefore sound better without a long wait.
- Valve amplifiers generally use little feedback unlike solid state which is often much higher.
- Valve amplifiers have a much smoother sound than solid state without losing the detail.

### **Using a turntable**

You will need a phono stage. Ask about our new phono stage now available. Only a good all valve phono stage can bring vinyl to life like it should be!

### **Specifications and Features**

- Comprehensive manual supplied
- Full instructions for valve change included
- All hand wired point to point
- Choke regulated power supply ("Classic" only)
- No printed circuit board to 'colour' sound
- Japanese Blue ALPS volume pot.
- All Triode front end
- Output circuit Ultralinear or Triode switchable\*
- 4x EL34, KT66 or KT88 output valves
- EL34/KT88s precisely matched for best performance
- 2x 12AX7 (ECC83) first stage valves
- 2x 12AT7 (ECC81) phase splitter valves
- HT delay to prevent cathode stripping (optional)
- 2x 45w KT88, 40w EL34, 30w KT66 RMS per channel
- 2x 20/19/15 Watts RMS in Triode mode
- Signal to noise level -90db
- Freq response 20hz-20khz +0 - 1db
- Total harmonic distortion typically less than 0.2%
- 4 and 8 ohms output taps
- Japanese steel EI transformers with low oxygen copper
- Attractive cover included in the price
- Minimal feedback used
- High quality 2w metal film, & wire-wound resistors
- Blue LED mains indicator
- Polypropylene audio capacitors
- Silver TEFLON audio cable (not SE/e)
- Ceramic valve holders for minimum leakage
- Centre tapped heater circuit for minimum hum
- Pre-amp 6.3v heater circuit floated at 60v to minimise heater-cathode leakage
- 'Soft start' device incorporated
- Supplied bias test meter
- Polished stainless steel chassis
- 10mm solid aluminium front plate & transformer cover
- Gold plated Input & speaker terminals
- Inputs for CD, Tuner, Aux & Tape
- Tape monitor circuit\* (not ie)
- 350mv input sensitivity.
- 230/240volts (also 120v), 135watts 1.6A anti-surge fuse
- C E certified
- 320W (380), 250D (340D), 180H (240), 14.6kg (figures in brackets allow for rear connections & ventilation)

\*Not available of "ie" version

(Specifications subject to change, errors & omissions excepted 10/07/06)

Although we are a company small we make customer service a priority. We are aware that there are many importers who will purport to offer you a good deal, but will they be around in five years time to service your treasured amplifier?.

**Total Peace of mind service!**

When you a Icon Audio product, you get:

- A UK 240v specification product. Designed for use in Europe.
- A full UK guarantee.
- UK service dept with skilled engineers that know how your product should sound!
- Full back up of spares in stock
- Free valve testing for customers
- Free telephone or email advice

**What we do:**

In Leicester each amplifier is carefully checked & tweaked plus any custom modifications added as required before undergoing over 20 rigorous tests in all its important static & dynamic parameters. Finally each amplifier is run to allow the valves to "bed in". This ensures, inc. and listening performance, plus any custom modifications required.

**What you get:**

With the amplifier, you get a comprehensive manual to tell you everything you need to know, including how to check the performance & how to change valves. We even supply a meter to help you do this.

Optional extra with "e" version.

**Model Options**

With the continued success of the Stereo 40i we have now widened our range to include two cheaper models which are identical apart from the following: The "40i SE" does not have the tape monitor circuit. The "40ie" does not have triode facility or a tape monitor. Neither have the Teflon silver audio cable.

**Stereo 40ie SE & i Model Options**

Model	Chinese Valves	Valve Upgrade
ST40ie EL34	599.95	699.95
ST40ie KT66	699.95*	749.95
ST40ie KT88	699.95*	749.95
ST40i SE EL34	699.95	769.95
ST40i SE KT66	N/A	799.95
ST40i SE KT88	N/A	799.95
ST40i Classic EL34	N/A	899.95
ST40i Classic KT66	N/A	999.95
ST40i Classic KT88	N/A	999.95

\* The 12AX7 and the 12AT7. Prices and availability can change (Next day delivery £20, UK mainland)

**How to order:**

Ask your dealer or failing that contact us by email or phone to discuss availability, payment etc. You can then pay by credit card or cheque. Your amplifier will normally be dispatched within 7 days by next day service (UK), or you could collect and save the shipping cost.

**30-Day Trial**

If upon testing the amplifier on your own system you are not happy with the amplifier for any reason, Icon Audio will refund the purchase price. (UK customers only, excludes carriage cost conditions apply).

**Conditions**

The unit must be returned in new condition in original box and packaging within 30 days of purchase, together with accessories and instructions. The customer is responsible for return carriage and insurance. We reserve the right to charge for damage or admin costs.

**Limited Offer Valve Upgrade**

For a limited period we are supplying the Stereo 40i Classic & 40i SE with a set of Premium quality Slovak JJ driver valves, Russian Svetlana EL34 or EH KT88 GEC replicas. AT NO EXTRA CHARGE. In our opinion this opens up the musical detail from the '40, giving an even more 'euphoric' quality.

Mullard EL34s, 12AT7s, JJ EL34 & KT88 also available ask for prices.

**Icon's 'Intelligent' HT Delay timer option £79.95 Preserve valves and performance!**

It is well known that applying a high voltage to valves when they are cold causes 'cathode stripping' which will reduce both the efficiency and the life of the valve. The switch on surge also stresses transformers, rectifiers, capacitors and fuses, The old method of using a valve rectifier which warmed up slowly overcame this problem, unfortunately valve rectifiers have other problems including inefficiency, size and cost and high source impedance, with no sonic improvement. Our solution is a unique active timer delay, which delays the switch on of the HT until the valves have reached their correct operating temperature, Thereby preventing cathode stripping and preserving the life of the valves. Also helps the "getter" keep the vacuum 'hard'. This circuit has no sonic effects, is simple and very reliable. Especially recommended if you are using expensive or 'new old stock' valves.

**Want to part exchange your old equipment?**

Ask us for a quote. Ideally you should have the manual and either original box(s) or suitable packing for transit. We can uplift direct from your home (usual cost £20.00) and upon confirming the condition of the item will deduct the amount from the sale price. We regret that it is not possible to do PX with the 30-day trial option.

For Trade & Export inquiries contact David at

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Direct 10/07/2006