

## Enjoy the Music.com

First up is the product i am proud to say first reached America due to my review in SoundStage!. It all started when my German internet friends tipped me off to this jewel called the Black Cube phono stage. Well i took the bait hook, line and sinker. The owner of Lehmann Audio, Norbert Lehmann, took a big chance and sent his first 120 volt unit to me as Germany uses the 220 volt standard. Can you imagine sending your German product to some American for a review on the internet? Why on earth would a manufacturer do that? Ahhh, read on!

After the obligatory 10-day burn-in time it was sounding absolutely incredible! In fact it was the undisputed best phono stage my ears have hear for under \$1,500 and the Black Cube would retail for about half that! How was this possible? i took the Black Cube apart and inside i saw premium-grade parts and top quality construction. Nothing smelled of downgraded el cheapo rubbish. In fact after looking at the parts and construction quality i was even more amazed how Lehmann Audio could make such a product for so little money! So without telling Mr. Lehmann my opinion of the product i started to put the heat on him. What was his background? How long had he been in business? How many of these units could be made in a month? On and on i went with my questions until i was sure

that if my rave review of this unit was to reach the public, the public would not yell at me about lack of availability or a high defective product rate. Once all was satisfied it was time to release this jewel to the world-wide internet.

All the above happened a long time ago. Ok, so it was December 1997 which in internet time is about ten years ago (one year equals five internet years). Within the past ten years, er, um, two years virtually every major magazine has positively raved about the Black Cube. So what is all this foreplay leading up to? Well my friends it is time for me to tell you about the newest version!



Enter Black Cube, new, improved and kicking booty in a town near you! This newer version uses a circuit board with checkered grounding plane versus solid. On the phono board itself the older Analog Devices chip has been replaced with a better Burr Brown unit. There were also some minor parts change in the power supply while the latest big change is the usage of a non-magnetic aluminum chassis instead of steel. The use of

a non-magnetic chassis has long been used to improve the sound quality of various electronic devices. So how does it sound?

More transparency than my original unit, tighter bass, greater soundscape depth with more precise imaging. Not imaging as in all smaller pinpoint but proper better imaging as in the size and shape of the image with it's surrounding ambience better defined while also being more delicate. Is it a huge monstrous difference? Not really, yet one that is perceptible in my mega-buck \$10,000 Clearaudio Insider Gold Reference wood body cartridge weilding system. i am not sure how much is due to the simple chip swap versus how much due to the chassis. i would rather spend my time simply enjoying the music than trying part swapping. And enjoy the music i did! For those looking for possibly the worlds best phono stage for under \$1,500 or even \$2,000 i can proudly again recommend the

Lehmann Audio Black Cube. Your music and your wallet will thank you.

*Steven R. Rochlin*

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