

Matthew Polk
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Dear Ron:

I'm delighted that these amps are going to you as I think you'll appreciate their history. These amps, s/n 03309 and 03310, along with the matching FET ten/hl preamp, serial #03381, came to us directly from Threshold around 1990. We were looking for amps specifically to use in the development of the SDA SRS 1.2TL, the culmination and final iteration of the 2-channel SDA speakers. The SA-12's turned out to be the perfect choice. With a grounding strap between the amps they were able to drive the SRS 1.2TL prototypes without the need for an isolation transformer and with incredible dynamics. Along with almost limitless power the SA-12's offered superb vocal clarity and sound staging which were critical elements in the voicing of the 1.2TL's. The combination was so effective that we used the SA-12's to demo the 1.2TL's at many shows including several CES's in the early 1990's.

Around 1993 I started work on adapting SDA technology to home theater, an effort that eventually produced the Signature Reference Theater (SRT) system. The SA-12's were once more pressed into service for development. My goal with the SRT system was to offer what the marketing department called, "performance without limits". In other words what I wanted was a system capable of so much more than anyone really needed that the listening experience would seem completely effortless and free of limitations. The SA-12's were still one of very few high-powered amps to offer a really involving listening experience coupled with the dynamic capability to tap the full potential of the SRT system. I did most of the SRT voicing work in my media room at home and the SA-12's remained a core component of my home system for many years thereafter.

A few pieces of advice about the SA-12's. Nelson Pass's stasis circuitry is a very clever way of maintaining rock steady bias which depends on feedback from the temperature of the heat sinks. The huge thermal mass of the SA-12's makes this work beautifully but they need to warm up thoroughly before they really sound their best. I'd recommend at least an hour and two is better. If they're in a drafty location it will take longer. The difference is easy to hear. Also, if you plan to drive SDA's, other than an SRT, use ground lifters on the AC plugs and a heavy ground wire connecting the two chassis. This will ensure that SDA works properly.

I hope you'll enjoy these as much as I have.

All Best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Polk', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Polk
Co-founder Polk Audio, Inc.