



OUR GOLDEN BOY

The new Accuphase E-370 tops the performance of its predecessor and costs even less. If there were a hi-fi gold medal - this would deserve it.

Take something excellent and make it even more so - that's the maxim of celebrated Japanese brand Accuphase. Yes, there have been revolutions along the way, such as 2002's conversion from the most popular conventional volume potentiometer to the „AAVA“ level control with interconnectable fixed resistors, but in general the Yokohama company prefers to rely on the ongoing evolution of its products.

That the E-360, which was launched in 2012, is now followed by the E-370 has its method - as does the fact that the new

model hardly differs from its predecessor, at least visually. It's very Japanese, with everything in its place, nicely in line, and creating no great waves. Except...

There's something different about this launch - excitement! Three dealers, whom I contacted for other reasons, inquired whether we'd already received a review sample of the new Accuphase product - apparently it was awesome and incomparable with the now obsolete E-360 version, not to mention less expensive. German distributor Accuphase-Vertrieb P.I.A. HiFi lowered the price from 6750 euro for the E-360 to 6150 euro for its successor, leading Thomas Dressel of PREMIUM PARTNER High End Schlegelmilch in the Frankish city of Haßfurt to „complain“ that he could hardly sell the original version of the E-260 at 5000 euro. Seems the price difference of 1150 euro to the E-370 was simply too little, and the new amp in a totally different class...

Same as ever? Yes, but...

Spurred on by this, we wanted to see and hear what was behind this flurry of gossip and excitement: in over 35 years of dealings with HiFi, I have followed the development of Accuphase, founded by ex-Kenwood manager Jiro Kasuga in 1972, and have tested countless components while following the ongoing improvements. In all that time I often found myself wondering, "Where's all this going?" and now I know the answer: it's all been leading to the E-370.

At first glance the new model is nothing special: it's just the latest one and, without the model designation on the narrow cover that gently slides downwards at a touch hiding the incredibly flexible switchgear, we may not have noticed the difference. Need further clues? Well, a small switch to the right of the flaps sets the two apart, as does the orange of the switchable digital level display between the striking level

KEYWORD

Push-pull output stage: The power transistors do not work against earthing, but two inverted "hot pole" transistors power the speakers.

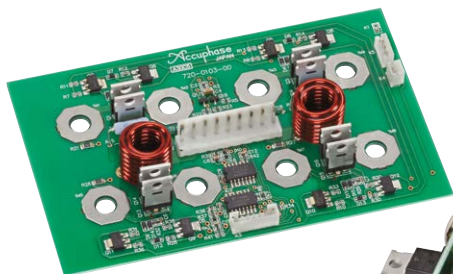
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HANDCRAFTED AUDIO COMPONENTS SINCE 1988

meters is now more orange, instead of the old red. But that's about it!

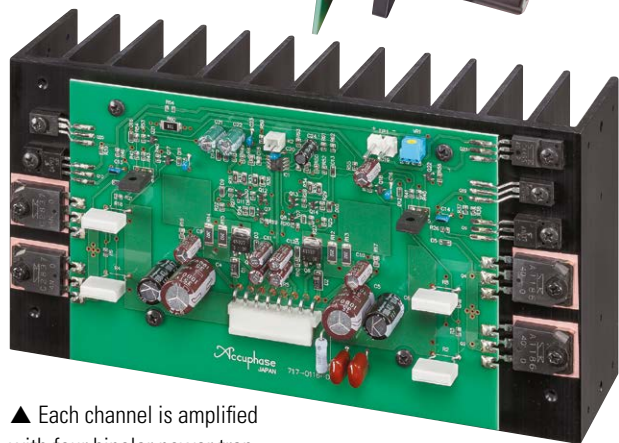
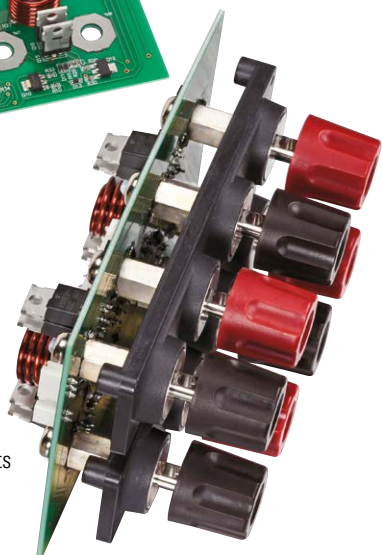
However, behind the beautifully made and finely-brushed front panel there are more innovations to be discovered, for example in the conversion of relays to FET switches in the loudspeaker output as a result of successive changes in the amps. As expected from Accuphase, the E-370 allows two pairs of speakers to be used individually or collectively, the contactless switches providing an even better connection of the solid pole terminals to the channel-separated power electronics with increased long-term stability. This separation of speaker switching and connections is new for the E370.

Otherwise, the new amplifier offers precisely the same Accuphase amps as known for decades: in the centre of the



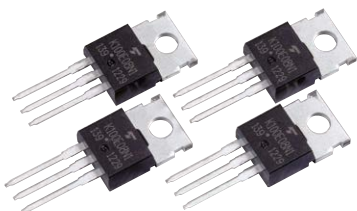
▲ The newly developed LS output board ensures the shortest signal paths and increases the attenuation factor because it is directly...

...connected to the terminal posts. In this manner, both parts form one unit. ▶



▲ Each channel is amplified with four bipolar power transistors in parallel push-pull arrangement.

A FET switch at the loudspeaker outputs should constantly ensure the best possible contact. ▶



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▲ The rear panel shows the extensive connection possibilities.

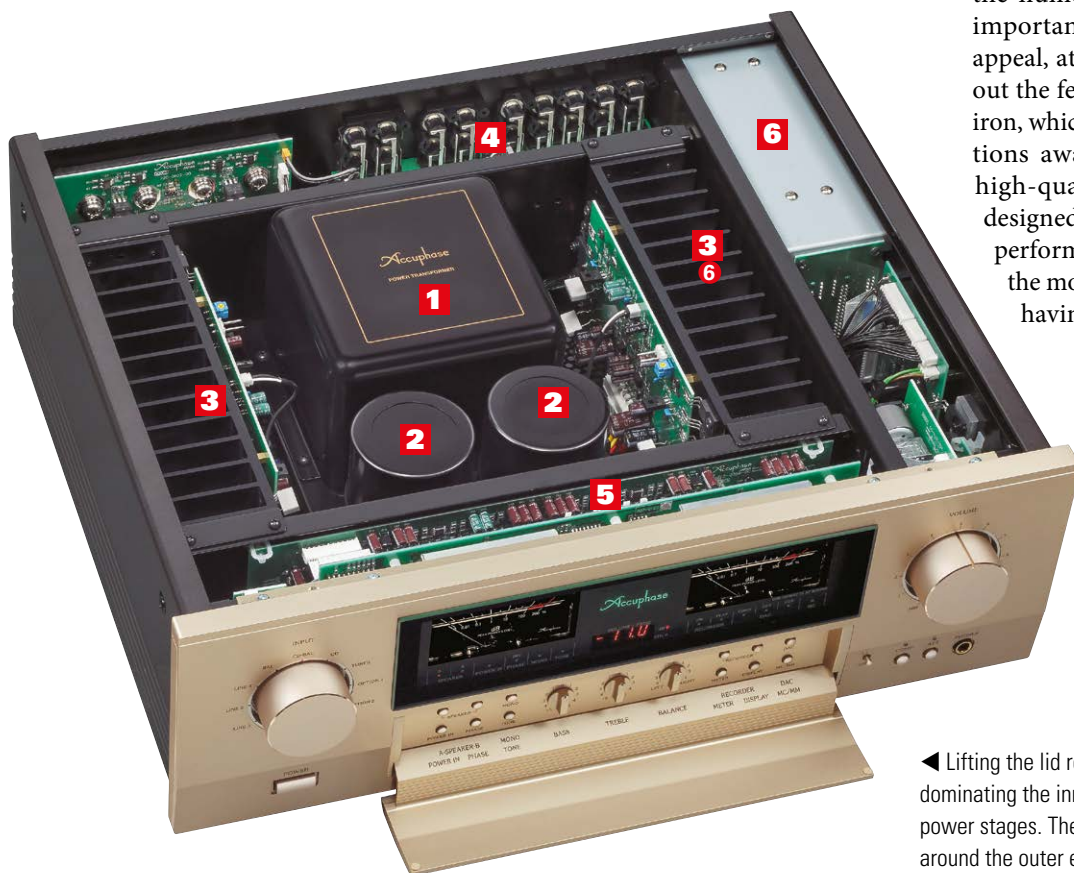
case the potent power supply consists of an encapsulated transformer **1** and main capacitors **2** framed by power amplifiers and heat sinks **3**. The inputs are switched **4** at the rear, the control plus AAVA electronics **5** is located behind the front panel. Of course, the E-307 also has the partitioned bay **6** for recommended phono MM MC or high bit capable D/A converter or high-level module (AD-30,

DAC-40, Line-10 for 1000, 1185, 160 euro respectively). Two of them fit in order to expand the amp for direct disc player connection and/or to the digital section.

Looking directly at the differences to the out-phased E-360, the use of even smoother action should be highlighted – Accuphase components have always been impressive in this respect – for the innovative, precise „Vari-Gain“ volume

control. In addition, the developers wanted to double the attenuation factor required for bass control, and it fits into the picture that the transformer capacity was made greater and the power supply capacity increased from 22,000 to 30,000 microfarad, while the balanced the push-pull output stages were designed more consistently.

In order to not get completely lost in the numerous details, which are also important to achieve a perfect visual appeal, at this point we shall only point out the feet made of „high-carbon“ cast iron, which should effectively keep vibrations away from the device, and the high-quality headphone connection designed for low impedance and high performance: that should satisfy even the most fussy sound lovers and saves having to buy an external solution.



◀ Lifting the lid reveals a generous power supply, dominating the inner workings along with the two power stages. The remaining electronics are distributed around the outer edge.



▲ In the listening room the E-370 (below) competed with its predecessor, the E-360 (above). The DP-550 SACD player sits between the two amplifiers.

Culmination in Sound Room

The Accuphase was supposed to go to the laboratory for measurement before we listened – but impatience got the better of us, and so we connected it to the just assembled Bowers & Wilkins 803 D3 speakers, which had just taken their place in our listening in room.

The Accuphase DP-550 SACD player had already warmed-up. The handy left-hand knob on the E-370 selected the correct input, and there it was: a cultivated, Accuphase-sounding tone touched with ultra-fine detail, the music moving with a timing that never appears to be excited or hectic, and a pronounced sensitivity to any shades of tone.

It was obvious the E-370 was a first-class amplifier, as well as an authentic Accuphase. But how good is it really and, in particular, how much better than its predecessor? In order to assess this, we set the two up side by side, and switched

between them: we'd already carried out such an endeavour several times before, and the new always knocked out the former champion, but this time it was different – though only in the huge amount of clear water the E-370 put between itself and its predecessor.

One could easily get the impression of having skipped not one, but three or four generations: the industry colleagues had obviously not been exaggerating.

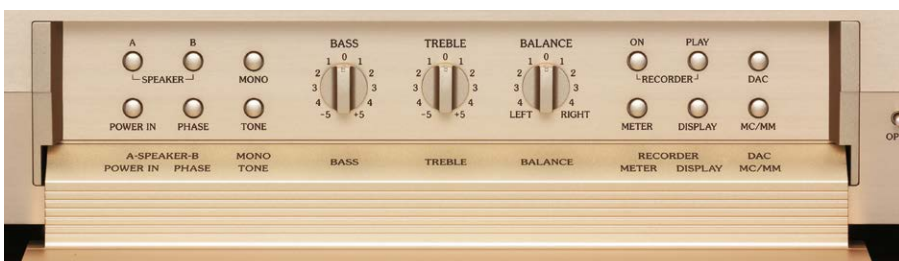
Comparing E-360 and E-370, with the same HMS „Gran Finale Jubilee“ speaker cable and a similar power cable, at the same volume the song „More Than You Know“ from the new, fantastic-sounding Lyn Stanley album „Interludes“ sounded considerably more expansive, more spatial and clearly more three-dimensional via the new amplifier. Miss Stanley's voice sounded more natural and the subtle, highly authentic mixture of song and instrumental accompaniment was more multi-faceted.

Then things really took off with Monty Alexander's highly dynamic „Moanin“ from our sound test CDVI. The new Accuphase got its explosive kick-drums accurate to the point, irrespective of the level, with a 'go for it' balance and an uninhibited relaxed sound, although the output meter needle frighteningly flew to the „0 dB“ indicator. No question about it: the E-370 has power and knows how to use it – precisely as well as consistently.

E-370 Setting Standards

The E-360 was forced to give in. Although it did captivate with snap and discipline, its bass was less well-ordered and the overall sound a long way from the naturalness, delicacy and confidence of its successor. The E-370, however, not only sets standards in the Accuphase program, but also in its price class. It will be difficult to find a better amplifier for the same price.

Matthias Böde



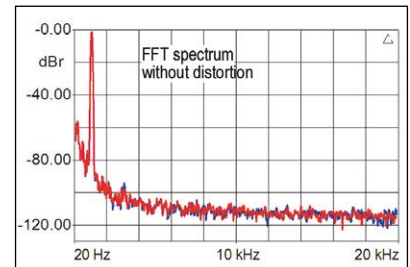
▲ Less frequently used, but useful, functions are hidden behind the flap.

ACCUPHASE E-370

approx. € 6150
 Dimensions: 46.5x17x45 cm (WxHxD)
 Warranty: 3 years (on registration)
 Contact: P.I.A. HiFi, Tel.: +49 6150 50025
 www.accuphase.com

If the new Accuphase would cost 600 euro more than its predecessor, this would be perfectly OK as far as sound quality is concerned. But the „Golden Boy“ costs this amount less and even better, making it a superb bargain.

MEASUREMENT RESULTS



Continuous power at 8 | 4 Ω 107 | 170 W per channel
 Pulse power at 4 Ω 220 W per channel

Distortion factor
 At 50 mW | 5 W Pmax -1 dB 0.005 | 0.002 | 0.004%

Intermodulation
 At 50 mW | 5 W Pmax -1 dB 0.002 | 0.001 | 0.1%

Signal-to-noise ratio CD at 50 mW 5 W 83 | 92 dB

Channel separation at 10 kHz 59 dB

Attenuation factor at 4 Ω 125

Upper limit frequency (-3 dB, 4 Ω) > 80 kHz

Connection values practice-orientated

Crosstalk Tuner/CD (10 kHz/5 kOhm) 95 dB

Synchronization fault volume
 control up to -60 dB 0.03 dB

Power consumption
 Off | Standby | Idle 0 | <2 | 40 W

LABORATORY COMMENT

Excellent measurement data in all relevant points. High pulse power and signal-to-noise ratio with extremely low distortion. Effective channel separation

FEATURES

Eight high-level inputs, two in XLR, remote control, balance and sound control, loudness, tape output, phase reversal, headphone output, separable pre and output stage, level meter, phono, DAC and high level modules are optional.



AC phasing on test unit

STEREO-TEST

SOUND QUALITY 96%

PRICE/PERFORMANCE



OUTSTANDING