



Temptations

THE WORLD'S MOST DESIRABLE KIT



Fiery amp irons out the wrinkles

Bask in the warm glow of the **Unison Research Sinfonia** – an alluring amplifier that combines ancient valve technology with a modern feature set to produce an incredibly refined performance

VALVE AMPLIFIER
UNISON RESEARCH
SINFONIA
★★★★★
£ 2950

FOR

Refinement and smoothness; exceptional build and finish

AGAINST

Not the last word in slam; needs careful system partnering

VERDICT

The Sinfonia is a fine amplifier that's capable of a sparkling performance in the right system

IT'S EASY TO gush about valve amplifiers, particularly when they're as seductive as Unison Research's Sinfonia. Even those with just a passing interest in hi-fi wouldn't mistake this 27-watt per channel integrated amp for anything other than a quality item. Build is immaculate: the finish on the wooden sections is exquisite, both on the amp and remote handset. Many an established high-end company would blush with shame at the standards set by this small Italian manufacturer.

Once powered up, things get even better. The Sinfonia's quartet of KT88 valves glows brightly, and gives off a warm sheen after a few minutes of use. Rarely has central heating looked so enticing, and rarely has an amp sounded so civilised.

Makes the rough sound smooth

Sonically, the Sinfonia harks back to the traditional valve-amp stereotype of smoothness and refinement. Throw some ropey recordings at it – we used Mary J Blige's latest set, *The Breakthrough* – and it'll respond in cultured tones. The Sinfonia will leave no doubt as to the quality of recordings, but it'll round off the rougher edges to make your listening experience as palatable as possible.

Dynamics are strong, and bass has surprising kick considering the amp's limited power output. It goes without saying that sensitive, easy-to-drive speakers will work best – though, having said that, we tried everything from ATC's mighty SCM50s, to Diapason's tiny Karis, and Eclipse's unusual TD510s,

without coming across a serious mismatch. Push the amp to high volumes with a demanding piece such as Holst's *Mars*, and it'll start to compress gently, and lose a grip of what is, most of the time, a taut and tuneful bass-end. Stereo imaging is

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pleasingly secure and focused, while general levels of detail resolution are as high as you would hope for at this kind of price level.

Good as the Sinfonia is, it needs more bite and a greater ability to track fast-moving rhythms to be a true all-rounder. As things stand, it sounds a tad too civilised to be totally convincing – though much depends on what type of music you listen to. If you're a fan of classical or mainly easy-going vocal material, there are few better buys at this price.

Old-style technology, modern features

Also, don't forget that this Unison Research is a thoroughly modern integrated amplifier, despite its use of Jurassic technology. The Sinfonia has a remote control, plenty of protection circuitry, and is engineered to last a lifetime. Add all that to the seductive sound, impressive build and the alluring glow of valves, and you have the definition of a *Temptations* product: pure and simple.



UNISON RESEARCH
SINFONIA
POWER 27 watts per channel
LINE LEVEL 4
TAPE LOOP Yes
PREOUT No
SPEAKER OUT 2
TONE No
HEADPHONE No
REMOTE Yes
FINISH Wood/black



The Sinfonia has a superior fit and finish that would shame plenty of established hi-fi brands