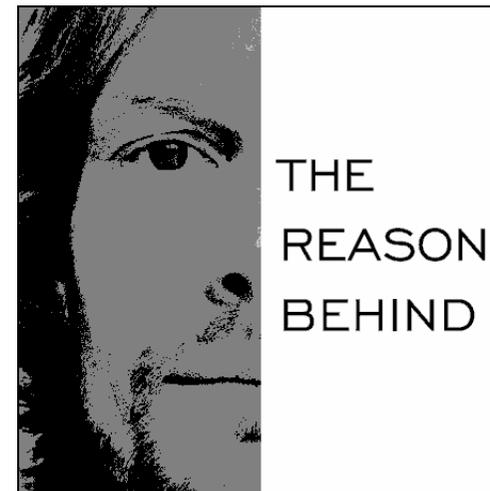


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TUNDRA MONO

My first power amplifier, **Tundra**, was released in April 2012. Two months after the introduction, I knew of at least three owners who were using *two* Tundra's in their stereo system. They were using only one channel on each Tundra, leaving the other two channels unused. This arrangement results in a marked improvement in sound quality over a single Tundra, due to a doubling of the power available for each channel.

Using two Tundra's this way may seem like a waste of channels, and indeed it is. I felt that a single channel version would make more sense. But simply removing one channel from a stereo Tundra does not benefit the remaining channel. Rather the opposite: It sounds a tiny bit worse on its own. This is due to the balance of the Tundra circuit, which is tuned and optimised for stereo, becoming upset. A single channel Tundra would require some redesigning.

Tundra Mono started with a list of 14 ideas that I considered essential to evaluate. The ideas covered the areas of power supply filtering, the input, drive and output stage, the cooling, the connectors and the aluminium case. I worked them through one by one, in what I believed to be the order of importance. Redesigning and experimenting with the input stage took more than a month, but eventually it turned out that the original Tundra design was superior to all new variations. It was easy to make the sound more impressive, but it also lost the harmonic flow and musicality of the original.

The drive and output stages were of particular concern in Tundra Mono. My primary goal was to improve musical performance, but if I could also increase power handling, it would be a nice bonus. I therefore built output stages with double and triple transistor pairs, and tried tuning each one as optimally as possible. The multiple versions did sound more powerful, but unfortunately they also lost some of the unique speed and agility of the original. Another month had passed and I was still

searching for something that could improve the original Tundra circuit.

Eventually I found it. One day I tried a five times more powerful *drive* stage together with the original single transistor pair output stage. This combination had all the speed of the original, and also added a sense of stability and effortlessness to the music. It was a marked improvement over the original Tundra and I was very happy to make this discovery. In addition, I reworked the internal cooling and sourced the best thermal management materials that are currently available. Incidentally, these are made by a Swedish company called Bergquist. The improved thermal management makes the temperature more stable at critical points, which lowers thermally induced distortion.

The last experiments were focused on the connectors and the case. I tried a bunch of RCA females and speaker output connectors. To be honest, I am puzzled by the difference these details do – and how terrible most expensive connectors actually sound! Although it may appear strange, the connectors I am using on Tundra are the best sounding ones I have found so far - regardless of price. On the aluminium case, I did some mechanical tests, simply checking by ear how the circuit board should be positioned and supported. This resulted in three more screws holding the single channel board of Tundra Mono.

What about the price? A Tundra Mono costs almost exactly as much to manufacture as a Tundra. In line with the company motto 'Honest HiFi', I therefore decided set the prices equal. That means a pair of Tundra Mono will cost twice as much as one Tundra. Is Tundra Mono twice as good? Yes, I think it is. I'd very much appreciate your opinion, so please drop me an email when you've heard them!

Tundra Mono was released in January 2013.