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**Rega Elex-R | Stereo amplifier | £900**

# Elex-R goes straight to the heart

**For the record**

It's the fashion for integrated amplifiers to eschew a phono stage, but not this Rega. It's a talented circuit that shines with good turntables.



If you're on the lookout for an upmarket stereo amplifier you certainly shouldn't ignore Rega's Elex-R. It's good enough to shake up a market that's long been dominated by the likes of Cyrus, Roksan and Naim.

Think of this integrated as a more muscular Brio-R (£480) and you'll be pretty close to the mark. By using the much-admired Brio-R as a base and adding circuit elements from the unquestionably talented Elicit-R (£1600) into the mix, Rega has created one of the most talented sub-£1000 amplifiers we've heard.

**Of sound character**

Anyone familiar with Rega's current amplifier range will find the Elex-R's sonic character entirely familiar. It delivers a fast, agile sound that's as rhythmically surefooted as we've heard at this level. Play a piece of music like alt-J's *Breezblocks* and the Rega is right at home. It's happy to deliver that thickly layered bassline with power, and has no trouble rendering dynamic shifts or changes of pace with enthusiasm. There's an addictive sense of liveliness and energy, something most rivals tend to tone down in the search for greater refinement.

Tonally, the Rega edges towards leanness, though if partnered with care (avoiding sources and speakers that err too far towards brightness or harshness) all will be fine. We use a range of speakers from Dali's lively Zensor 3s and B&W's 685s right the way to PMC's mighty Twenty 26s and at no point does the Rega fail to shine.

Of course a power output of 72.5-watts per channel into 8ohms (Rega likes to be

**Switching to Tchaikovsky's *Marché Slave Op.31* shows that the Rega Elex-R can keep track of complex instrumental arrangements, delivering scale and authority when needed**

pretty specific, it seems) isn't enough to make the floor shake in really large rooms, but we think this amplifier is capable of decent levels in most set-ups.

Switching to Tchaikovsky's *Marché Slave Op.31* shows this amplifier can keep track of complex instrumental arrangements and can deliver scale with authority when required. We are pleased with the resolution on offer, and at no time is there a sense the Elex-R is overlooking subtleties for the benefit of the bigger picture. We notice, again, that this amplifier is terrific at communicating the drama of the music. It has us hooked from the first note, right through to the end of the piece. With hi-fi this good it's easy for listening sessions to extend well in to the night.

**Music is math**

Move away from sound and the Rega remains on sure ground (as long as all you want is a traditional stereo amplifier). There are no digital inputs, though we imagine Rega would direct you to its talented DAC for number-crunching duties. Instead you get a good quality MM phono stage, one talented enough to make the most of £1000 turntable packages like, say, Rega's own RP6. It's a relatively quiet circuit, one which keeps all the good sonic points we noted in the line-level stages.

There are four line-level inputs, one tape out and a single preamp output should you

**Build quality is what we expect from Rega: everything feels like it will last for years**

need to add a bit more muscle. That's probably enough for most purist stereo set-ups, though we would have liked a built-in headphone output.

Build quality is as solid as we expect from Rega. Casework is functional rather than luxurious but it's finished neatly. Everything feels like it will last for years. We're disappointed with the remote control though. It lacks the quality we expect at this price, though it works well enough.

The Elex-R is a fine achievement. It's the kind of product that gets straight to the heart of the music. It's up against the likes of Naim's Nait 5si, Cyrus's 6a and Roksan's Kandy K2, but the Rega has enough talent to shine even in such formidable company.

**Rating ★★★★★**

**FOR** Agile, articulate performer that gets to the heart of the music; fine rhythmic ability; good phono stage; solid build and good finish

**AGAINST** Remote handset should be classier

**VERDICT** Builds on the strengths of the excellent Brio-R. A terrifically musical amplifier

**Also consider**

**Naim Nait 5si**  
**£925 ★★★★★☆**



Our current favourite amplifier at this price level is a superb performer but has plenty to fear from this new Rega.

**System builder total build £4095****CD player**

**Naim CD5si ★★★★★ £995**

Terrific CD player that's as musical as a thousand pounds can buy. The CD5si delivers plenty of dynamics and punch. Subtleties aren't forgotten either.

**Turntable**

**Rega RP6/Exact ★★★★★ £1000**

Our favourite £1000 record player has dominated this sector for years now. Few get close to topping its addictive musical delivery.

**Stereo speakers**

**ATC SCM 11 ★★★★★ £1200**

Another terrific product from ATC. These speakers have the agility and transparency to make the most of the Rega's performance.

