

# VITUS AUDIO SIA-025 REVIEW

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Are you ready to make a journey to Denmark? No, we're not taking a holiday in the Nordic. Let's set a musical course to the Danish manufacturer Vitus Audio. The brand owner and designer of all the products is Hans-Ole Vitus. So, there it is. A brand that honors the family name of the man in charge. Nothing exciting, shocking or scientific here! But hey, the Vitus Audio designs will definitely blow your mind. Or should I say ears? I've heard a couple of speakers and a few amplifiers as high end aficionado. I'll cut it short. Vitus is the man. Your search can be over with this guy and his products. Want the longer version? Please read on...



## Hans-Ole Vitus

On all the boxes are stickers that say: "Handcrafted in Denmark". Let's get to know the man behind some of the industries finest products. I'm confused. Browsing the Vitus website in search for some personal information I bumped into the link "Pedigree". Here in Belgium Pedigree is a premium dog food brand. I'm still confused. The man has absolutely no resemblance with dogs what-so-ever. He looks more like a karate practicing bear, but let's not wonder off... Stay focused! Obviously the man is an electronic engineer. What else? A Nespresso? Somebody? And yes, Hans is -as so many manufacturers- on a pursuit of the best possible sound. What else? A rough, drumming rocker? Maybe. In the early days the guy spent all his money on buying hi-fi gear. Not to enjoy himself or learn about music. No. Not at all. He bought the stuff to take it apart and/or try to improve the performance. He worked for 6 years with Texas Instruments. In 1995 he established the Vitus Audio brand name. It took him as little as 8 years to finish his first product. Yeah. Euhm. No comment. Fast-forwarding to 2017 I'm glad I've got to know this Danish manufacturer, even more his exquisite products.

## Vitus Audio

At this time Vitus Audio offers 3 different “commercial” product lines: Reference, Signature and Masterpiece. There’s also a mention of the “Design Studio” series, but these products are by special order only. So forget that. For the moment. I’m confused again. The Signature Series was the first line-up. Hans once explained to me that he never thought he would be able to produce products beyond the “Signature” level. He fooled himself. Components from the Signature Series can compete with the very best from other manufacturers. Here’s one of the company’s early slogans: “Vitus Audio, we start where the others finish”. Enthusiasts in search for a fair introduction into the world of high end can find their way in the Reference Series. Some of the finest products in terms of price versus performance can be found here. Out of this world components for people with unlimited budgets can be found in the Masterpiece Series. Long story short: with the SIA-025 we’re right in the middle of the Signature Series. No rocket science...yet! SIA stands for Signature Integrated Amplifier. The 25 stands for the 25Watts that it delivers in Class A. Pure and simple.



### Unboxing of the SIA-025

The packaging is of the same quality and vision as the Vitus Audio products. You have to start by unpacking a box in the box. There’s a lot of heavy foam to protect the units for transport. Good thinking! Those looks. Simply jaw-dropping! I know that design is personal and thus subjective. But you got to show some love for the way these beauties are built. And yes, they’re heavier than they look. Mind your back and prepare for impact! Get ready for a showdown with the 38Kg of the SIA-025. You thought the Germans could build tanks? Please take notice of the Danish ones. The form and curves of the front panel. Look at the firmness and thoughtfulness of the back panel. Those cooling fins! Honey, I think I’m in love (again).

Handling and installing the amplifier and is easy. The menu structure and way to operate the device is straight forward, without any bells and whistles. There are only six buttons. Right. Not one more. More of the overall Danish ‘look and feel’. I like it. Even the remote breathes that same Puritan and solid appearance. I find that this approach lets you focus on what really matters: enjoying music.

The SIA-025 offers an extra treat: 2 amplifiers in one. Hold your horses. Don't get overexcited. Via the menu you can choose for 2 x 25Watts in Class A or 2 x 150Watts in Class AB. Interesting? Not. Once you're hooked into the Class A mode, it's like...is there another mode? Really?

What's under the hood? Remove the top panel and you go like: OMG! This unit is packed. Fully packed. There's not an inch of space left. Here's my 2 cents. If you pay 21K for an amplifier that really delivers the goods, I think most of us would like it to be twice as high. I know, it doesn't make any sense what-so-ever! There's no technical explanation. I got nothing. Just that with this kind of investment the amplifier should visually show the kind of horsepower its got onboard. Pretty tough with this kind of height. Hans! This kind of height is used for 'source' components. His answer (I'm 99% sure): I don't care. That's that then.



## Listening to the SIA-025

This is it. That part of the review. I've listened for hours and hours to this amplifier. Now I offer a mix of tracks in terms of genres and try to describe what I've experienced. But first let me confess something. Never in my career as a high end aficionado I got so emotional with every of the first 5 tracks that I've listened to. Vitus is the man. Nobody has done that to me. Nobody. Of course I took the first few days to let the unit adjust to its environment. But when I sat down for the first real listen...that happened. For real. For the record: all 5 tracks were classical music.

The XX is a triple indie band that was formed in London in 2005. Angels is a well known track. Coexist was released back in 2012. Baria Qureshi has a fragile and sensitive voice. They did a great job in the studio in capturing the intimacy of her vocals. Her sweet voicing makes your ears melt like ice. She fills the room in a realistic measure, totally separated from Jamie, Romey and Oliver. The musical canvas is pitch black. The silence is breathtaking. Timbres are spot on. You're drawn into the music in a way that I've never experienced before. And yes, this still remains a studio recording!

What a pity that Toots died sometime ago. He was a world class musician, artist and performer. Very worthy of a test drive on the SIA-025. Oh boy, it's becoming very clear that this is a whole new level of experience. No longer am I listening to a representation or interpretation. I'm connecting to Toots and his harmonica. For the first time it get in touch with the artists intent. That's something else. It becomes so much easier to understand the music, what the performer means. The level of micro-detail of the harmonica is outstanding. All those little nuances contribute to the expressive ability of the artist. I'm getting sucked in and I love it.

Lisa Ekdhahl is a Swedish singer/songwriter that breathes pop and jazz. Maybe you know her track 'It's oh so quiet' from back in 1997. It was used in a commercial for a well known perfume brand. In her album 'Back to earth' she performs together with the Nordic Trio. The level rises. Again. Talking about a sublime studio recording! It's one of the best voice-captures out there. It's like she's really standing before you: singing, breathing, making all these little noises. Is she making love with the microphone? The air that surrounds her voices underlines the resolving power of the system. Piano, drums and double bass each have their position within the soundstage. They sound like real instruments. No flavor. No color. How honest can it get?



Moving on to classical music. A classical classic. Fanfare for the Common Man should sound American: big, bold and beautiful. Main actors in this work are big drums and trumpets. This Reference Recording version offers weight, scale and balance. A real stress test for the amp if you want. Even if I crank up the volume beyond 'live' levels, the SIA-025 never stops to deliver or loses control. That is not something one would expect with this kind of music, at that kind of levels with 'only' 25Watts of horsepower. So much refinement is represented in this big sounding track. Have I ever witnessed such a natural sized stage? Big drums sound like big canons being fired. The sheer weight and impact is overwhelming. Trumpets rise and fade into to dark and silent background.

Save the best for last? Channel Classics is a Dutch label that produces sublime classical recordings. I visited the label about 10 years ago. Jared Sacks really knows his game as he grew up in Boston and later moved to the Netherlands. He was schooled as a professional horn player at the conservatory of Amsterdam. Sacks started recording in 1987. Just like his colleagues from Pentatone, he uses modified tube microphones as a basis for his recording. This results in a more involving sound that can convey more emotion. You feel every mood change in the cello of Pieter Whispelwey. The wooden instrument produces beautiful color and resonates in a soothing way. This is one of the tracks that got me in an emotional state. There's a real Steinway Model D in my listening room. Lazic lets the notes roll with individuality and togetherness. I feel like if Brahms is taking to me through his music. The guy is dead! And still his music lives on. What a tribute, thanks to this 'little' amplifier.

On the amp side I tried mixing the system up with a Stello Ai 700 digital integrated amplifier and a pre/power combo with the McIntosh MC452 among other things. It didn't matter what I fed the Estelon XB's. Nothing matched the reference class level of musicality of the Vitus Audio SIA-025. Me want. For keeps. For "Reference". Dare I dream of the Vitus Audio SM-103 mono's? Hans?

## Price

€21.000 (Eurozone) at the time of the review.



## Technical specifications

- Inputs: 3 analog XLR, 2 analog RCA
- Sensitivity: 2/4/8V RMS
- Impedance: 10KOhm
- Outputs: 1 analog XLR, 2 speakers at 75mOhm (L- R)
- Power output at 8Ohm RMS: 2 x 25Watts Class A or 2 x 150Watts Class AB
- Signal to noise: >100dB
- THD + noise: >0,01%
- Volume type: relay controlled fixed resistor network
- Volume gain: -81dB to + 6dB
- Power consumption stand by: <1Watt
- Power consumption Class AB: 90Watts
- Power consumption Class A: 162Watts
- Dimensions (H x W x D): 130mm x 435mm x 430mm
- Weight: 38Kg

## Review setup

- Vitus Audio SIA-025 mkii
- Vitus Audio SCD-025 mkii
- Estelon XB
- Purist Audio Design
- iMac
- VOX Premium Mac Music Player for Hi-Res music

## Track list

1. Angels - The XX [Coexist]
2. La vie en rose - Toots Thielemans [Chez Toots]
3. Nature boy - Lisa Ekdahl [Back to earth]
4. Fanfare for the Common Man - Aaron Copland [Minnesota Orchestra - Eiji Que]
5. Sonata for Piano and Cello in E-minor, Opus 38, Allegro non troppo - Pieter Wispelwey, Dejan Lazic [Brahms Sonatas]



## VITUS AUDIO SIA-025 REVIEW

I'll repeat: Vitus is the man! This man designs amplifiers that I've been searching for all my life. The SIA-025 let's you connect with the music and the intent of the musicians. My God, I've found the Holy Grail! Music is emotion. An amplifier should be everything about conveying that true emotion. Not creating or presenting an individual, brand colored interpretation. If you want that. Look, there are about 2.957 brands out there...



### POSITIVE POINTS

- Holographic organic sound
  - Never runs out of juice
    - Natural timbres
  - Very emotional, involving
    - Resolving power
  - Build to last 3 generations

### NEGATIVE POINTS

- Way to bad for your back
  - What's with this height?
- No room for USB DAC module

**93%**  
OVERALL SCORE

Read this review online

<http://www.bestofhighend.com/vitus-audio-sia-025-review-8/>