



Following David Price's review of the PrimaLuna Prologue Eight valve CD player, Neville Roberts tries out the latest upgrade to emerge from Herman van den Dungen's Durob Audio...

# Dutch Courage

**T**he Prologue Eight incorporates the same tiny triode-based clock used in the SuperTubeClock. The theory is that a valve clock produces an ultra-clean sine wave that effectively eliminates jitter, resulting in a significant improvement to the sound of a CD.

The player also sports a 'state-of-the-art' Burr Brown SRC4192 upsampler and Burr Brown PCM 1792 DACs as well as employing custom designed isolation transformers. There's a dual-mono, zero-feedback output stage using one 12AX7 and one 12AU7 (ECC83 and ECC82 to you and me) per channel, with each being supplied by a separate 5AR4 (GZ34) valve-rectified power supply – six valves in total.

The result is impressive, and I agree with DP that the PL8 has arrestingly natural timing, dizzying amounts of detail and organic musicality. So it's clearly a pretty good unit as it stands, but where can you go from here?

## IV INTO VIII MUST GO!

The answer is to fit a Super I/V op-amp kit! PrimaLuna claims that the Super I/V Board Plus incorporates a new type of op-amp that has never been used before by an audio manufacturer.

From a theoretical point of view, an upgrade of the I/V components *should* improve the sound quality. £139 is a relatively small sum to invest in to upgrade a £1,849 CD player, but is it worth it?

It was a simple matter to replace my Njoe Tjoeb 4000 valve CD player with the standard Prologue Eight in my system. My well-spun copy of Vivaldi Violin Concertos Op.6 (Decca 455 653-2) was placed on the CD tray and I was ready for some serious listening...

The Prologue Eight in its standard form offered a highly detailed presentation with clear and well defined strings, and no signs of harshness. Moving onto vocals, Cecilia Bartolia's 'The Vivaldi Album' (Decca 289 466 569-2) is a pretty demanding CD for any system and the Prologue

Eight responded well to the extreme changes of tone and tempo in the recording as well as the breathtaking vocal gymnastics of Cecilia Bartoli.

Moving to something a bit more modern, Gordon Giltrap's guitar playing on 'Airwaves' (La Coocha Ratcha LCVPI08CD) produced a crystal clear performance on the Prologue Eight.

Time to switch off and swap the four op-amps with the Super I/V op-amp board. Listening again using the same set of CDs, by comparison it became evident that the midrange had been slightly lacking with the standard op-amps fitted. Also, the bass was now much more extended and tighter with the new board. The overall effect was a huge improvement in the realism of the various performances. The sound was altogether more believable with an expansive sound stage of extremely well-balanced instruments.

In conclusion then, the Super I/V op-amp board is not just a worthwhile upgrade – I would say it is a 'must have'. For the price, it really is a 'no-brainer'.

**PRIMA LUNA SUPER  
I/V OP-AMP KIT** £139  
Pistol Music Ltd.  
☎ +44(0) 208 971 3909  
[www.pistolmusic.co.uk](http://www.pistolmusic.co.uk)