

## INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER



# Audiolab 6000A

**E**xpanding the number of sources that the original could handle, the new 6000A is very much about “traditional values in a modern setting” and adds DAC functionality and Bluetooth wireless connectivity with aptX support, as well as having a moving-magnet phono stage and headphone output. It sports an ESS Sabre ES9018 converter chip, alongside four S/PDIF digital inputs – two coaxial and two optical – offering support up to 24-bit/192kHz PCM. Three user-selectable digital filters – fast roll-off, slow roll-off and minimum phase – let you tune the sound to taste.

At the heart of the amplifier, there's a discrete Class AB power amp stage delivering a claimed 50W per channel into 8ohm. The output stage uses complementary feedback topology, which Audiolab claims gives superior linearity and good thermal stability, as the idle current is kept independent of the temperature of output transistors. Meanwhile, the preamplifier section is as simple as possible, giving -80dB to +8dB in steps of 2dB and 1dB – the step resolution increases the higher the volume position.

The 6000A sports a JFET-based phono preamplifier section with three operational modes – integrated, pre-power and preamplifier. The mode selector toggles between these, and also gives the set-up menu where you can select balance, digital filter type

and standby time, etc. It's a very tidily packaged amp that's easy to use.

### Sound quality

This is a surprisingly sophisticated-sounding integrated that belies its low price and never offends sonically. It presents a dry and clean rendition of the music, with no overhang in the bass or any sense of richness or bloat. The midband is clean and spry, casting a light on the recording that leaves little room for doubt about what's going on. Up top, treble is crisp and accurate with a well-etched feel.

The result is that thin-sounding recordings like *The Wind Blows Your Hair* by Naz Nomad and *The Nightmares* don't get any sweeter. Warmer tracks like *White Bird* by It's A Beautiful Day defrost a little, but you're hardly cosseted by the amp's opulent tonality. For this reason, anyone contemplating buying this integrated should consider partnering it with rich, full-sounding speakers, as opposed to more analytical ones.

Despite its dry tonality, it's still great fun to hear. Bassheads' electro stomper *Is There Anybody Out There?* proves a joy – the Audiolab serving up serious amounts of power, moving air around the room with alacrity. Although not the world's most emotional-sounding amplifier, it's good at transients and duly captures the natural starts and stops of the electronic percussion very well indeed. You get quite a technical style of presentation, yet it's enjoyable

### DETAILS

**PRODUCT**  
Audiolab 6000A  
**PRICE**  
£600  
**ORIGIN**  
UK/China  
**TYPE**  
Integrated amplifier  
**WEIGHT**  
7.8kg  
**DIMENSIONS**  
(WxHxD)  
445 x 66 x 300mm  
**FEATURES**  
• Quoted Power output: 2x 50W into 8ohm  
• Digital inputs: 2x optical; 2x coaxial; Bluetooth with aptX  
• Analogue inputs: 3x RCAs; 1x MM phono  
**DISTRIBUTOR**  
IAG Group Ltd.  
**TELEPHONE**  
01480 447700  
**WEBSITE**  
audiolab.co.uk  
**REVIEWED**  
HFC 444

all the same. I find myself focusing on the interplay between the snare and the looped hi-hats, as the bass synthesiser punches out vast tracts of low frequencies with surprising ease.

Fed a high-quality recording such as Peter Gabriel's *Here Comes The Flood*, I enjoy its spacious nature and the confident and expansive soundstage it conjures up. Instruments are pushed far stage left and right, and Gabriel's vocals hang in the middle with real confidence. In absolute terms the 6000A is a little two-dimensional when it comes to depth perspective, with a slight dip in stage depth, but it's still capacious considering the price.

Switching between inputs, there is no obvious failing. Bluetooth is perhaps the least sonically convincing, of the bunch, but being decently implemented aptX it handles the signal well and sounds surprisingly engaging.

### Conclusion

Audiolab's 6000A is a cracking budget integrated with just the right amount of facilities, a snappy and engaging sound, sufficient power and fine build. A great buy for the modern music fan who wants plenty of flexibility. **DP**

### Hi-Fi Choice

#### OUR VERDICT

**SOUND QUALITY** ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Snappy, fun sound; decent power; good design  
**VALUE FOR MONEY** ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Nothing at the price  
**BUILD QUALITY** ★★★★★ **WE SAY:** Impressive integrated for audiophiles that are on a budget  
**FEATURES** ★★★★★

#### OVERALL

