

# ALMOST INDISPENSABLE

Do you know this? One minute, you've never heard of it, and the next, it seems indispensable. That's exactly how it is with the ModWright Analog Bridge.





### Modify and optimize

ModWright is a unique company whose products we've been watching closely for quite some time. On the one hand, this is because company boss Dan Wright is a savvy developer who builds excellent devices with and without tubes, and on the other hand, it's because he started his career as a tuner of digital equipment. So, modifying was his first passion, and he still caters to this field, which explains the company name ModWright. Looking inside the Analog Bridge, you quickly realize this is not a toy but means serious business. There used to be smaller, let's call them, sound effect units from other companies that were based on very simple circuitry and were ultimately nothing more than distortion ge-

nerators. What Wright delivers here leaves those devices in the dust of audio history and sets a new standard.

### What is the Analog Bridge?

Dan Wright's intention with this unit is to fill a niche he discovered through his custom tube modifications of digital source devices. While the digital world is constantly changing, the tube technology of the Analog Bridge is, to put it bluntly, mature. Its purpose is to add the positive attributes of tubes to digital sources and transistor amplifiers but „without the bandwidth limitation, residual noise and added distortion that many associate with tube electronics.“ The Analog Bridge is an



*But the Analog Bridge makes an excellent impression not only from the inside. This is a device for serious sound improvement – with tubes*





*That the Analog Bridge is anything but a gimmick can be seen at first glance from the tasty innards*

analog tube-based device that Wright says is designed to cushion the unpleasant harshness that some transistor and many digital devices (especially DACs) are said to exhibit.

### How does the Analog Bridge work?

The Analog Bridge gives the listener three variables to influence the sound and tonality of his overall system. They can choose between the 6922 and 6SN7 tube families and their different sound characteristics. Other variants of these tubes give the user further adjustment options. They can do the same with the GZ34 rectifier tube and its variants, as well as the combination of everything. Dan Wright is very keen to point out that the Analog Bridge, as an additional circuit, does not add unwanted noise or distortion to the overall signal, nor

does it clip the frequency response. In addition, it has a very high input impedance and a very low output impedance, so it should enhance the overall sound, not detract from it.

### Tube character

The 6SN7 and the 6922 belong to very different families of tubes, each with its particular sound and working conditions. The 6SN7 has a characteristically fat tone, whereas the 6922 has a more transparent, perhaps subtler nature. Thus, in different system configurations, one can tweak the overall sound and even, in a sense, optimize different styles of music. Wright employs separate, parallel circuits for each tube, though the basic circuitry is identical. Finally, and this turned out to be tricky during his design, you can select between 6922 and 6SN7 during operation and do

## Teammates

### Turntable:

- [Transrotor Massimo Nero](#)

### Tonearm:

- [Transrotor Studio 12](#)

### Cartridge:

- [Transrotor Figaro](#)

### Integrated amplifier:

- [Accuphase E-5000](#)

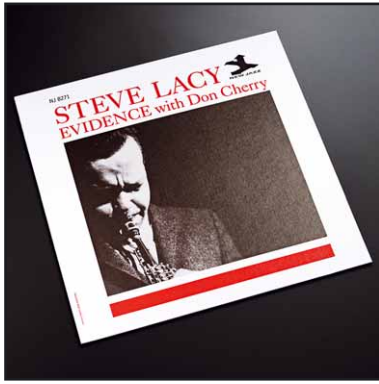
### Phono preamplifier:

- [Musical Fidelity NuVista 800](#)

### CD player:

- [Accuphase DP-570](#)

Andrew Bird – Noble Beast



What we played

**Andrew Bird**  
Noble Beast

**Hampton Hawes**  
All Night Sessions Vol. 2

**Steve Lacy with Don Cherry**  
Evidence

**ZZ Top**  
Fandango



*Ample connection variety. Two unbalanced and alternatively one balanced device can be looped in.*



*Would you guess at a glance what you are looking at here? We believe not. The sonic gain is anything but marginal*

so without any pops or hum, for which he implemented a mute circuit. Attention: The toggle switch for choosing the tubes has a center position that initially made me think the 6SN7 couldn't be switched.

### Tubes are rolling

After Dan Wright defined tube swapping as an essential part of the Analog Bridge and Michael Hannig from Ibex Audio also





*On the left, one of the two 6SN7 and, in front of it, the E88CC. Both are double triodes, and the latter is a tension grid tube. You can hear the difference clearly*

pointed out the great possibilities that can arise, I decided to try it. I have plenty of excellent tubes, but you can get bogged down forever in combinatorics without reaching your goal. Let me put it this way: a pair of Telefunken or Valvo E88CC or green Sylvania 6SN7 will give you a significant sonic boost over the off-the-shelf stuff. And if you had a Mullard 5AR4 rectifier, you would not want to take it out again.

### Practice

The Analog Bridge can be looped in between a source device and a preamplifier, a preamplifier and an amplifier, a source device and an integrated amplifier (if volume control is available), and then provides impedance balancing between the devices,

according to Dan Wright. Two separate systems can be connected, for example, a digital and an analog branch. The XLR connection option is balanced in input and output with four Lundahl transformers. The expense is significant. The overall gain of the system remains untouched. I looped the Analog Bridge between the phono stage and our Accuphase integrated amplifier, as well as between the Accuphase CD player and the integrated amplifier. The results were clear and easy to follow.

### Sound improvement

It's not that the Accuphase devices need any sound improvement; quite the contrary. And yet, something happens as soon as the analog bridge is allowed to play along,

regardless of where it does so. Perhaps the effect is more pronounced in the digital branch, but that's almost academic. So what happens exactly? The music becomes more comprehensible, and structures clarify themselves in an organic, unobtrusive way. This is not an increase in resolution per se, but something I have experienced with different Leica cameras: The images take on depth, dimensionality, and colorfulness that they do not achieve with other cameras. In terms of music reproduction, for example, Andrew Bird's „Not a Robot,

but a Ghost“ increases pressure and bass, and there is a seductive sheen that makes Bird's voice seem more present and personal. The Analog Bridge takes me closer to the music. Oh well, the 6SN7 option sounded a bit darker and slower in my setup, the 6922 fresher and snappier. Both options have charms and can turn around with other tubes and in different system configurations.

*Christian Bayer*

*Well-reputed Lundahl  
input transformers for  
balancing the  
XLR signal*

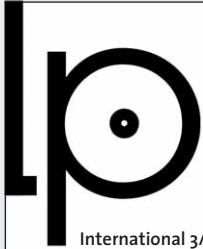




## ModWright Analog Bridge



- Price: EUR 3,999 (unbalanced)  
EUR 4,990 (balanced)
- Distribution: Ibex Audio
- Phone: +46 (0)7321 / 25490
- Internet: [www.ibex.audio.eu](http://www.ibex.audio.eu)
- Warranty: 2 years  
(5 years for registered first owners)  
6 months on tubes
- W x H x D: 267 x 89 x 268mm
- Weight: 8.2 kg



ModWright  
Analog Bridge

International 3/23

» You can also live without it. But with the ModWright Analog Bridge, the audiophile life becomes more beautiful – significantly more beautiful.