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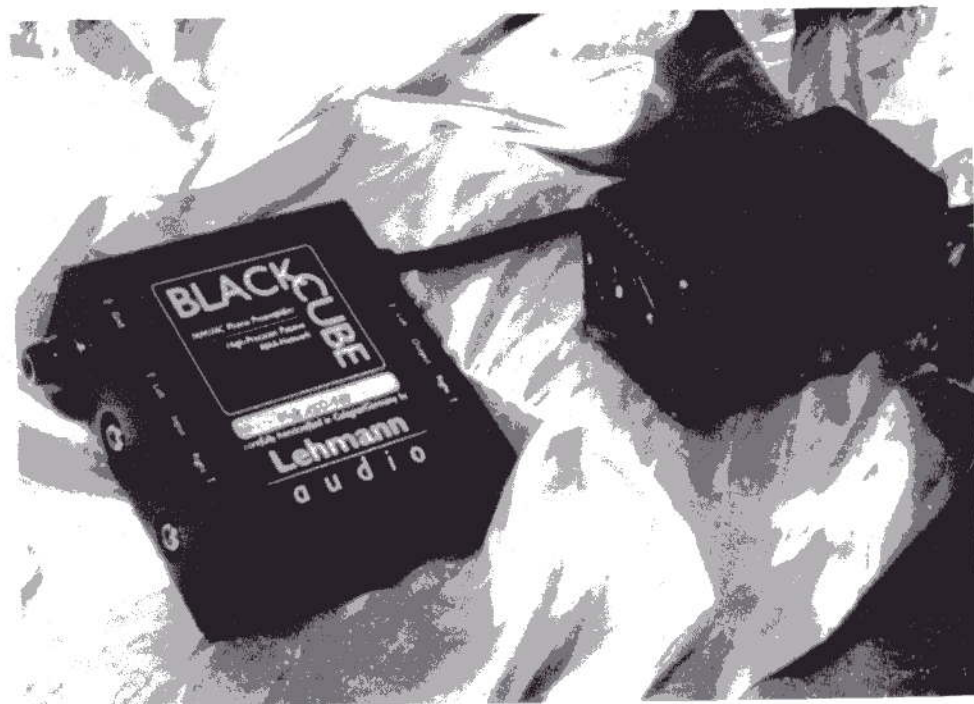
shhh, LISTEN

"... You Won't Believe Your Ears."

M. Fremer, Stereophile Vol.21 No.10

the **Black Cube**

All Phono Stage Problems Solved!



Look what's inside this little box for \$695 . . .







Lehmann
a u d i o

The Black Cube uses double-sided Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs) in the power supply section as well as in the audio section. Though the cost of double-sided PCBs is nearly twice that of single-sided boards, the contact between parts and solder is by far superior to single-sided PCBs. As a result, trace layouts and parts placement are optimized.

In a phono preamplifier, the two channels' corner frequencies must be as identical as possible to avoid frequency dependant panorama shifting. If this is not realized the result will be an unstable sonic image. Generally, cartridges have very low output, so amplification must be dead quiet! Only uncritical DC voltage is fed into the audio section of the Black Cube. Technical data aside, high-quality filters are a high priority since all filters in any signal chain are responsible for overall sonic performance. And, multi-stage filtering, in combination with the noise free precision dual voltage regulator and the fast diodes, is responsible for much of the Cube's superior acoustic performance. The Black Cube combines functionality and reliability of studio equipment with superior sonic behavior inherent in high-end audio equipment.

The Cube's external power supply (connected by a shielded, one meter cable) eliminates RFI and AC problems that can occur with a built in power supply. As a result, output from the Black Cube's power supply section is noiseless.

Input configurations

Cartridge	1	2	3	4	View
MM/47 kOhm	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF	
MC/47 kOhm	On	OFF	OFF	OFF	
MC/470 Ohm	On	On	OFF	OFF	
MC/100 Ohm	On	OFF	OFF	On	
MC/80 Ohm	On	On	OFF	On	
MC/***	On	OFF	On	OFF	

*** = Custom load

Here common input configurations are shown. The row entitled "view" shows the positions of the dip switches graphically. Both switches have to be set identically. The place for the custom input load can be filled with any available resistor. This makes the variety of input configurations very large without needing any external impedance plugs. The default factory setting of the input stages is MM/47kOhm.

Input Sensitivity	MM	MC
For an output level of 250mV/-10dBu	2,2mv/1kHz	0,21mV/1kHz
Gain 1kHz	40dB	61dB
Max. input level 1kHz	63mV	5,8mV
S/N-Ratio unweighted ref. to 0dBu	77dB	69dB

Inter-channel gain mismatch	typically 0,5dB
Channel separation 10kHz	>85dB
Input impedance settings	47kΩ / 470 Ω / 100Ω
	selectable on board via dip switch. One setting for custom impedance.
Input capacity	220pF
Output impedance	<100 Ω
recommended impedance following stage	>10k Ω
dimensions	w x h x d (chassis) 114mm x 44mm x 108mm

Please Read This!

(What You Should Know When Buying The Black Cube)

- ◆ The Black Cube, as with all high quality audio gear, needs a break-in period before it really begins to reward you with optimum performance and sound. You'll notice improvements after one day, more the second, with gradual improvements the days following. After about ten days, the Cube will reach about 90% of its capability as it subtly keeps improving.
- ◆ Feel free to fool with the internal loading switches to audibly adjust them to your kind of sound. Don't simply take the cartridge manufacturer's word for which impedance to use, unless you like a soprano to sound like a contralto or basso.
- ◆ Leave the Cube turned on! Aside from trying to maintain its low price, another reason it doesn't have an on/off switch is so you *will* leave it on.
- ◆ The Black Cube *benefits greatly* from a high quality power cord. A well chosen power cord may be expensive, but a sizeable improvement at the "source" level is also sizeably important.
- ◆ You'll be happy to know that we have distributed hundreds of Cubes in the USA and Canada with only two returns (one from a customer who owned a JVC receiver).
- ◆ In spite of so many e-mails, faxes, and letters singing the praises of this awesome little unit, I am convinced that most people who own the Black Cube don't really yet know how good it is. Many comments go something like this: I love my little Black Cube . . . it sounds wonderful, but someday I'll step up to an E.A.R. or something in the \$2,000 range. Unfortunately these appreciated comments miss the point, since they underscore the Cube's biggest drawback – IT'S TOO CHEAP! And, try as I may, I have a hard time getting folks, users and dealers alike, to grasp the fact that the Black Cube needs to be compared to \$2,500 to \$4,000 units. *That's how good it is!* So listen to what the reviewers and customers are saying. Hear the Black Cube for yourself. Our thinking is . . . you're in for a surprise.

Happy listening,

lea

Recommended Audio Accessories:

- 1.) Spend \$12 for a couple #1 Vibropods. The added isolation to your audio components is worth the price tenfold.
- 2.) Try 3M Visco elastic dampening sheets recommended for tighter image focus and dynamic contrast in most equipment. Optional 2 1/4" x 3" sheet. User installation \$18. Dealer installation \$38.

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Input mains voltage:	see label at the bottom of the unit	
Output voltage:	app. +/- 14V	
Max. power consumption:	30VA	
Pin assignment XLR:	-14V	Pin1
	Gnd.	Pin2
	+14V	Pin4

IMPORTANT NOTE:

THE MODIFICATION HAS TO BE PERFORMED ONLY BY TECHNICALLY TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED PEOPLE AT YOUR DEALER OR AT THE DISTRIBUTOR.

Steps of modification:

1. Disconnect the Black Cube from mains voltage and pull out the IEC plug from the power supply.
2. Cut of the standard power supply near the power supply.
3. Unscrew the top cover of the Black Cube and have a look at the power supply cable that is soldered to the pcb (printed circuit board). Prepare the loose end of the cable in the same way taking care of the colors of the cables. Newer units have two cables per pole.
4. Solder the 4pin XLR male connector to the loose end of the cable according to the pin assignment above.
5. Take care that the settings of the dip switches have not changed while handling the unit.
6. Fix the top cover of the Black Cube.
7. Connect the Black Cube first to the PWX power supply and **after this** your AC power cord to the mains outlet and the PWX power supply. You should be able to operate the Black Cube again immediately.

The fuse is placed in the IEC receptable. In case of replacement take same type:
120V AC: 630mA slow (or T)
240V AC: 315mA slow (or T)

Here's a scan of the instructions that came with mine.

Follow Ups:

A PEAK AT REVIEWERS' VIEWS

"I know of no other phono preamp remotely close to the Cube's asking price that can better or even rival its performance, period!"
F. J. Alles, Audiophile Voice: Vol 5, No. 3

"This \$695 MM/MC [phono stage] need not apologize for itself in any way at any price - that's how good it is."
M. Fremer, Stereophile: Vol. 21, No. 10

"I started scratching my head looking at this small black box delivering the goods like a four-figure tube or solid-state unit. Something magical was happening . . ."
S. Rochlin, Soundstage: Dec. 1997

"It [the Black Cube] . . . would not be embarrassed by other phono stages costing three times the price. You should definitely contact the HyEnd Audio folks who import this gem."
J. B. Hollow, Audiophile Voice: Vol. 4, No. 3

GRATIFIED CUSTOMERS GET THEIR SAY

"Will I be looking for a class A rated Stereophile phono stage? Not now . . ." *H. N.*

"Earlier when the Black Cube was breaking, I was saying, 'Yes, this solid state.' This all seems irrelevant to me now . . . the Cube rules."
Sincerely, M. L.

"Huge soundstage, very impressive dynamics, excellent bass and sweet treble. Who could ask for more?"
Regards, B. N.

"You asked me to tell you my opinion of the Cube. Well, you're not getting it [the Cube] back, that's for certain . . . I'm a satisfied customer."
J. D. V.

CUBE DEALERS (June 1999)

California

AUDIO MAX Laguna Niguel, CA Tel: 949-363-6894
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MIRAMAR EXCHANGE San Diego, CA Tel: 619 695 7218
SAN FRANCISCO STEREO San Francisco, CA Tel: 415 861 1044
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