

Rave Reviews

I've been sitting here at my computer now for over an hour without typing a word. I am showing signs of terminal writer's block, but I wish I were so lucky. I'm just speechless. The Cinénova Grande amplifier from Earthquake Sound Corporation is the reason why. Several weeks ago a massive wooden crate, stamped HEAVY several times, arrived at our sound lab in Woodland Hills. I had seen



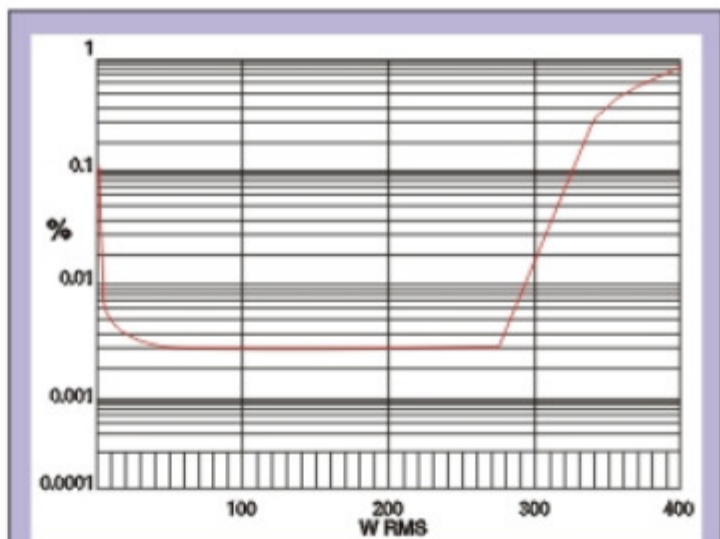
crates like this during my stint in the military—they usually contained Patriot missile warheads. We gathered around it like cavemen observing fire, poking at it with questions of what it might be. Finally, I worked up the nerve to open it up. Inside was the Earthquake Cinénova Grande 5-channel power amplifier. I had been hearing rumors about this amp for quite some time and was anxious to give it a listen. Something that has always gotten my goat when it comes to manufacturers is when their measurements stray so far from what we actually measure in the lab. When I read the specs for the Earthquake Cinénova Grande I shook my head in disappointment. Earthquake Sound lists the specifications of the Cinénova Grande as follows; 300-watts x 5 @ 8-ohms with no more than 0.003% Total Harmonic Distortion (THD), 600-watts x 5 @

4-ohms with no more than 0.006% THD, and a whopping 1000-watts x 5 @ 2-ohms with no more than 0.006% THD. When I read through the rest of the specifications I was just as shocked. Not that specs this good are impossible, but more like they are unheard of in the realm of home theater and certainly at a price point of no more than \$4,000 US dollars. Typically we listen to gear before we measure it. With the Cinénova Grande however, we couldn't wait to dissect it first. Opening up the top cover of the Cinénova Grande several things are noticeable right away; One, the Cinénova is a true monaural design with five discrete blocks, each with its own power supply and a 15 ampere capability, Two, it's not made in a sweatshop overseas and Three, it is built to last. Under the top cover I swore I saw hair on this amplifiers chest and under the chassis, I swore I saw a set of balls. Each of the five discrete "EZXS" amplifier boards in the Cinénova Grande can be removed and replaced in minutes without the entire disassembly of the amplifier. This may never be of use to anyone using it solely for home theater, but certainly is beneficial to anyone using it for professional applications. Keep in mind, the Cinenova earns the "Grande" in its title by weighing a hefty 125-pounds. Each of the five monaural blocks also features a built-in low pass/high pass variable filter with a range of 20 Hz to 5 kHz. A 3-way switch controls the operation of the filter between full range, high pass or low pass modes. There are binding posts for speaker connectivity, RCA inputs on each board and a parallel port, which houses all five RCA inputs. Many view this as the port of choice for the future.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Unmatched output
- Exceptional Sound Quality
- Unbelievable performance for the price
- The Cinénova Grande measures 9.25" x 18" x 21" (height x width x depth).
- The front plate features a rather clean, simplistic design with five small LED's
- labeled according to the channels that are active.

- A. This behemoth weighs 125 pounds and has a clean, simple front panel.
- B. On back, there are binding posts, RCA inputs, and a parallel port.
- C. The Cinénova Grande is a true monaural design with five discrete blocks, each with its own power supply.



HT Labs Measures: Earthquake CineNova Grande Amp
The Above measurement show that the Grande's left amplifier channel, with two channels driving 8-ohm loads, began clipping at 0.0037% distortion and 245.3 watts. The amp reaches 0.1% distortion at 294.4 watts and 1% distortion at 328.9 watts, as shown above. Into 4 ohms, the amp began clipping at 0.0082% distortion and 478.6 watts and reaches 0.1% distortion at 604.4 watts and 1% distortion at 661.1 watts. The amplifier's frequency response was +0.06/-0.19 decibels from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. The response rose to +0.1 dB at 10 Hz and to -0.78 dB at 50 kHz. THD+N from the amplifier was less than 0.013% at 1 kHz, with 2.8 volts output. - CW

There are also two large handles on the front, which in my opinion aren't nearly large enough for the amount of hands that should be on this amp when it's moved.

Once we had the Earthquake Cinénova Grande amplifier on the bench we were even more astounded. We were reading the same measurements earthquake had listed. Take a look at the chart for yourself and observe, the harder we pushed the amp, the less the distortion!

Moving right along it was time for the listening evaluation. I began as I do with all my audio reviews-music first.

I inserted my Trisha Yearwood "Songbook" CD. Track 2 of the disc (The song Remembers When) is one of the most revealing tracks ever recorded. Within the first 13 seconds of the song, there are several very subtle details only the best amps; preamps and speakers can uncover-the Cinénova Grande unveiled them all. The soundstage was enormous, wide and equally transparent. At times, I thought I could feel the breath of Trisha coming out of my Mirage HDT speakers. After hours of listening enjoyment, I retired the Cinénova and gathered my notes. Day two meant theater performance review.

I gathered up all my favorite DVD's and prepared my system for a workout with the Cinénova. I first dropped in Armageddon and listened intently. My Mirage HDT's beats as though they had undergone a triple bypass-I have never heard them sound so good. DVD after DVD, scene after scene, the Cinénova Grande ripped through complex material effortlessly and with absolutely zero sign of fatigue.All the while I kept seeing that \$4,000 price tag. My Mirage speakers love

power. I decided to push the envelope a little further and drove the volume even higher. Watching the helicopter crash scene on The Matrix DVD, I was certain I would hear some signs of clipping or fatigue but the amp waded through with seemingly little effort. If I pushed it harder, I would surely impair my hearing. An amplifier like the Earthquake Cinénova Grande is the kind of component that other manufacturers fear, neighbors dread and men lust after. Every one of us has that friend, spouse or relative who does not understand our hobby-the fact that we go out and spend the money we do on our A/V systems. At one point or another that was each one of us. Remember the first time your heard something sound so right, so wonderful, so magnificent that it made you appreciate music in an entirely different light? Staring at this gentle giant I wondered how many lives it would have that sort of impact on.

Just when I thought I had heard it all, the Earthquake Cinénova Grande came along, picked me up, cleaned out my ears and begged for a listen-this amp brings new meaning to the phrase "gentle giant." The only drawback I can foresee to buying this amplifier is perhaps having to cut the roof off your house and rent a crane to lower it into your theater.

