

## Review of Leben CS-660P in Diapason magazine France – November 2007



The brand Leben favours musicality. It is part of a specific Japanese school where we find famous names like Shindo, Koetsu or Air Tight who bring the reproduction of music to a grand art.

These products are designed without any compromises and tested and re-tested after long hours of listening. The very beautiful integrated amplifier CS-300 has also obtained a Diapason Gold Medal in 2006 for its exceptional expressivity, its tone and fluidity also being of the first order. Its power restricted to 12 wpc reserves it for loudspeakers of high sensitivity around 95dB.

More orthodox, the CS-660P is much more generous, a power which in no case alters its qualities. The emotional dimension of the music, that precious heart, makes an impressive. But be careful the set up is delicate and the loudspeaker compatibility important. So we choose, if possible, loudspeakers of the same philosophy, the Prestige Tannoy Kensington or Mini Autograph for example seem very suitable, they also have a matching 'retro' look.

The CS-660P is compatible with many different tubes which each offer their own particular sound like – EL34, KT66, KT88, 6L6WGB, 6L6GC...

An impedance selector (4, 6, 8 or 16 ohms) permits the best marriage with the loudspeaker.

We know that this amplifier gives the music an intelligibility that is impossible to obtain with transistor amplifiers and even with many tube amplifiers. The soul of the music seems miraculously preserved with fluidity, a texture only found at a live concert. Massed strings possess a strange truthfulness, the connection between elements from double bass to violins acquire a particular expressivity. All of the other instruments, whether they be woodwind, brass, or percussion are in some way real, produced in superb fashion. All of this with a richness in the midrange which is exceptional, always natural in the spirit of the best tube amplifiers of the 1950's or 60's.

Dynamics are another great strength of this amplifier; the rhythms possess a vitality and energy of a live performance and generate a troubling enthusiasm.

The overall expression is excellent.

A product to capture the heart, different from the others without doubt, but very worthy.

**Thierry Soveaux – Editor HI-FI section –Diapason magazine, France.**