



[Hoyt White Paper](#)

VU Meters in High-End Sound Systems

Analog is making a comeback in the music industry. Some aficionados are [buying vinyl records again](#), for the more natural sound they offer. Plus, some manufacturers are even returning to an old standby to measure the signal level of music in high-end sound systems: the analog VU meter.

[VU \(volume unit\) meters](#) have become the universal standard level indicator for practically all audio-frequency transmission systems. VU meters are employed for the measurement of sound or noise levels (including broadcast monitoring, use with public address or communication systems, and in all instances where volume level measurements are to be made). They are also used for the measurement of noise level and other audio-frequency energy where established dynamic characteristics of an instrument give a common result for measurements taken in different laboratories. (Strictly speaking, VU meters actually do not measure absolute loudness but rather enable users to adjust a signal around a nominal target setting that is defined as 0 dB.)

More importantly, though, for audiophiles is the fact that they just look so darn cool. Recently, Yamaha brought back the VU meter look for its high-end [A-S3000 integrated amp and A-S3000 CD/SACD player](#). In a (glowing) product review, Digital Trends said of the A-S3000 that: “Front and center – right where you’d expect to see glowing blue LEDs showing input names, surround decoding modes, and volume digits – we find two large, analog VU meters.”

“As with fashion . . . everything old will one day become new again,” the reviewer noted.

Yamaha is not alone in finding the look of the VU meter irresistible in its audio equipment. Audio Research Corp. (ARC) has also gone “throwback” with its up-market [Reference 75 amplifier](#). “The Ref 75 also sports a pair of VU meters, which give the amp a bit of the vibe of ARC’s classic D79 amplifier, from the 1970s,” a review in Stereophile observed. “These double as adjustment meters for biasing each of the four tubes individually.”

We’re glad to see that the trusty VU meter has become so popular again with a new generation of audio enthusiasts. We’ve trusted them all along. If you find that your product could use a VU meter, be sure to contact us about supplying the most accurate meters on the market (we even make a line of Retro Series VU meters). For those who just must have that authentic old-school look and exceptional high-quality that only a [“true VU” meter](#) can offer, Hoyt should be your supplier of choice.