

ELECTRONIC HOUSE

FAST TRACK TO THE CONNECTED LIFESTYLE

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Want a dedicated home theater, but you only have a small space? No problem. Photo courtesy of Acoustic Smart



REVIEW

Stereo Tuner

Magnum Dynalab MD-106T



WHY YOU WANT THIS

Sometimes you have to go back to move ahead—and if FM stereo is your thing, there's no "sweeter" sound than an old-fashioned tube-based FM tuner, especially when combined with cutting-edge electronics.

Most people think that tube-based electronics are trash-can material. But tubes can offer a much "sweeter" sound, as we found out years ago when we traded in a tube-based electric guitar amp for one with nothing but circuits. Some of you may have had similar experiences, and maybe that's why so many long for high-tech audio equipment that can recapture that "analog" sound quality of the past.

This is what Magnum Dynalab aims to do for FM with its hybrid-design MD-106T stereo tuner.

Installation Issues

Hooking the tuner up to an external antenna seems a logical way to proceed, but being in Manhattan limits us to a portable one, which we attached to one of the two F-connector inputs. Outputs consist of XLR (balanced) or RCA (unbalanced).

Performance/Features

All of the elements that can affect the "sound" have been taken care of, from a grounding circuit, to zero feedback design, to power-supply shielding.

This is a real man's tuner, with a look that screams "rack-mount me." It's fairly massive in size (but moderately lightweight and running quite cool), with large ratcheted knobs for switching between antenna inputs and finding channels. This is accompanied by two brightly lit meter windows with dancing needles: one displaying multipath (the less show-

ing the better), and the other indicating signal strength. Toggle switches handle Power, Mute (tunes out weak signals), Stereo-to-Mono, as well as a toggle for whether there is/isn't adjacent-channel interference. A yellow LED dead center shows the channel number, and above it is the green "magic eye" that provides a visual cue by opening/closing its iris as you lock onto the channel.

We left the tuner on for two days for "burn-in," and then it was time to search for a signal. Once a good one was locked in, we pushed our receiver and speakers just to the edge of their 110-watt limit, to find out just how much distortion we could hear from the FM. Good luck with that happening; everything came through with power and intensity. The optional remote would have been a convenience, but that has nothing to do with the tuner's outstanding sound quality.

The Last Word

We could really get used to FM radio with this tuner being part of the equation. The MD-106T provides a gorgeous sound and is worth every penny—although the cost is a sizable investment. **EH**

Info: Magnum Dynalab, \$3,995
800-551-4130, www.magnumdynalab.com

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THE SCORE

■■■■ Install	■■■■ Ease of Use
■■■■ Expandability	■■■■ Overall Value
4 → broke the mold	3 → playing with the big boys
2 → not such a bad buy	1 → just plain sad