

# Bellari VP549 Phonograph Preamplifier with RIAA EQ

The Bellari VP549 phono pre has excellent true sound resolution. It's tone center is right in the middle of the music. It performs very well on the extremes, and never loses its solid performance in the meat of the music. Has a well rounded sound when needed, but has a very surprising shimmer when called on. The VP549 is bold, yet has a very surprising attack that will take your rig to the next level. Hundreds of hours went in to listening and improving the design. All Bellari products are hand built in Salt Lake City, Utah by people who care about high quality music. No surface mount parts are ever used at Bellari.

**Connecting the VP549:** You have an input for the VP549 that connects to your phonograph, and the output of the VP549 plugs into your preamp or amplifier. The ground post is where things can get complicated. Ground hums have always plagued the turntable. We recommend using the ground post to connect to your turntable's ground connection. In our experience we have never seen a situation where not using the ground would sound better than using it.

Ground loops are a very common occurrence with audio. The more equipment you use, the higher likelihood you will have a ground loop. The term "loop" refers to your ground generating unwanted noise from traveling back and forth in a loop. The turntable is usually the most likely component to have a ground issue. Another thing you can try if you have a ground loop is connecting the turntable ground to the RCA jack's ground if the ground post is not remedying the issue. One thing to keep in mind is that ground loops can be anywhere in a system so try and isolate the components that are the issue before you spend a lot of time looking at just one component.

**Rumble filter:** AKA "subsonic filter" cuts very low frequencies (below 20 Hz). The purpose of a filter like this is to get rid of annoying frequencies that disrupt the turntable's sound quality. A good rumble/subsonic filter should be inaudible, meaning you can not hear when it is on or off in the program material you are listening to. What it will do is help with excessive very low frequency interruptions from the turntable to the preamp.

**Cartridge load capacitance:** The VP549 has three settings: 120 pF, 220 pF and 330 pF. Set the switch in the position you feel sounds best to you. The difference might be very slight, but it is there. Most cartridges come with a capacitance load recommendation in the spec sheet for the cartridge. For example the Ortofon 2M series asks for a loading of 150pF to 300pF. Most Audio Technica cartridges state 100pF to 200pF for loading. The VP549 has been tested with multiple turntables and multiple cartridges. We have found it best to use your ears to set the loading. You can set the loading switch to any setting 120, 220 or 330 with any MM cartridge and no damage will be done to the VP549 or your cartridge. If you can not hear a difference we would suggest that you do as the cartridge manufacturer suggests, and set the loading switch to their recommendation for the cartridge you are using.

**Trim - Gain:** Control to attenuate the signal level up or down. It is not a volume control, meaning that signal will still be present even when the level is turned to the lowest point (in this case -10dB as labeled). If at half way up you are at 0 dB output level then all the way up you will have +4dB more gain, and all the way down you will be at -10dB down from a reference of the middle 0 dB.

Most users will be best served to set the control at the middle or 0 setting to get the best outcome. This is not always the case. In some situations you might need more gain, like when using a quiet record or a very low level cartridge. In the opposite situation you might need less gain from a hot or loud record, or if you have a high output cartridge. The newer cartridges made tend to have a higher output level than in the past. For instance, the popular Ortofon 2M series of carts have a 6mV output. This is much hotter than carts of old, as they were around 4mV to 5mV. When using a 6mV cart you might need to turn the trim gain control to just below the half or 0 setting. Many factors go into setting the proper level, but we recommend start at the middle, 0 setting.