

# High-gain Audio Voltage Amplifier

by D. Leblebici\*

One of the commonly used feedback amplifier circuits is the 'feedback pair', where feedback is applied from the collector of the second transistor to the emitter of the first transistor (Fig. 1(a), ref. 1).

The feedback circuit described here is a modified form of the conventional feedback pair (Fig. 1(b)). Feedback is the series voltage type applied from the emitter of  $Tr_3$  to the emitter of  $Tr_1$ . The circuit has some advantages as compared to the conventional feedback pair:

- The output as well as the input terminals of the circuit are outside the feedback loop and consequently the amount of feedback is independent of the source and load impedances.

- The input and output signals are in phase opposition and as a consequence it is possible to apply a second feedback loop (parallel voltage feedback) from the collector of  $Tr_3$  to the base of  $Tr_1$ .

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<sup>1</sup>National Bureau of Standards, preferred circuit no. 201.

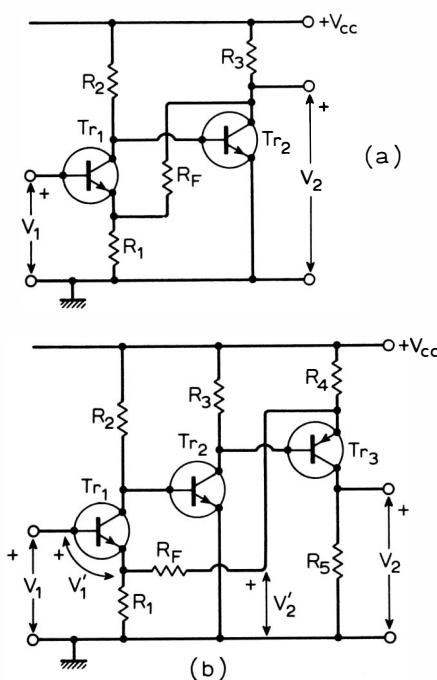


Fig. 1. Common form of feedback pair (a), and modified form (b). One advantage of the modified form is that feedback is independent of load impedance.

- The feedback voltage is taken from the emitter of  $Tr_3$ . The negative feedback acts to decrease the distortion of the voltage wave at that point. The relation between the output voltage  $V_2$  of the amplifier and the voltage  $V_2'$  fed back can be written as

$$\frac{V_2}{V_2'} \approx \frac{R_5 I_{e3}}{R_4 I_{e3}}$$

provided that  $R \gg R_4$ . For a high-gain transistor  $I_{e3}/I_{e3}$  is very close to unity. Hence

$$\frac{V_2}{V_2'} \approx \frac{R_5}{R_4}$$

This shows there is an additional and practically linear (low distortion) voltage gain of magnitude  $R_5/R_4$  from the emitter to the collector  $Tr_3$ .

As the voltage gain from the collector of  $Tr_2$  to the emitter of  $Tr_3$  is approximately equal to unity, the voltage gain from the input terminal to the emitter of  $Tr_3$  must be equal to the gain of a conventional feedback pair using the same transistors  $Tr_1$  and  $Tr_2$  and the same circuit components  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$  and  $R_F$ . As this gain is approximately equal to  $(R_F + R_1)/R_1$  (ref. 2), the total voltage gain becomes

$$A_v = \frac{V_2}{V_1} \approx \frac{R_F + R_1}{R_1} \cdot \frac{R_5}{R_4}$$

The only drawback of the circuit is its relatively high output resistance, which is approximately equal to  $R_5$ .

## Experimental circuit

The experimental circuit diagram is shown in Fig. 2. The stages are directly coupled. To stabilize the quiescent points a d.c. feedback across the first two transistors is used. A collector current of about  $200 \mu A$  is chosen for  $Tr_1$  this being the optimum collector current of transistor BC109 for minimum noise. The transistor operating points and component values have been calculated for a sufficiently high open-loop gain and as high a dynamic range as possible.

The calculated open loop gain  $V_2/V_1$  is 11600, a value that is sufficiently high. The additional gain provided by  $Tr_3$  is about 10.

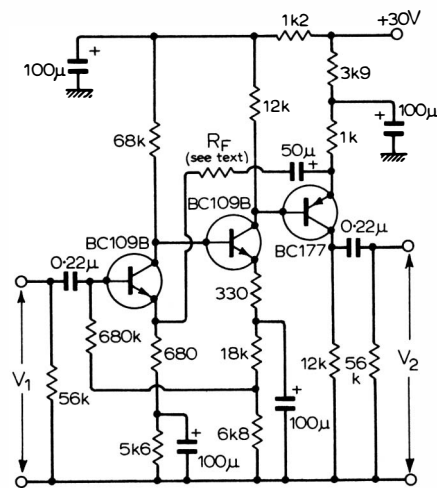


Fig. 2. Practical circuit of preamplifier with voltage gain of 100 for  $R_F = 5.6 \text{ k}\Omega$  or 1000 for  $R_F = 78 \text{ k}\Omega$ . Total harmonic distortion is 0.02% and 0.04% respectively.

The measured overall voltage gain for  $R_F = 5.6 \text{ k}\Omega$  was  $A_v = 100$  (calculated value:  $A_v = 92$ ) and the available maximum output swing was 18 V pk-pk (6.4 V r.m.s.). For an output voltage of 5 V r.m.s. the total measured harmonic distortion was 0.02%. For  $R_F = 78 \text{ k}\Omega$  the measured  $A_v$  was 1000 (calculated value:  $A_v = 1150$ ). The maximum output voltage was again 18 V pk-pk and the total harmonic distortion was 0.04% ( $V_2 = 5 \text{ V}$  r.m.s.). The measured lower and upper cut-off frequencies for both cases were 17 Hz and 200 kHz.

Consequently, the circuit is very convenient as a high-gain audio preamplifier. The possibility of applying a second, independent, parallel voltage feedback loop makes it possible to use the circuit as a low output impedance, moderate gain and high dynamic range booster amplifier. With frequency dependent feedback, it is also possible to use the circuit as a low distortion equalizer amplifier.

<sup>2</sup>Millmar & Holkias, 'Electronic devices and circuits', pp. 502, 3.