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OCTOBER 2014

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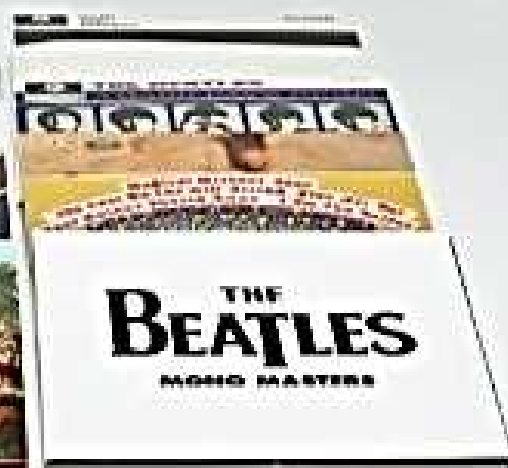


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THE BEATLES IN MONO LPS

CANOR CD 1:10 CD PLAYER

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Tony Bolton listens to the new Canor CD 1.10 valve equipped CD player and DAC.

DACs the way to do it!

There has been a lot written in the press, both hi-fi and mainstream recently, about the rapidly declining sales of CD and its imminent demise, so it is a brave manufacturer who bucks the trend and introduces a new CD player, especially one priced at £3,295.

Except this is not just another CD player. The Canor CD1.10 incorporates a DAC that is fed both by the onboard transport and by external digital devices, and since

it has a complement of valves at various points in the circuit, as you can imagine, it more than took my interest.

After unboxing it, the first impression is one of substance. This is a physically big player, measuring 435 x 170 x 370mm and weighing in at 15kg. There are two finish options. All black as in our review sample, or with a silver fascia that has a black stripe across the middle of it where the CD drawer and the control buttons lurk. As I would expect of a

product costing £3295, the finish was excellent and detailing, such as the fit of the CD drawer into the fascia, were first class. When the drawer was closed the shut-lines were nearly invisible, and when open, it proved to be a substantial affair with none of the flimsiness that so many drawers exhibit. It felt solid and moved smoothly.

On the opposite side of the fascia was a big dot matrix display that was big enough to be read at a glance from the far side of a

This has five brightness settings, and can be turned off altogether by either controls on the front or the alloy topped remote control. The underside of this was made of plastic, but it still felt solid, and the action of the buttons was positive.

A large knob in the middle of the fascia controls play, pause and track selection, with smaller buttons to the side of it offering search facilities within a track, repeat and filter selection. This latter control is the only one not accessible from the remote control. There are two options, "Dynamic" and "Natural". I generally preferred the latter setting for most music, although I did find the "Dynamic" filter added a little heft to the sound when using the external optical input from our Digibox to provide TV sound.

Inside, the valve complement includes a 6CA4-EH rectifier on the mains input, with two 6922 and a pair of 12AX7LPS in the output stage. The digital decoding is carried out by two Burr-Brown PCM1792 DAC chips which offer 24bit/192kHz performance.

Rear connections include co-axial and optical inputs and outputs, alongside a USB (2.0) input and both balanced and unbalanced analogue outputs, so most connection options are catered for.



The StreamUnlimited CD mechanism sends the signal to two Burr-Brown PCM1792 DAC chips

SOUND QUALITY

Having rearranged my shelves to take account of this machine's size I connected it up with the aforementioned Digibox and my MacBook Pro and proceeded to listen to a range of material from both internet and TV transmissions of the Proms as well as normal TV programmes.

In both cases I found the sound to be very good, offering a smooth and very detailed rendition of both music and speech. I felt that the tonal balance was slightly on the warmer side of neutral, but not in the cloying way that some less well thought out valve designs offer. This is very much a 21st Century take on how valves sound, with firm edges to the bass sound in particular that stopped deep notes bleeding into each other.

Mid range definition was excellent, with voices being projected slightly forward on a very substantial soundstage. Although

not hugely deep it was very convincing in scale and tonal colour, making the recent Proms transmission of Elgar's 2nd Symphony a suitably immersive experience.

The CD section also provided very engrossing sounds, whether dissecting the gentle harmonies of the Mamas and the Papas singing 'Safe In My Garden', or the more strident tones of Etta James informing me that "I just want to make love to you". The rasp in her voice, which paralleled the raw saxophone sound, was beautifully captured, and the rhythm had a thoroughly engaging swing to it that instantly got my feet moving – something that doesn't happen as often with digital sources as it does with analogue.

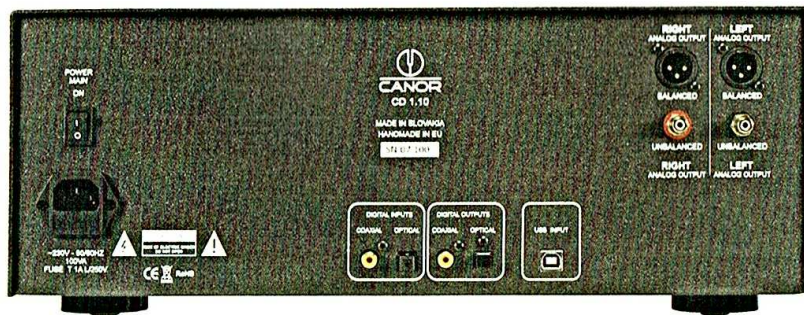
I won't go so far as to describe this as an analogue sounding player,



The alloy topped remote control will also operate any Canor amplifier. It operates over quite a wide arc and has a good range.



The 6CA4-EH valve (equivalent to an EZ81) acts as rectifier for the incoming mains.



The well populated but still spacious rear panel houses optical and co-axial input and output sockets as well as the USB input. A choice of balanced or RCA analogue outputs is provided. The mains IEC socket and power switch are on the left.

"this is a 21st Century take on how valves sound, with firm edges to the bass"

but neither is it a digital sounding one in the conventionally accepted sense. There is a smoothness and couthness to the sound that most digital sources will benefit from. Even dodgy YouTube sources sounded acceptable, while uncompressed digital sounds were rendered in such a way that

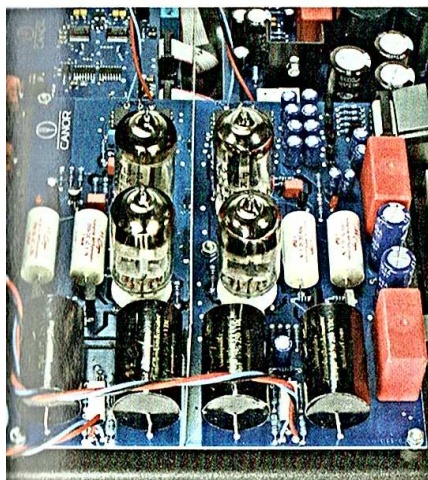
It is expensive, but the sound and presentation seem to justify the price and I can thoroughly recommend auditioning this product. I will be amazed if you are anything less than impressed with this combination of valves, good DAC chips and good connectivity.

MUSIC USED

BBC Proms 2014 transmissions.
Various Artists. 'Divas of Jazz'. Universal Classics and Jazz. 0394222. 2003.
The Mamas and the Papas. 'Creeque Alley'.
The History of the Mamas and the Papas.
MCA Records Inc. MCLDD 19124. 1991.

SYSTEM USED

MacBook Pro.
Digibox
Leema Acoustics Tucana II amplifier.
Chario Ursa Major loudspeakers.



The pair of Sovtek 12AX7LPS and the two 6922 valves act as the amplification for the analogue output stage.

they were thoroughly enjoyable and quite difficult to criticise.

Although CD sales are in decline, Canor have recognised that the format still has some life in it yet, but have also realised that external digital media need to be catered for. In doing so they seem to have attempted to future-proof this player and made a very good job of it.

CONCLUSION

The Canor CD1.10 is well made and finished, sounds lovely and can connect to most types of media.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

There was a large difference in dynamic range between the Phono socket (unbalanced) output of the CD 1.10 and the XLR balanced output, suggesting the latter passes through quieter solid-state circuits, because even the quietest valves like the ECC88 are noisier than modern transistors. A figure of 108dB EIAJ Dynamic Range (24bit) at the XLR

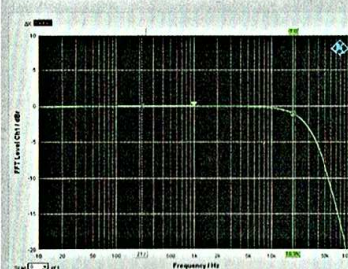
output socket was good, if unexceptional, whilst the 97dB value at the phono output (24bit) was on the low side, likely due to valve noise.

Frequency response rolled off slowly above 10kHz, measuring -1dB down at 19kHz, enough to ensure the player has no treble sting and is 'valve-like' in its sound balance. With CD the Natural filter best extended treble, whilst Dynamic rolled off highs (-1dB, 15kHz) smoothly. The filter had little affect upon the audio band above 48kHz sample rate.

Both the optical and electrical S/PDIF inputs accepted 192kHz sample rate digital, showing a good optical receiver has been used. Distortion with 24bit was low at 0.06% (XLR) at -60dB and 0.0008% at full level (0dB).

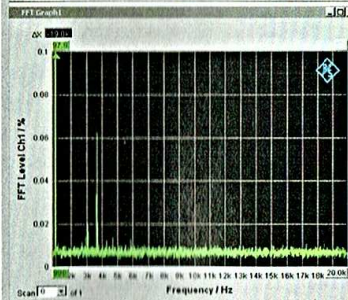
The Canor CD 1.10 measured well in all areas, although its valve phono output stage has a little noise, like all valve output stages, if not at a level that will be overtly audible. NK

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION

THD at	Level RMS	Frequency
CH1 0.0576 %	4.1632 mV	997.00 Hz
CH2 OFF	OFF	OFF



Frequency response (-1dB)

CD 6Hz - 19kHz

Distortion	CD
0dB	0.0008
-60dB	0.06
Separation (1kHz)	105dB
Noise (IEC A)	-107dB
Dynamic range	108dB
Output	XLR 4.2V / Phono 2V

CANOR CD 1.10 CD PLAYER £3,295



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

Superbly smooth sounding, valve driven CD player and DAC from respected Slovakian manufacturer

FOR

- big open sound
- tightly timed bass
- good vocal projection
- excellent connectivity

AGAINST

- nothing at the price

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