



REVIEW

MÉTRONOME – LE DAC 2

The combination of Le Player 3 and the first Le DAC, the 3+ models, had already proven itself with us in 2021, providing a perfect alternative for listening to our high-resolution audio files and our traditional CD collection.

Today, we are witnessing a complete renewal of the Classica range. The Métronome Le DAC 2 was designed for High-End enthusiasts looking to integrate a high-quality digital-to-analog converter (DAC) into their audio chain, complementing their equivalent-level digital sources.

The Le DAC 2 undoubtedly marks an additional step that reflects the company's commitment to meeting the needs of its customers and the current practices of audiophiles.

Why do we say this? Because in the meantime, a new category of devices, the

transport streamer, has gained popularity. We now feel that it is time to go with the flow.

For those who are unconditional fans of digital sources, a similarly 'unwavering' DAC has been designed. The brand continues the aesthetic of its already legendary devices.

Its lines are minimalist and elegant, appealing to those who appreciate a design that is decidedly bold and full of character.

It naturally incorporates the classic design features of Métronome, with its 10 mm thick solid aluminum front panel, its 2 mm 'armored' chassis, and its blue display

The menu, although limited, is easy to navigate thanks to excellent touch zones. The screen displaying light blue characters makes it easy to read, even from a distance, the selected input and the sampling frequency of the

incoming signals.

The brightness of the screen can be adjusted via the remote control or simply turned off.



The DAC 2 is equipped with three anti-resonance cones magnetically attached to its feet. These cones are made of Delrin.

The device is almost as deep as it is wide, and once placed on the cones, it becomes quite tall. If not placed on a shelf unit, its appearance is monumental.

Everything, from the electronics to the elegant touchpad, is entirely new. The



Métronome Technologie Le DAC 2 features a dual-mono architecture, with two toroidal transformers dedicated to the regulated power supply of six independent zones.

The power supply is equipped with EMI and RFI filters, eliminating any noise associated with switch-mode power supplies. The included remote control can manage a complete audio system from Métronome Technologie, including a CD player and amplifier. For the DAC, it allows turning the device on and off, selecting inputs, and adjusting the screen brightness.

The volume is fixed and non-adjustable, but the output level is higher than average.

The first Le DAC used an AK4493 conversion chip from



Asahi Kasei. Unfortunately, in October 2020, a devastating fire destroyed the Asahi Kasei factory, interrupting the supply of chips. When Métronome began running out of AK4493 chips, it had to rethink its new models from scratch.

Its successor, the Le DAC 2, uses the ES9028PRO chip manufactured by ESS Technology, requiring a complete redesign of the circuits. As a result, the Le DAC 2 is a completely different structure from its predecessors,

adopting a dual mono design from the outset.

The back of the device features five digital inputs, providing great flexibility for using various digital signal formats. If multiple digital sources are available, the future owner of the Le DAC 2 can even conduct some cable tests.

All inputs support PCM signals between 44.1 and 192 kHz, as well as DSD256-512. The connections include: S/PDIF RCA 75 Ohms, AES/EBU XLR 110 Ohms, Toslink optical, USB (44.1 to 384 kHz), and the increasingly common but still relatively rare I²S HDMI connector.



The addition of I²S is strategic, as Métronome is also developing a streamer equipped with an I²S output.

The ES9028PRO chip decodes all formats up to 32-bit/768 kHz on all inputs, supporting both PCM and DSD.

After the digital-to-analog signal processing, class A amplification in a dual-mono configuration is implemented.

The outputs provide a 3 V RMS signal (0 dB – 47 kOhms in RCA unbalanced) and 3 V RMS (0 dB – 600 Ohms in XLR balanced), fully usable by amplifiers.

With the uncertainties related to component supply, taking on the challenge of developing entirely new devices is a real test. We are pleased to offer new products to the enthusiasts of Métronome devices and to continue the classic story of Métronome." – Jean-Marie Clauzel, owner and

designer of Métronome Technologie.

About the I²S input:

I²S (Inter-IC Sound) is a standard serial interface used to connect digital audio devices. It is used for the communication of audio data between the electronic circuits of devices.

The I²S bus separates the clocks from the serial data signals, which allows for simpler signal transmission compared to asynchronous communication systems that need to restore the clock from the data stream.

I²S allows two channels to be sent over the same data line. In audio devices, I²S is used as a connection between two units, such as a CD player or a digital audio streaming device and an external digital-to-analog converter (DAC).

This interface serves as an alternative to commonly used standards such as AES/EBU, Toslink, or S/PDIF. (The HDMI connection is not mandatory here; other types of connectors can be used.)



The listening

Since the experts in the manufacturing team validate the performance of each device after several repeated critical listening sessions on different high-performance audio systems, we followed the same approach.

We immediately clarify that we have never encountered a digital audio converter of such performance, but let's not rush

things!

The first thing we noticed was that the musicians seemed to play with even more enthusiasm. Every sound is clear, pleasant, and open, and the Le DAC 2 from Métronome Technologie manages to extract an incredible vitality from each recording.

It's not a DAC with a bright sound, but a device that delivers a faithful and noise-free digital reality. It offers an unusual sound quality, remarkably close to analog smoothness, capable of conveying the full energy of each track played. It's not lacking in dynamics, while also delivering beautiful moments of lyrical beauty.

It wasn't just the major hits that were the heaviest and most tangible, but also classical music. From the first few minutes after powering on, we found ourselves searching for classical music recordings.

The sound of the symphony orchestra – even though the sounds produced by the instruments are close to one another – maintains the distinctive character of each instrument, while producing harmonics of striking pitch. Every incredibly atmospheric, mystical, and exotic element is offered with remarkable purity. The effect is both captivating and thrilling.

The lush richness of the strings, the vibrant energy of the brass section, are palpable. The large soundstage, the balance of timbres, the harmony between the deep, almost tangible bass, as well as the musicality and sense of presence swept us away within minutes.

We re-evaluated the significance of certain recordings we had

previously considered weak, as the Le DAC 2 allowed us to uncover details that other DACs had missed or presented with rough peaks in some places.

The Le DAC 2 from Métronome Technologie brings the fullness of a concert into every room.

A piano recording is an excellent test for a DAC's capabilities. We have a reference disc for listening



to piano sound – Piano Solos (Narada LotusND81031) – which features different pianos, including Steinway & Son Grand, Bösendorfer 225, Petrof, and Yamaha C7 models. It quickly becomes clear that the piano sound should not be too harsh or rough, nor should it be thin. Listening to a piano recording on this DAC is a real pleasure. The right-hand notes resonate brilliantly, not only correctly, but also the sound of the hammers hitting the strings is audible. The bass chords are filled with dense harmonics, energetic when necessary, resonating with all the power of the instrument as the piano makers intended. The sound of the pianos – obviously from the best recordings – is completely believable and moving.

In digital technology, the importance of electronic noise has increased. There must be silence – here, the silence is "black." It is possible to listen at high volume without any discomfort. It is from the wide signal-to-noise ratio that the ability to represent the

soundstage is nurtured, and it is expansive without being artificial. There is a sense of air between the instruments/sounds, contributing to a true perspective on the scale of each performance space. The fluid sound of the orchestra – and especially – is due to the fact that the Le DAC 2 operates with very low distortion. The Le DAC 2 recreates the size and ambiance of live concerts and other recording spaces, filling the space with music. As a result, the separation of channels is excellent.

Where music demands great delicacy, the DAC 2 captures its essence. Tiny details, like the movement of guitar strings and their "tension," or the way the music is presented, are more important than minute details, yet despite

this, the Le DAC 2 reproduces a wealth of information. The incredibly lifelike performance never loses its balance, never overwhelmed by vivid, sharp, or artificial details. The way it paints the "musical landscape" never feels unnecessarily adorned. The bass range is also filled with micro-details, and the key role of the mid-bass in shaping the sound palette is evident. It is clear that even the deepest sounds remain tight—everything is in its place—sometimes rumbling and vibrating in the chest when needed. The rhythm is defined by speed, and all rhythmic combinations are presented with clarity and exceptional dynamics. The key terms: timing and coherence, with ample detail. The amount of signal reaching the amplifier after the Le DAC 2, its finesse and musicality, are undeniable. Nothing dominates the presentation, yet it never sounds "flat." It's impossible to remain still when the sound is this fresh.

The DAC faithfully reproduces

the diversity of recording quality, without emphasizing the flaws in more modest recordings. That said, it is not monolithic! It is capable of rising above the already established mainstream, reaching ethereal heights, and somewhat reshuffling the list of priorities.

CONCLUSION

The leader of the French company Métronome Technologie is Jean-Marie Clauzel, an engineer who is responsible not only for the design of the devices but also for the manual assembly technology. He applies new technologies, thus allowing for the discovery of the future of high-end audio. The Le DAC 2 is simply a DAC, but there is no need to pay additional costs for a preamplifier, volume control, or network streamer; it is literally just a DAC. The Le DAC 2 is a component with a wonderful sound, very natural and organic in texture. It is detailed, captivating, impressive, and a little more coherent than other devices tested so far. The music seems more versatile and interesting than with many other converters. It reveals every resolution and detail, everything one desires, and most importantly, it truly connects us to the music. It is a real pleasure to use.

Advantages

- Double mono structure, with two toroidal transformers in the power supply
- ES9028PRO chip
- Class A amplification
- Light sound while being rich in details

Disadvantages

- The output level is not adjustable