



Hi-Fi Voice
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REVIEW

METRONOME – LE PLAYER 4+

Since 1987, Métronome (and even more so its ultimate and most luxurious version, Kalista) has focused on high-end products, including state-of-the-art D/A converters, as well as CD transports and players. Except for the chips, all components are sourced locally, within a relatively close range of Montans in southwest France, and assembly is entirely handcrafted by a small team.

The technical design has been handled, almost since the beginning, by the same engineer in collaboration with the company's owner, ensuring continuity and a strong identity for these devices for over 35 years.

Although Métronome is a small company with an almost family-like spirit, its development is far from slow—it introduces a new

product to the market nearly every year. Less than a year ago, you discovered the brand's entry-level CD player, Le Player 3+, and now here is an improved new generation, Le Player 4+,

which also comes with a noticeably higher price.

The "+" in the name indicates that the device is not just a disc transport but also includes a built-in D/A converter.

The transformation between generations is nonetheless significant. While the fundamental design remains the same—a relatively low and wide chassis with a clean, minimalist aesthetic resting on tall spikes—the most striking change is the repositioning of the display to the center, between the engraved logo and the device name. This evolution was made possible by a major modification: moving the mechanical tray from the front panel to the top, adopting a smoothly gliding sliding lid inspired by





Inside the 2 mm thick steel chassis lies technology derived from the brand's high-end models, with a level of sophistication that is even closer to these models than the previous generation.

This is

the high-end AQWO models. The mechanism, elegant, deep, and sturdy, holds the disc securely in place with a magnetic clamp. All controls are now grouped near the front edge and are touch-sensitive.

The rear panel adopts a more understated design (slightly contrasting with the more imposing visible parts, such as the 1 cm thick front panel), a characteristic typical of Métronome devices. It features analog RCA and XLR outputs, but what truly sets Le Player 4+ apart is its wide range of digital inputs, making it much more than just a CD player—it positions itself as a universal player. It includes optical, coaxial, and AES/EBU inputs, along with a USB Type-B port for computer connection and a USB Type-A port for playing audio files from an external drive. However, the most notable addition is the integration of an Ethernet port, providing a simple and efficient streaming solution. This significantly enhanced connectivity compared to previous generations partly justifies the price increase.

If you're looking for a digital output, it is not included as standard but can be added as an option for an additional cost. However, if your goal is to use the device solely as a transport, Métronome offers a version without the “+” in its name, specifically designed for this purpose.

reflected in the careful shielding of the mechanism and its mounting on three substantial isolators for optimal vibration control. The SUOS reading mechanism, designed by StreamUnlimited, is specially modified to meet Métronome's specific requirements.

One of the core principles of these French devices has always been an oversized power supply, and Le Player 4+ is no exception. It is equipped with three shielded toroidal transformers (for the mechanical, digital, and analog sections), independent regulation circuits, and Schaffner power filters to eliminate interference from the electrical grid. Not to mention the large array of filtering capacitors, which likely occupies about a quarter of the internal space (with half dedicated to the mechanism and its isolation and shielding).

Métronome does not officially disclose the chip model used in the latest generation, but the D/A converter is capable of reading PCM at 32 bits / 768 kHz and DSD512. However, some

clues suggest that it is likely the ES9026PRO chip.

It is also worth mentioning the physical dimensions of the device: with a width of 45 cm, a height of 11.5 cm, and a depth of 43.5 cm, it is a larger-than-average device. Its weight of 12 kg is also quite impressive for a CD player.

We listened to Le Player 4+ directly in the importer's showroom in Kopřivnice, where we had the opportunity to compare it with Le Player 3+ and Le DAC. The alternative streaming was done via the Métronome DSS. The connections were handled by Nordost Tyr 2 cables, amplification was provided by the Vitus RI-101 MKII, and the listening was done through AudioSolutions Figaro M speakers. Needless to say, various Nordost / QRT accessories were used, as well as streaming via SOtM cables and switches.

Charlie Haden's double bass in "The Song Is You" from the album with Lee Konitz and Brad Mehldau ("Alone Together (at Jazz Bakery)" | 1997 | Blue Note | 7423857150200) was remarkably richer, more imposing, and robust than in the previous generation. Each string seemed to have a bit more space to resonate, with better definition of its tension, vibrations, and resonance. The notes were clearly delineated, distinct from the other lower frequencies. Overall, the precision



was mature, allowing not only the weight of the instrument to be felt but also the difference between each string to be clearly perceived.

Le Player 4+ rendered Mahalia Jackson's powerful voice in "Silent Night, Holy Night" from the Christmas album "The Christmas Songs" (2002 | recorded in 1962 | Universe | UN11114) in a particularly pleasant way. Her voice was soft, warm, and full. Compared to the third version, there is a significantly more pronounced openness, and the gospel singing itself is much more detailed, nuanced, and three-dimensional, with much clearer separation from the instruments and the choir. You might also notice a slight lack of depth in the bass, which gives a

strikes even seeming more energetic. The notes appeared more direct and better defined, reflecting a more precise reproduction and a reduction in high-frequency harmonic distortion.

Le Player 4+ allowed for a better sense of the complex "Symphony No. 9 'From the New World'" by Dvořák, performed by the Berliner Philharmoniker under Rafael Kubelik ("9 Symphonien" | 1999 | recorded in 1972 | Deutsche Grammophon | 423 120-2). There is a more pronounced sense of distance and increased dynamic

reserve, allowing the orchestra to play in a more relaxed manner while retaining great power, although the player doesn't provide the same physical impact as the previous version.

However, this comes with a more precise and detailed sound

reproduction. Overall, the music feels more rigid, dramatic, and explosive.

The most significant intergenerational change lies

unquestionably in the improved resolution, greater precision, and more assured delivery with which the player renders the information from your recordings. Magdalena Kožená's mezzo-soprano in the aria from the oratorio "Abramo



ed Isacco" by Mysliveček ("Le Belle Immagini" | 2002 | Deutsche Grammophon | 471 334-2) had a natural tone and effortless clarity, offering a sense of greater plasticity compared to Le Player 3+. Despite a slightly more technical style of reproduction, the deeply musical, organic, warm, and tenderly colored sound that is characteristic of Métronome is still present, remaining its most distinct feature. Compared to its predecessor, the reproduction feels more open and much clearer, with tones defined more soberly and firmly, which particularly strengthens and clarifies the bass and midrange. This is not just an evolution, but a true leap upward in performance.

"El Condor Pasa" in the rendition by Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel ("Bridge Over Troubled Water" | 2014 | recorded in 1970 | HDTracks) benefited from that magnificent and vast space that Métronome renders so distinctly. However, compared to before, Le Player 4+ introduces greater firmness in managing the



slightly drier sound, but this is accompanied by a marked increase in sonic precision. Compared to the character of most players on the market, the reproduction remains remarkably rich.

The high frequencies, which were bright and ringing in "Malagan Stew" from Legrand ("Le Jazz Grand" | 2005 | recorded in 1979 | FiveFour | Fivefour1), were surprisingly less pronounced than in the previous version. However, they offered much better clarity. Some of the sharp penetration and high-end resonance were reduced, making way for a more defined texture and slightly longer reverberation, with the mallet



instrumental lines, with better definition and more precise placement in the space. The result is a stereophonic soundstage where orientation is even easier, and each dimension of the sound image becomes more tangible,

aspects, it transcends the mere concept of a generational upgrade to establish itself as a true step up in quality. Its sound reproduction gains in precision, richness of information, and tonal fidelity, while still maintaining the



exceptional musicality and expansive soundstage that distinguish Métronome from the competition.

Although it represents a significant investment, Le Player 4+ offers a top-tier alternative to the most exclusive players

making the overall presentation more three-dimensional and precise.

on the market, while remaining well below the ultra-high-end price range. If you're looking for a truly high-end CD player without crossing the half-million threshold, it undoubtedly deserves your attention.

The piano duo, both cool in tone yet warmly intimate in expression, Frozen Lake by Bob James and Keiko Matsui ("Altair & Vega" | 2001 | Tappan Zee | EOM-CD2125), unfolds with superb musicality. The notes flow with confidence and fluidity, creating an immersive soundscape in which it's easy to lose oneself, never inducing listener fatigue. Thanks to the truly high-end clarity of the new Le Player 4+, every resonance of this seemingly simple yet subtly intricate composition is fully appreciated. The experience becomes even more captivating as Métronome gradually shifts the focus away from sound analysis, bringing the attention back to what truly matters: the music.

Le Player 4+ represents a major evolution in Métronome's CD player lineup. While its design retains some key elements from the previous model, its technical and sonic approach places it in an entirely different category. More refined, better equipped, and significantly more performant in all essential

