



# MÉTRONOME DSC mini

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## REVIEW - September 2025 DSC mini

Métronome – and its even more ambitious sister brand Kalista – are now focusing their expertise on compact components from the Digital Sharing range. Among them: the DSAS server, the CD transport DST, and the digital transport DSS 2. At the heart of this ecosystem, DSC mini embodies all of Métronome's technology in a reduced format, without compromising on quality.

Despite its compact format, the craftsmanship of the Montans teams, behind the brand's entire portfolio, is immediately recognizable. The uniform chassis and front panel, made of thin vertical metal strips, are proof of this. Added to this are an integrated control for menu navigation and a small, subtly integrated display. Overall, the DSC mini faithfully evokes the DSC model, but in a reduced version.

At the rear, in addition to the power socket and switch, there are five inputs and two outputs. The signal can pass through standard interfaces – USB, coaxial, AES/EBU, or optical – but also via IS2 over HDMI, using the pin configuration found on other Métronome components. This is, in fact, the connection recommended by the manufacturer. The available outputs are XLR and RCA.

At the heart of the converter is the ES9026PRO chip, which allows the DSC mini to achieve a signal-to-noise ratio of -110 dB and a dynamic range of 124 dB. It can process PCM signals up

to 32-bit / 384 kHz or DSD512, depending on the capabilities of the input used.

The manufacturer doesn't go into the technical details, simply stating that everything is based on the experience gained from designing the DSC and other high-end models. This likely involves the use of multiple toroidal transformers for each section, large capacitor banks, and other techniques that contribute to Métronome's characteristic sound.

Among other technical features, there is an above-average output voltage of 3 V (the same on both outputs) and a non-touch 3.5-inch display with a resolution of 320 x 240 pixels.

Beyond that, little information is provided, apart





The delicate sound of Anne-Sophie Mutter's Stradivarius in Vivaldi's 'Spring' from The Four Seasons ('The Four Seasons' | 1992 | Deutsche Grammophon | 463 259-2) has slightly less body and woody density than on the DSC. The details and nuances are rendered a bit more explicitly, with a subtle emphasis on precision. Yet the performance remains organized with the lightness and discipline of a premium category, while retaining the lyrical phrasing and typically French richness of tone. It can truly be described as a somewhat simplified 'compact' DSC.

from the dimensions – 25 cm wide, 25 cm deep, 7 cm high – and the weight of 4.8 kg. This is fairly typical of this French manufacturer, which assembles its products from 'Made in France' components (except, of course, for the chips when it's not possible otherwise).

We primarily listened to the DSC mini in two setups: with Le Player 3 and via USB on the Musical Fidelity M8xi (mainly comparing with the D/A converter built into the amplifier), on Fyne Audio F1-5 speakers.

The main test, however, was conducted by comparing it to the brand's 'full-size' DSC, on the Norma Revo SC-2 LN / Norma Revo PA 160 MR system and KEF Blade One Meta speakers. For details on cables, accessories, stands, filters, and more, see the right-hand column.



The highest notes of 'Almost Like Being in Love' played on tenor saxophone by Sonny Rollins ('with The Modern Jazz Quartet' | 1988 | recorded in 1953 | Prestige | 0002521811126) unfold with naturalness, maturity, and refinement. The cymbals and vibraphone have a believable metallic timbre, although compared to the DSC they are less pronounced and less articulated.

However, compared to the M8xi, the rendering is noticeably more natural, less technical, and less 'highlighted.' There is still a subtle touch of 'ESS presence' in the background: the vibraphone, for example, slightly shines in its notes, with a subtle brilliance that remains pleasant throughout.

If the DSC mini reveals something truly French – or rather, typically 'Métronome' – it is its juicy dynamics, delivered with elegance and charm.

In 'Job' by Laco Deczi & Celula New York ('Jazz na Hradě' | 2007 | recorded in 2004 | Multisonic | 31 0651-2), the music unfolds and overlaps with robust, rich instruments. It is, in a way, 'a lot of sound.' On the bass drum hits, the DSC mini delivers richness, impact, and a physical sense, while maintaining the flexibility and fluidity that give the rhythm its natural swing.

The piano under the fingers of Romanian virtuoso Radu Lupu in the 'Piano Sonata No. 16 in A minor, Op. 42' ('Plays Schubert' | 2005 | Decca | 475 7074) is very clear, much more so than with the M8xi, while remaining organic, full-bodied, and almost expansive.



The dynamic bass in 'Mammagamma' by The Alan Parsons Project ('Eye in the Sky' | 1982 | Arista | 788478) is less powerful and less punchy than on the DSC, but much fuller and more satisfying than on the M8xi.

The overall character truly evokes a 'miniature' version of the DSC: rich without being heavy, with density and presence, not aiming for extreme speed, but rather offering a robust and enjoyable listening experience. Separation and definition remain very good: it's a high-end sound designed for listening pleasure.



Even if the sound proportions don't quite reach those of the DSC, the output remains generous and slightly 'larger-than-life,' which contributes to its clarity and precision, without emphasizing every tiny detail or nuance. The listening experience prioritizes enjoyment, with natural and rich colors, allowing the reverberations to be perceived without losing anything, offering a pleasing overall sound rather than a technical analysis.

The spatial qualities in Viklický's 'Acrostatic' ('Pocta Josipu Plečnikovi' | 1994 | Lotos | LT 0036-2 131) are put to the test, even though it is a relatively simple a cappella piece. The spatial rendering and clarity present a real challenge for an audio system. The DSC mini proves focused, accurately localizes each voice, and keeps them distinct, while its generous format enhances the sense of space. The sound isn't as crisp and sculpted as the DSC, but it undeniably belongs to the premium league.



The blues-rock of 'Hideaway' by Bernie Marsden, former member of Whitesnake ('Green & Blues' | 1995 | Castle Music | CMRCD 181), has a good rhythm. The DSC mini plays with more energy than the DSC (though slightly less detached), with flair and sustained vitality – far from frantic, rather juicy and full of life. The music isn't aggressive; it retains its expression and color, with a hint of drive in the rhythmic range. The listening experience may not be entirely neutral, but it remains very enjoyable and possesses a distinctly musical charm.

The compact DSC mini is a beautifully crafted device with good connectivity. Although, for this price, a streaming module or a slightly more intuitive interface would have been welcome, it is a premium product.

A significant part of the cost reflects the fact that it is made in France using mostly local components. In terms of sound, it showcases a typically Métronome style: richness, color, breadth, and dynamism, capable of immersing you in an enjoyable and engaging listening experience, almost regardless of the recording. It is undeniably a solid high-end device.

## ADVANTAGES

- Generous, characteristic Métronome sound
  - Plenty of connectivity for a compact format
  - Dynamic and lively
- Supports multiple formats and resolutions

## DISADVANTAGES

- Display and control interface are not very intuitive
- Relatively high price

