



# Metronome c/AQWO 2

HIGHLY COMMENDED

**F**resh from its High End Munich 2025 unveiling, Metronome's c/AQWO 2 DAC is available with an optional streamer card and a tube output (all reviewed in issue 248) and has been entirely re-engineered over its 2020-released predecessor. It now features what the French company considers the two best converter chipsets available – the ESS 9039M PRO and AKM 4499EX, the latter of which reviewer Chris Frankland finds “more open, with greater subtlety” and “cleaner and more natural” vocal delivery. The c/AQWO 2's separate Elektra power supply (which also supplies the tube output stage) now features many more different regulation lines for optimal control of the low-voltage power supplies and ideal separation between each stage, too.

This is a fully kitted-out, streaming-savvy DAC, with DLNA/UPnP, Spotify Connect, internet radio and Roon readiness listed on its

comprehensive CV, and connections spanning coaxial, optical, AES/EBU, USB Type-B and USB-A inputs and RCA, XLR and I<sup>2</sup>S outputs. All-encompassing file support includes PCM 32-bit/384kHz, DSD512 and MQA.

## Quality inside and out

Designed and manufactured in France, the c/AQWO 2 is a quality product – heavy, robust and beautifully finished, with a lovely seven-inch colour touchscreen hogging the minimalist front panel. And such quality is just as immediately evident in the DAC's performance when Chris slots it into his system. He experiences a calibre of streamed sound he had not previously come across, praising its emotive expression, lively rhythmic energy, and both the delicacy and strength with which it can deliver dynamics. To his surprise, Chris finds he prefers the tube output sound, too; Julian Lage's guitar sounds “more three-dimensional” while the cymbal lines have “more sparkle and subtlety”. Worth the asking price? Absolutely!

Reviewed in Issue **248**

Metronome • [metronome.audio](http://metronome.audio)

“Manufactured in France, the c/AQWO 2 is a quality product – heavy, robust and beautifully finished, with a lovely seven-inch colour touchscreen.

