

dCS Lina DAC & MASTER CLOCK

fr Par Lionel Schmitt

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Lina Network DAC/Clock

The Lina range of the British manufacturer dCS came in 2023 to complete the prestigious collection of digital sources. It consists of three distinct elements: a network reader, a master clock and a headphone amplifier. Each can be acquired separately. These three references take all the manufacturer's know-how in the three disciplines, including the helmet part that is inspired by that of the Bartok – tested exclusively in France here – but which appears to be even more sophisticated.



The dCS research and development team chose a half-format presentation to carry its state-of-the-art electronics cut into a block of black anodised aluminium and, more recently, in white. Thus protected from parasitic waves, and provided with an internal vibration management system, each device can “work” at its ease without mechanical or electromagnetic disturbances. if necessary, they can even be stacked.

Lina benefits from the Ring DAC proprietary conversion system and the digital processing platform whose design details remain confidential.



Compatible with all digital audio formats, and with its own control application – “DS Mosaic” – the Lina connected Dac supports high-resolution streaming from Roon, TIDAL, Qobuz, Spotify, Deezer, AirPlay 2 and other internet radios. Its flexible FPGA-based architecture and state-of-the-art electronics ensure a long life of the product with simple software updates, providing improvements and new functionalities to the system with recurring software updates.

The rear face accommodates all the digital connectors essential for the most flexible and extensive possible operation of this product:

- 2 Digital inputs AES / EBU 3 pin XLR 44.1 to 384 kHz
- 1 S/PDIF digital input 44.1 to 192 kHz
- 1 coaxial BNC digital input S/PDIF 44.1 to 192 kHz
- Toslink numeric input 44.1 to 96 kHz
- USB-A input for mass storage devices
- USB-B 44.1-384ks/s PCM and DSD, DSDx2 input in asynchronous mode
- 1 RJ45 Ethernet port



We understand that it is in the ability to “process” formats up to 24 bits from 44.1 to 384 kHz, DSD /64, DSD /128, native DSD and DoP (depending on input), FLAC, WAV, AIFF, MQA. Lina has a multi-stage DXD Sampling Sampling Device with switchable oversampling. Since it is required to associate a separate clock, two Word Clock plugs on 75-plus BNC connectors that lock at 44.1 to 192 kHz are also available. Lina being configured in symmetric mode, it is not surprising to find a pair of XLR analog outputs. They are assisted by a pair of conventional RCA outlets directly bolted to the chassis and carefully isolated from the latter.



The production of this test bed in France was made possible thanks to the assistance of PPL Audio and Audio-Frequencies – HIFI-Nancy which made this network reader available to me and its clock. The aim is to “deliver” and share with you the musicality of these products as well as my impressions.

Listening and impressions

The listening tests were carried out in the Audiofrequencies-Hifi Nancy auditorium made available to me for the occasion, in two separate phases with the following elements:

- MOON 390 power block directly connected to the adjustable output of the Lina source
- Integrated amplifier MARK LEVINSON No. 5805 (tested [HERE](#))
- RAIDHO TD 1.2 Acoustic Enclosures ([Kicked HERE](#))
- NORDOST Frey 2 symmetrical modulation cables
- HP NORDOST Heimdall 2 cables

For mains power supply: NORDOST QB 8 Mk3 strip, Tyr 2 and Frey power cables of the same brand.

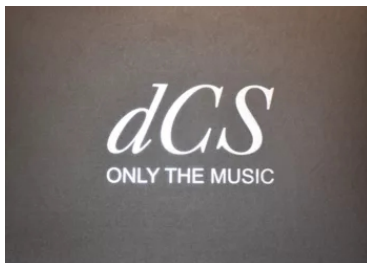


Qobuz: Yehudi Menuhin and Stéphane Grappelli plays Gerschwin, Berlin, Porter, Rogers, Hart and others – Dance into Eternity, Omar Faruk Tekbilek Naim – Naim Sampler No. 6 – Vivaldi and Friends – Jeannette Sorrell – Les Égarés – Ballaké SisFive and Dave Brubeck Quartet – Mademoiselle in New York – The Voice of the Trumpet – Lucienne Renaudin Vary – BBC Concert Orchestra – We Get Requests – Oscar Peterson trio – Parla zarathustra: Richard Strauss – Direction Lorin Maazel – Indiscretion – The Curious Bards – 11:11Original film – Sonata Kk 87 – Domenico Scarlatti – harpsichord: Trevor Pinnock – Russians and Sting – The Incomparable Jérôme Kern – Frank Chacksfield Orches – Chorus – Jazz pa svenska – Jan Johansson – La Folia de la Spagna – Gregorio Paniagua – Quiet NightsJacques Brel – Balalaikas Favorites – Osipov State Russian Folk Orchestra – – Meedle and the Wall – Pink Floyd – Slavonic Dances – – Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra – Direction Antal Dorati – “Prodigies”



The Symphony of the New World “viewed” by dCS, MARK LEVINSON and RAIDHO

Implementation



A first approach was taken a few weeks ago with the new MONITOR Audio 3G100 speakers, which helped me form an idea about the musical approach of this network-Dac player. To get to the heart of the subject of this test bench, initially Lina was directly connected to the MOON 390 power unit in symmetrical mode. Its use was carried out alternately without and with the separate clock. As a second step, Lina was connected to the MARK LEVINSON amplifier No. 5805. dCS was

kind enough to provide Lina with a line output setting that finely defines the required output level (between 0.2 V, 0.6 V, 2 V or 6 V) depending on the sensitivity of the amplification system to which it is connected.

The “owner” Mosaic application, rather intuitive and easy to use, offers the same features as the touch screen. It also takes the control of the sound volume and the fine adjustment of the balance.

Obviously, the best musical “performances” were obtained with the use of the clock and the use of the integrated MARK LEVINSON amplifier. It is in this optimal configuration that the test bench was drafted.

Nature of stamps – analytical capacity

Acute registers - medium

Yehudi Menuhin - Stéphane Grappelli plays Gerschwin, Berlin, Porter, Rogers, Hart and others



For the British manufacturer dCS, being perfectible is not an option. Also, in line with the other reference of the mark, Lina is above all a product that keeps its promises in terms of colours of stamps. It is also an electronics of a Neutrality absolute. With its separate clock, the entire audible frequency band is climbed. From the launch of the first clip, Lina "gets tone".

We instantly feel that this product has the technology that promotes the extension of the highest frequencies. Listening to the "plays" by Gerschwin, Berlin, Porter, Rogers and many adapted by the excellent duo Yehudi Menuhin and Stéphane Grappelli embodies the finesse of each of their respective violin.

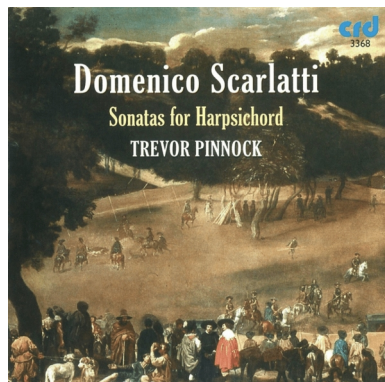
However, if Lina can climb very high in the frequencies, he does not do so at the expense of the purity of the sounds. Lina knows harmoniously how to combine stratospheric frequencies gently. In dCS, it is perfectly known to promote high frequencies without, however, delivering a tiring sound.

Also each of these violins takes a "sharp" texture, a silky spun, a woody color and a totally devoid of aggressiveness. On the high frequency range, I also noticed that Lina with a pronounced modulation sense. Indeed, in addition to the school to which Yehudi Menuhin and Stéphane Grappelli belong respectively, each violin "evolves" with its own musical characteristics and a rather different ringing that is perfectly understood.

As an exceptional analyst, Lina emphasizes everything that can be heard by the human ear, such as nuances, variations, inflexions, vibrato of chords, and bow contact on the strings. All these characteristics are unveiled to us with an eloquence that is not necessarily found on network readers – dac of the same category. It is certain that Lina, and more generally all the associated products, have a "silence of operation" which undeniably highlights the content of the so-called reference recordings.

Analytical capacity and transparency

Sonata Kk 87 – Domenico Scarlatti and harpsichord: Trevor Pinnock



While Lina is "spartinizing" on the most acute frequencies, he has this rather unique feature of going deep into the contents of an event-rich "partition". Just turn its attention to the harpsichord playing as a soloist the Sonata Kk87 by Domineco Scarlatti. The particular sound of the harpsichord demonstrates that this device performs a high resolution work allowing a precise and detailed hearing on each note, each shade. Each of them can be reproduced differently, in accordance with the score. Lina points to the differences in tones that result from it.

The crystalline transparency is embodied in particular by the play of the mechanism of the harpsichord and more particularly the "attacks" or the touching of the hammer on the strings. Better still, the degree of "loyalty" gives us the full benefit of the technicality of Trevor Pinnock who works on his score with the attention he is known. So we observe how each note is weighed to give a very special tint in absolute conformity with the creation of Domineco Scarlatti.

All this is by no means the fruit of my imagination: this description is audible, in accordance with what I have been able to hear and appreciate. Moreover, the grain delivered by this harpsichord with a sparkling temperament is very close to that of an instrument listened to live. The reproduction is fruity and totally "confounding" veracity. Then, it comes from this listening sequence to the translation of a prodigious work on harmonics. The extinction of the ends of sentences is taken care of with great care, fineness, should I even say. These are extinguished in time and space without any cut-off at ultra-low level. This gives even more credence to musicality. The trimming of each is a goldsmith's job.

Listening to this sonata, Lina succeeded in giving a soul to the harpsichord, just as Trevor Pinnock was able to give meaning to the music he invites us to taste. All this is a flagrancy that any audiophile or music lover, somewhat sensitive to the charm of this repertoire, will be able to spontaneously our.

Serious register

For example, the opening: Richard Strauss and Lorin Maazel



Sending the serious register is sometimes a delicate exercise. The depth of the musical notes should not be confused with a "coated" aspect that would make an extreme grave register appear.

The best way to seriously understand the serious frequencies is to test a device for the organ. Precisely, the opening of thus the zarathustra, which begins and ends with organ "cloths" is the found extract.

Listening to this opening strangely reminds me of the feeling I felt when I was analyzing RAIDHO TD 1.2 loudspeakers. However, since the system is of a higher range, it is normal for the characteristics to go a little, or even clearly, further. As a matter of depth, Lina is responsible for this descent into abyssal tones that only the organ can emit. On the beginnings and endings of musical phrases, I was able to observe basements explored with extraordinary aplomb.

Moreover, these organ "lays" are in no way limited to a single monochord sound. It is easily detects a host of nuances attached to the tuttis of the instrument. Moreover, Lina does not have the same to differentiate this organ from the orchestral mass, which leads to a hallucinating relief with very successful effects.

The "management" of the grave also involves the blows of timbals that punctuate this partition widely provided in information of all kinds. These percussion gives us substantial, solid, organic, precise, well-designed "bearings" that, above all, have the weight and the expected matter. Decidedly, in this test, this opening prefigures a symphony that does not lack distinction.

• Jazz på svenska - Jan Johansson



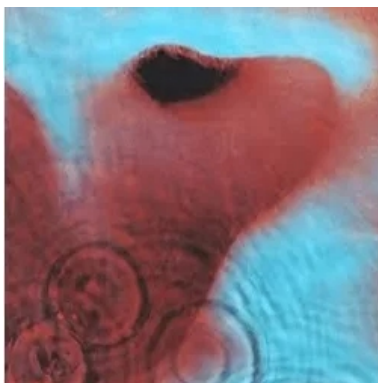
A piano and a double bass can sometimes be enough to fill an audiophile who only searches for sound truth. The directory of Jan Johansson is simply endearing despite the sobriety of orchestration. Together with this network/dac reader and its separate clock, this directory reveals countless pieces of information that make it even more captivating.

If the piano displays a verve and a straightness to all trials, we will be filled by the string of sounds, all more untied than the others. The various octaves follow one another with a meticulously organized sequence. The most serious notes are reproduced with frankness and impeccable seating.

The return of the double bass completely transforms the test. Not only does it descend very low, but its legibility clearly demonstrates that this product was designed and made with thoughtful wall care. It is quite fascinating to be able to follow the melodic line to the note, the pinching of the fingers of the bassist on the strings of his instrument, and the way in which he slides his other fingers on the key of the instrument to press his chords. It emanates from the table of the double bass of vibrations, a density, a physiological texture, a carved, unparalleled shape. Moreover, not "a protrusion thread", no trace of approximation, no more trace of an overweight: the felted texture is degenerated.

Reaction capacities – dynamic – rigour

Meedle - Pink Floyd



Although it is the amplifier and the loudspeakers that give the tempo, I realized that the source, whether analog or digital, has a say when it comes to marking rhythm and cadence.

As the engineers/developers of dCS wanted to go all the products they develop, it is indisputable that Lina rises to the top of the podium from the best digital sources of the moment. "Invested" by the mission of convincing a hyper-demanding audience, this digital reader knows absolutely what the challenges it faces in terms of responsiveness.

Still, anxious to respect the natural properties of music, Lina does not have a demonstrative vocation as is sometimes found in competition. On the other hand, it takes the "versail-shaped" or lack of reactivity that would aim to make listening monotonous.

With her speed, Lina bluntly confronts the playing of Roger Waters' formidable bass guitar on the excerpt One of the Days from Pink Floyd's Meedle album. Not a shadow of a hesitation: this undisturbed device "goes into battle" to unfailingly brave Pink Floyd's escapsocks. If the plumb line and the rigour are part of his vocabulary, they translate into a musicality of the instantaneous respondent. Electric guitar riffs as well as strokes at bass drums, snare drums and cymbals are reflected in "diabolical"

energy. Moreover, it is not even useful to raise the sound volume in order to benefit from a lively and cheerful reproduction. Moreover, whatever the sound level required, Lina and the other elements with which he is associated, "work" in symbiosis with a flexibility and articulation of the most beautiful effect.

It should be noted that in all cases, the image retains unshakeable stability, while preserving the spontaneity of the expression. It is unperturbed in the face of large dynamics gaps and other power surges. Clearly, everything is under control.

Space Espace – image and sound scene

- Naim Sampler No. 6



This album, at the beating of its remarkable sound, brings together a sufficient number of different musical styles and artists to sum up what is able to "provide" this network reader – Dac on the plane of thespatialization.

It is absolutely not necessary to position oneself as an expert on acoustics in order to realize the "generot" of this "great heart" device. Like dynamics, Lina was designed to provide an interface between interpreters and listeners.

It gives music a realistic image in all three dimensions. No constraint is reduced to the holographic aspect of the expression. I must also point out that, assisted by the master clock, Lina multiplies the size of the sound image. This has the direct consequence of giving an increased sense of aeration (though without the clock, Lina is not lacking).

Be that as it may, with or without the optional external clock, it is without constraints that the musical reproduction fills the listening room. Lina "grows" by this aerated side where every desk, every plan, instrument or soloist voice, is clearly identified. Their positioning within the sound scene is defined to the nearest centimeter, and it is ultimately very visual. Stereo effects are masterfully staged. There is no vacuum in the centre of the space of the sound space; this is just as well documented with a "manifest" link between the information from the left and right channels. To our great pleasure, we enjoy superb contrasts and reliefs demonstrating unparalleled freedom of expression.

Meaning of expression – sequence of pleasure in listening

Quiet Nights - Diana Krall



Like other dCS references, Lina should be considered a musical instrument in its own right. It would, however, be presumptuous to classify it as the "great voices" of this world. Yet his ability to reproduce natural vocals is well known. It's not just the voice of Diana Krall that we find with him, it's much more than that. For my part, I have the feeling that the artist was accompanying me during the listening session devoted to his album. Quiet Nights.

Its presence in the listening space is indisputable. "Lina and Diana" agree to make you succumb to the charm of a singular interpretation. The vocal/orchral ensemble is of great acoustic sincerity. It begins with a phrasing and a high-fulcat diction. The warm atmosphere, devoid of any form of "electronic" artifice, helps to make the expression of an authenticity unparalleled.

To properly measure the degree of perfectionism, one will forget any trace of whistles on the "S" These have been totally erased, in favour of a suave and carnal voice. Sweetness masks absolutely nothing of the details detected on the jazz orchestration that accompanies the performer. For example, it is with undisconcealed happiness to hear the rubbing of the broom on the snare drum, just like the guitar frets during chord changes, the small percussion that break here and there, not to mention the piano which here takes on a credible dimension. The equation between correctness of the stamps, neutrality and fluidity is simply successful.

- The Marquesses - Jacques Brel



Lina also has one particularity: to make us discover the world of poetry. This "small" sweetened British in many ways was also designed to capture the listener's attention, shuddering him every moment. It is then impossible to resist the delight of an interpretation that will take you away at the whim of the Marquesas Islands. Lina draws her "strength" on the principle of "communion" between the singer, his repertoire, and the listener. Establishing a close and direct link with Jacques Brel or other artists is the main task I am subodorous by the research and development team dCS.

Listening to us immerses us in the artist's world. It provides feelings of emotion from end to end, and I must point out, rarely achieved. On The Marquesas, the surprise effect is total, the objective of giving goosebumps is achieved. Every voice and orchestral detail arouses astonishment and, why not, a form of excitement.

- Balalaikas Favorites - Osipov State Russian Folk Orchestra



If you want to get this ultimate shudder of happiness, the one that will make you shudder, Lina is able to give you "for your money." We are no longer even looking at technical performance, measuring dynamicsdynamique, scrutinizing frequencies, or making a fixation on the signal-to-noise ratio. We listen to the music, and we are guided by the artistic line and the sound of the instruments that Lina personally takes charge of illuminating the listening room. On this sequence of traditional themes, all the musicians have this singularity of having an unsuspected existence.

Being at the "dispensed" of the Balalaika Favorites by the Osipov State Russian Folk Orchestra is by immeasurable enchantment. You have no idea how much music is breathing, how wide this product

"sweeps" to illuminate the musical landscape. He does not refrain from focusing on each tint, on the entire content of the recording, revealing the slightest breath, the slightest acoustic "graduation" without obscuring anything. Each vibration is immediately brought to the attention of the listener, especially since the reverberations of the place of registration are also perceptible. The overall precision is exemplary: it goes hand in hand with the subtly distilled game of a triangle or carillon that animates with majesty and around you. We are outright at odds with an aseptic or, on the contrary, totally artificial, as we can unfortunately meet on products of a certain competition, often Asian – that is, it is said once and for all.

- Les ÉLÉLÉ - Ballaké Sissoko, Vincent Segal, Emile Parisien, Vincent Peirani



In his time, Leonardo da Vinci had a keen sense of beauty, of perfection and did not neglect any detail. One of his quotes "Details make perfection and perfection is not a detail" applies without restriction to those four musicians who take you on board a ship on their way to a journey exploring new artistic horizons. As you will have guessed, the ship in question is none other than the dCS Lina. This quotation can be repeated in the letter when his attention is paid to the correctness and beauty of the message that is conveyed.

The repertoire of this French-Malian quartet composed of Ballaké Sissoko (kora), Vincent Segal (cello), Vincent Peirani (accordéon) and Émile Parisien (saxophone soprano right), leads you to artistic lands where musical cultures from popular air, traditional melodies from Africa or Eastern Europe are mixed. This repertoire opens the doors to a totally purified musical universe, freed of all forms of pollution of all kinds that we also owe to this network reader – Dac de competition.

I have even paid attention to the way in which Ballaké Sissoko is taking to make his kora ring. With the help of the dCS Lina, the pearl of the delicately touched strings carries an increasing number of micro vibrations from the resonance body. Typical grain makes listening thrilling. Self-hearts of this Malian instrument, the other performers graciously enrich a colorful musical message: a fresco that reaches you with spontaneity and magnificent agility.

The musical phrases emanating from the cello, accordion and soprano saxophone have a distinct melodic line from the main theme: they evolve as if each of them were isolated. The counter-tanks and counterpoints brighten up these singing "postures" in the form of a devilishly multi-colored rainbow.

Conclusion

Network readers – dac, there are a large number of them on the market, at all prices. So why dCS Lina? Lina is not just a "diffusing" of digital sounds. It really embodies music with everything that entails. This real "speaks" instrument. He wears the costume of a composer or that of a performer, he adopts the envelope and the original color of musical instruments and voices. Designed and carried out with extreme attention, it gives you an experience that challenges habits and/or reticence towards the digital transition. It is an investment in life.