



On the way to my daughter's school this morning, I introduced her to the magic of the Radio Garden application. The app features a rotating globe on which radio stations from nearly every country can be selected for playback. My daughter is learning Japanese and asked me to play something from Japan. I swiped the globe to Tokyo, and we were listening to Japanese radio within seconds.

I remember pushing in the mechanical presets on my dad's car stereo or when my mom upgraded her car stereo to one with a cassette deck that supported fast-forwarding to the next track with auto stop before the track started. That was the height of living for me as a kid. Thus, it's not lost on me that pulling up a selection of radio stations from Japan, in the car, on the way to school may be considered normal now, but it was straight science fiction when I was a ten-year-old in 1985.

Anyway, on the way home, I heard a couple of great tunes on the local Jazz station. I committed the artist names to memory until I drove past the next highway exit. Then it hit me. I absolutely had to go home, connect the newly received dCS Rossini Master Clock to the Rossini DAC and the Aurender W20 Special Edition, and play some of my beloved Japanese Jazz from the Three Blind Mice record label.

Another item that isn't lost on me is that most fathers don't get to drop their daughters off at school and decide they will spend the rest of the day with a world-class audio system playing amazing music. Life is good, and I soak every second of it when possible.

A Single Clock Source

After spending time with the dCS Rossini Apex DAC, I was offered a chance to try the Rossini Master Clock. Sign me up, add to cart, whatever terminology works best to get the clock here in the least amount of time. I hadn't had a master clock in my system for a while and was really looking forward to its arrival. I have an Aurender W20 Special Edition and N20. Both accept word clock input, and my Merging Technologies HAPI Mk2 accepts external word clock signals. That means both my stereo and immersive audio systems can be driven by the Rossini Master Clock.



When FedEx dropped off the package, it had already been sitting in the truck for several hours in single-digit temperatures. Less than ideal conditions for a high-precision digital audio component. I brought it to my listening room and let it sit for the rest of the weekend.

This morning I pulled some 75-ohm clock cables out of the closet and connected the Rossini Master Clock to the 44.1 kHz and 48 kHz clock inputs of the Rossini Apex DAC. Then I ran the Master Clock's third output to the word clock input of the Aurender W20 Special Edition. In addition to clock cables, I connected the Aurender USB to RS232 adapter to the back of the Master Clock and ran a USB cable to one of the W20SE's USB ports. This enables communication between the music server and the clock, so the clock knows which sample rate is being played and which clock rate to output to all the devices.

But wait, there's more. Because I'm using a Constellation Audio preamp, I connected a USB cable from the Aurender W20SE to the USB port on the back of the Inspiration Preamp. This communication port enables the Aurender iOS app to have full control of the preamp's volume, mute, input and phase settings. It essentially places the Constellation remote control inside the Aurender Conductor app. It's a beautiful thing.

I proceeded to grab my iPad to control the dCS Rossini Apex DAC, Aurender W20SE, and Constellation Audio Inspiration Preamp. Then I thought, I'll just install dCS Mosaic and Aurender Conductor on my new MacBook Pro with an M2 Pro chip. The apps work on Apple Silicon, whether it's inside an iPad, iPhone, or Mac computer. When I'm only listening, I use an iPad, but when I'm also taking notes for an article, it's much nicer to have a text editor open next to an app such as Aurender Conductor.



Snapping Into Focus

It was finally time to queue up three TBM releases on Impex Records, Midnight Sugar, Misty, and Blow Up. To say I'm familiar with the tracks on these albums is an understatement. These aren't demonstration tracks, although for many people, I'm sure they are, I listen to these albums quite frequently for pure enjoyment. The music, musicianship, and sound quality are all rated 10 out of 10.



Up first, the Tsuyoshi Yamamoto Trio's *Midnight Sugar*. Don't look for it on a streaming service, order it from Impex. I played *I'm a Fool to Want You* first. My initial thought was, are you kidding me? The absolute beauty of Yamamoto's piano playing and the sonic presentation were on a level higher than anything I heard while reviewing the Rossini Apex a couple weeks ago. This is ridiculous in the best way possible.

I was listening to Yamamoto on piano, Isao Fukui on bass, and Tetsujiro Obara on drums in a very different way than I usually listen when I ultimately have to write about what I've heard. I wasn't thinking about or considering sonic aspects such as transients, soundstage, attack, decay, sustain, and release, etc... I was only thinking about the music, the musicians, the instruments, the venue, and the history that may go along with a recording from 1974. Rather than certain sonic aspects of this track snapping into focus, the music snapped into focus in a truly magical way. The Trio was tight in musical terms, and that's what hit me. Not that the bass was tight and extended, although it certainly was. I don't know the last time I listened to music and thought the band sounded really tight. It happened today once everything was clocked by a single source, the dCS Rossini Master Clock.

After finishing the entire *Midnight Sugar* album, I rolled right into the Tsuyoshi Yamamoto Trio's album *Misty*. Through the first two tracks, *Misty* and *Blues*, I was again just listening as if I didn't have a "job" to do. When track three, *Yesterdays*, began, I had to focus on the task at hand, writing about this experience.

The opening bass solo from Isao Fukui is just delicious. I can picture the strings vibrating as sound emanates from his vintage wood instrument. His control over the unwieldy double bass is masterful and musical. As Yamamoto and Obama join him on the track, Fukui slides back into the pocket, laying the foundation for this amazing trio. The sound and music, as a whole, are absolutely addictive, even though this is a deep cut on the album.

Toward the end of the track, Fukui plays a bit more forward in the trio, close but not quite a solo. When he finished, I felt like the crowd should've applauded. I seriously felt like this was a live performance captured at a club rather than recorded at Aoi Studio in Tokyo on August 7, 1974. It's one of those performances that feels live, sounds live, and through the right system, fools the listener into thinking this is a tight trio playing the Village Vanguard.



When this album was over, I turned to my left to see my vintage teacup sitting on the table next to my listening chair. I took a sip and realized my Organic Nepali Golden Black tea had gone cold. I'd forgotten I'd even had a cup of tea next to me for the entirety of Midnight Sugar, and Misty. I don't know the last time that happened. This tea is one of life's luxuries. I enjoy its flavor and warmth as I listen to music frequently. The music and system had me so captivated that I only focused on the music. No tea, no incoming texts, no problem.

Letting the Aurender W20SE queue flow through to the last Three Blind Mice album released by Impex, Blow Up, by the Isao Suzuki Trio, I experienced more of the same. A tight trio properly snapped into focus by a single clock source. The music sounded absolutely wonderful, evoking a warm feeling of

relaxation and sonic satisfaction. Listening to the opening track, Aqua Marine, with Suzuki on Cello, Takashi Mizuhashi on bass, and George Ohtsuka on drums, there's an ethereal sound to the chimes juxtaposed to the deep bass, that gives it a dreamy feel. On my system today, getting lost in this music and forgetting about the outside world was very easy.

Wrapping Up



Focus, cohesion, and continuity are some of the major benefits I experienced today with the dCS Rossini Master Clock delivering perfect time to the Rossini Apex DAC and Aurender W20SE. This single source of precision has an ability to pull the entire system together in a way that's unique, compared to other components I've used. The focus and cohesion the Master Clock delivered to my music, changed my focus to be solely on the whole of the music being reproduced. Noticing a trio's tightness rather than the bass's tightness is a completely different level of awareness brought about by the Rossini master Clock in

my system. This is one component that I worry about removing because I don't have anything remotely close to take its place.

I'll eventually get to clocking my immersive twelve-channel system, but for now, it's time to listen to more music, including some DXD releases over dual AES from the Aurender W20SE to the Rossini Apex DAC.