



Métronome t | AQWO & c | AQWO

Author: Daniel Březina

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South-French manufacturer Métronome, with its ultra-luxury offshoot Kalista, has been creating original creations in the field (SA) of CD players and D / A converters for some 30 years. In 2019, the brand went into the world of SACD with the AQWO model, to which it continues, creating a new line of components to form a version divided into disk transport and D / A converter.

Moreover, both the transport and the converter are divided into two independent chassis so that the power part is shielded from the signal. Moreover, the external source with the poetic name Elektra is designed for each device slightly different in terms of internal topology and used parts. Massive, stable and carefully regulated sources are the cornerstone of the company's philosophy.

Métronome t | AQWO

t | AQWO is a classically active component with upper sliding doors, concealed by SACD mechanics from D&M workshops with minor modifications. The carefulness of the construction is underlined, among other things, by the grounding leading from the surface of the spinning disc to the grounding pin.



On the front of the manufacturer fitted a large touch screen for elegant control, at the back are only necessary digital output connectors, with the preference of course is the HDMI IIS interface, which allows the transmission of encoded SACD signal to any compatible business converters.

The oversized power supply uses three toroidal transformers, Schaffner filters and a full seven independent power supplies. A large dose of capacitors also serves as protection against EMI and RFI

interference. The manufacturer claims that thanks to Elektra, the external power supply filter will have no effect.

The whole construction is very honest, using unclean, thick aluminum profiles and although not a flashy luxury like the sister brand Kalista, the workmanship has a level worthy of bold price tags.

The machine (or both boxes) spreads its weight on the pointed inconspicuous pucks from Delrin, but serve as the first line of anti-vibration defense. However, the transport chassis itself absorbs vibration even at a weight of 13.2 kg, which is relatively wide at 43 cm wide, 12 cm high and 42 cm deep. Add a source that stands on the same floor plan, but has a height of only 8 cm and a weight that is even bolder 14 kg and you have a massive machine.

An interesting function is the possibility to set upsampling or downsampling of the read signal. This is atypical for the transport itself (often a D / A converter), and resampling is available for both 16 bit / 44.1 kHz PCM and DSD64, the SACD signal.

Métronome c|AQWO

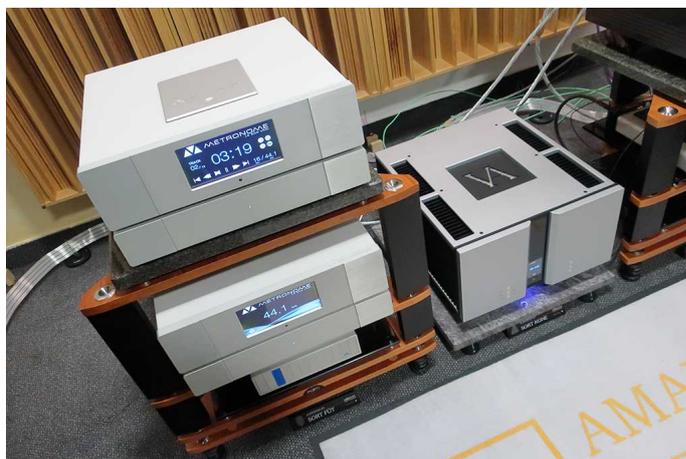
The logical partner for the transport is in the same visual style of the same sized and the same chassis (however, the converter weighing 12 kg and 12.7 kg source) made D / A converter c|AQWO. This is also dominated by the multifunctional large display on the front, where many interesting features can be set, ranging from the color of the user interface, through any of the six digital filters to one of the three voltages on the output connectors (1.4 / 2.5 / 3V).

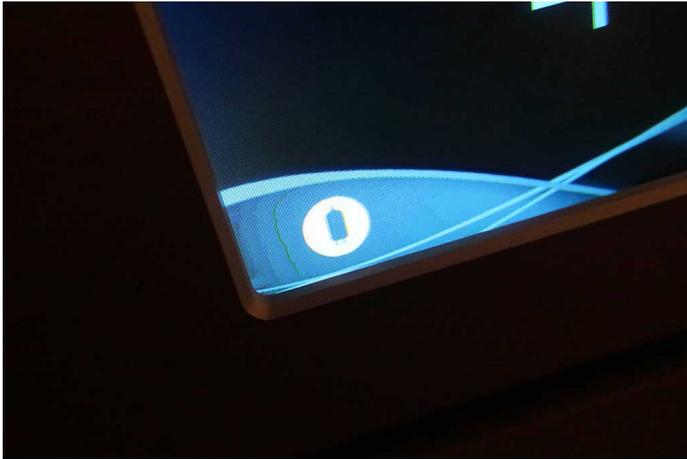
Inside are two closer AK4497 chips from Japanese AKM (by the way the only component not from France), each on one channel in dual-mono mode. Thanks to them, the converter can handle PCM (up to 32 bit / 384 kHz) and DSD signals (up to 22.5 MHz). Extremely impressive are the technical data - a phenomenal dynamic range of 175 dB or a signal-to-noise ratio of over 140 dB.

The converter's connectivity is then sufficient - USB and HDMI / I2S interfaces are the first to enjoy full resolution, but there are two AES / EBU connectors, two coaxial and two optical inputs, so c|AQWO fits well into any assembly. Both cinch and symmetrical XLR analog outputs help to achieve this.

The converter power supply is even more complex, using four toroids and eleven independent power lines. RFI and EMI interference protection is provided by a huge battery of 96 filter capacitors.

It is an interesting tradition at Métronome that the source components also offer a surcharge module that modulates the output signal through the tubes, although the manufacturer himself says it is the choice of "nice" at the expense of "accurate and clean". But if you want, two JAN6922 lamps and two ECC88s, working in pure class A, can be fitted, even if the dynamics only drop to 140 dB at that time.





We listened to the player and converter set in the imperial, acoustically optimized importer room where the company made him a [Métronome AQWO](#) for comparison and a Vitus SIA-03 amplifier whose sound we could compare with the Pass XP-30 / X350.8 set . Always heard on [Rockport Avior II](#) , [Nordost Valhalla 2's](#) complete cabling and a range of "optimization" aids from Nordost's QRT division - from QKore grounding units, Qb8 power strips, Qx4 and Qx2 filters to QPoint harmonization units with linear power supplies.

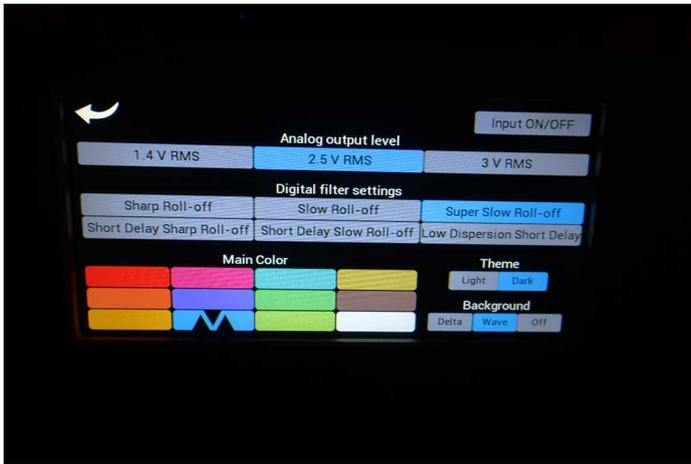
Madeleine Peyroux's "I Can't Stop Loving You" (2012 | Universal | 0602537242689) double-bass tones were wonderfully "fleshy", rich, and though you feel a bit more warm with corporate style , unlike other Métronome and Kalista players, t|[AQWO](#) + c|[AQWO](#) sound with minimal inherent track, flattened, smooth and even nonchalant, so very realistic and straightforward. Great was the weight and fullness of the instrument, the subconscious perception of "woody" deep tones, when the energy resonating a large warm body. Great is also able to distort individual tones with extraordinary elegance, capture their tight impulse and at the same time give them flexibility and readability.

Also, the trimmed vocal of Renee Fleming in Claude Debussy's "Mandoline" ("Night Songs" | 2001 | Decca | 467 697-2) combined the slightly friendly character inherent to all Métronome components with expressive straightforwardness, neutrality and impersonal authenticity, divided by letting the excitement of the superbly delicate subtleties of the trained voice stand out, without exceeding the limits of potentially tiring technicality in its brilliance, the singing sounded light and lively, energetic and very specific, peeled from the musical background and yet clearly integrated.

In a beautifully rich and harmonious style, the split player also delivered the highest frequencies, the cymbals in Michael Brecker's "Midnight Voyage" (1996 | Impulse | 051 191-2) clinking vigorously, focused and with magnificent focus. The resolution is generally great, the amount of information extracted in a not flashy package will show you a fantastic plastic surface of the cymbal, letting you perceive the impact of the mallet and the spread of the tone through a metal surface that is a good piece of metal. Even the analytical character here does not slip to hardness, although the sign neutral is definitely in place.

The piano's "Piano Quintet in E-Flat Major Op. 44" by Robert Schumann ("The Complete Piano Trios" | 1997 | Philips | 456 323-2) was proportionally large, a powerful and every keystroke was accompanied by an audible click and an immediate ringing of the string. It is not only sound beautifully complex and detailed, but also vigorous, sovereign and explosive. Métronome still plays the breathing more calmly, but can convey the power of a large instrument with confidence and a clear margin.

Fantastic work is done by divided Métronome in detail, namely in how simple, elegant, rich and easy to record,



order and depth. Amazingly rich and full of The Bad Plus's "Feeling Yourself Disintegrate" (2008) | The individual instrument lines are separated with complete overview, you can concentrate on any instrument or voice without any difficulty, both in the initial harmonic passages and in the cacophonous flood of sounds at the end of the song - even in one position Métronome does not lose the perfect assurance of perfect organization. Even here, it feels like the contours of the company are consistently precisely cut,

Filing space is a big asset of the South French brand and not even t|AQWO / c|AQWO (easy to name products on the other hand, the French do not go much) is no different. But actually it is a little bit - again, it shows itself as an impartial guide to music, and although it still offers more proportions

of instruments and scene than usual, it is not that sweeping life style. Yet, "The Modern Jazz Quartet" ("Fontessa" | 1956 | Atlantic Masters | 81227 3687-2) has been spread over a truly large area, with the localization of instruments that can withstand the strictest standards and where the left-and-rear almost surprisingly plastic, almost holographic. As already mentioned, the high-profile split Métronome plays very impartially and unruly, even though it retains the pinch of welcoming pleasure. "Champs Elysées" by Zaz ("Paris" | 2014 | Warner Music | 0825646149216) was also amazingly entertaining in its sheer musical enthusiasm, was accurate and undistorted, including the obvious limits on the vocal, and was incredibly fluid to fluid and rhythmically ravishing, so you can easily throw any audible limits and problems behind your head and enjoy the essence of a musical experience.

SACD transport t|AQWO and D / A converter c|AQWO French Métronome is a truly luxurious, first-class product. Not only is this split machine made with a high proportion of manual work from purely French sources (with the honest exception of Japanese chips in the converter and mechanics in transport), but mainly because of how luxurious and beautiful it is, how much music it can extract from discreet discs and how easily it pulls you into the snares of the musical experience and makes you want to spin more, more and more recordings through which hours of listening time flow with fascinating speed. With his top model, Métronome has taken a slightly different, extremely sound-neutral, yet more precise, more mature and even more fun way, and although the price tag is as luxurious as sound, this is not a dry one and zero player, this is an intense emotion player.

Pros

- + musicality and fullness
- + possibility of adaptation (resampling, output voltage, ...)
- + one of the best split SACD players in the world
- + solid workmanship
- + unlike the rest of the company production, extremely balanced and impartial sound
- + good sound insulation

- Maybe somewhat ordinal look

(Translated from Czech Language by Google Translate from <https://www.hifi-voice.com/testy-a-recenze/sacd-prehravace-a-transporty/2482-metronome-t-aqwo-c-aqwo>)