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Ivor Tiefenbrun was right, well....almost.

Back in the day when the Linn LP12 stood as the most important part of the audio chain, according to Mr Tiefenbrun anyway, digital sound reproduction was in its infancy and certainly no where near ready to be unleashed on the listening public.

Commercialism won in the end and the silver compact disc was unleashed on us in the early 1980's. Together with promises of indestructibility it was hailed as the holy grail of audio reproduction. For years there were two camps, those that clung on to their audibly superior but fragile and expensive LP based audio source and those who sang the same tune as the marketers of digital audio.

Make no mistake CD was far more convenient and the trade off for 99% of the listening public made the sound sacrifice well worth it.

For the other 1%, there was always just a little bit that was missing. A certain magic that LP was able to produce, albeit at a very high price these days, that so called natural sounding analogue sound that makes high end LP playback systems so special.

From an early stage it was clear to me that the compact disc was irrelevant anyway, its sole importance was to store 1's and 0's. This has been borne out by high resolution FLAC downloads which are becoming commercially available to access as downloads from certain forward thinking music retail web sites. The compact disc will too become obsolete in time.

Back to Ivor, while I was fumbling around trying to find audio nirvana, I realized too that speakers were all important, as those were surely the devices that actually produced the sound. After a few speakers graced by listening room over the years, I eventually found a wonderful pair (I am sure there are many other great speakers out there) in the Hyperion HPS 938. At the same time it was clear that amplification was important too, I wanted an amp to give me deep controlled bass, whilst faithfully reproducing the rest of the audio midrange and tops. To this end I eventually upgraded to the nu-force ref 9 SE V2. These are truly wonderful amps and give me the kind of sound I love.

I abandoned a CD player based system several years ago and the Benchmark DAC served as only my source being fed its signal from a computer.

This certainly was a step up from the cd based system that I had. Digital now sounded better than it ever did before. As the months and years passed, I found myself listening less and less to my system, not because I lost interest in music, but because I guess I could get my music delivered just as well in my car or on my iPod. There was no reason to make the pilgrimage to my listening room, yes digital sound had come of age, I could get it delivered to me where ever I was.

That was until I heard the LampizatOr level 4 DAC. It was a demo that finally turned my listening room into a place worth the pilgrimage. So I bought one.



Ivor was right!!

Source is the most important part of the audio chain!

For the first time my speakers disappeared in the room. I had always read in the audio press about speakers disappearing in the room, and I have had experience of this with the extreme stereo effects on some recordings, but the LampizatOr DAC makes my speakers disappear, period. The 3D spatial effects are amazing, disconcerting to a point as I need to re-adjust my experience of well known recordings in

my collection. It's as if the artists had been boxed in all this time and have finally been unleashed from their graves and spring to life right before me in real life. Truly a place worth making a pilgrimage to.

But there's more.

Aside from the sound stage effects, the amount of detail, both micro and macro that were hidden amongst those bits of 1's and 0's is amazing. The LampizatOr somehow manages to extract all the hidden gems that the artists have buried into their sonic works of art.

Textures, tones, detail and low-end authority are extracted and presented in the way the artists intended.

My amps always had enough bottom end grunt and control, or so I thought, the LampizatOr DAC extracts and presents a few octaves more that I thought either my amps or speakers were capable of producing! In fact at high audio levels (and I mean high) the sound is clear, remains uncompressed and then shock, horror, my amps clip! I have never been able to do this before, the additional bottom end grunt that this DAC sends down the chain is too much for my amps to handle at very high listening volumes.

I bought the level 4 DAC with 2 digital inputs and 2 analogue inputs and most importantly the remote volume control! A sneak peek inside revealed a box crammed with exotic discrete components (including a few valves) all aimed at elevating digital playback to magical levels, which this DAC does with aplomb.

I have no dedicated pre-amp, my audio chain starts with digital bits fed into the LampizatOr DAC and then directly into the power amps, simple. I have all the benefits of flexible music server convenience with high end analogue sound!

This LampizatOr DAC is what 'digital' has been waiting 30 years for.

The LampizatOr DAC has managed to turn all my CD recordings into LP's, without the crackles and pops most analogue loving audiophiles have had to learn to like for the sake of that magical sound they knew only LP could serve up.

A word of warning though, resist all temptation to audition or you will be forced to re-evaluate your current source completely! Though I assure you, the transition is well worth it.

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