

HIFI EXCLUSIVE CD TRANSPORT



**Across the world the high-end community is asking why Reimyo has stopped making its vaunted CDP-777 compact disc player. We know the reason: the brand-new CDT-777 transport**

## EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL

*By Uwe Kirbach*

Together with Reimyo's DAP-777 converter (see STEREO 11/06) that my colleague Böde so excitedly tested last year, this brand-new CD transport will cost you a good 13,000 euros. Were this combo to play better than the more expensive Reimyo one-box player, then continuing to build the latter would really make no sense. We don't want anyone to die from the suspense: The two sound better than the CDP-777 – a whole lot better. That in itself is quite a sensation considering that there are not too many high-end digital devices that have done so well in international tests and yet been so maligned as that bygone Reimyo CDP-777.

But let's wait a second before the laurels start growing all the way to the sky: The competition didn't make things all that difficult for the Harmonix and Reimyo boss Kazuo Kiuchi. This player, with its simply spectacular harmonic tuning, magnificent tonal colors, such spatial illumination and its fleet-footed versatility, was easily far superior to many – even more expensive – components. Quite possibly there are some listeners, who have since been liberated from those discordant digital sounds, that didn't notice that the CDP-777 was not the last word when it comes to dynamic punch. Or perhaps they gladly took that and its somewhat rounded frequency extremes in stride as part of the deal. In the end however, and despite its hefty price tag, this favorites-killer was still more affordable than those super-expensive monsters.

What could Kiuchi San have so improved on the transport side to give his popular player a one-way ticket to obsolescence? The first thing is obvious: separating the integrated player into a converter and a transport. Of significance here is not just the separate power supplies and having alleviated the converter of the resonance

emitted by a spinning CD drive. The way the power units radiate into the digital circuits is downright harmful as well

This was clearly evident as I prepared to test the CDT-777: So as not to be entrapped by any uncontrolled effects, the first thing I did was connect the new Reimyo CD transport to the mains in order to control any undesirable – and otherwise quite common – radiant interference affecting the running system. Here is where this Japanese gentleman proved to be a model student. No effect was audible at all.

When I placed it near the big Jadis JD 1 Super Mk II transport, it showed digital equipment's typical reaction: a paler, grainier sound. It's not just those whose job it is to compare sounds that have to listen carefully to hear if such interference totally falsifies their assessment – the important thing is that you've got to be this meticulous if you're going to make any kind of conclusive statement. Sometimes one tiny centimeter to the left or right is all it takes, while other times you might discover that there is too little spacing between the rack's shelves.

This radiation factor is even more perilous for the vigilant developer: After all, he can't just add more shielding toward the outside. Doing so would cause the device's own electromagnetism to have an even more detrimental effect within itself. Kiuchi's first countermeasure was to install three small transformers instead of one big one. He chose those particularly low-leakage and quiet R-core transformers that Kitamura Kiden built to his specifications. To protect them against electrical interference, he put a TDK power filter and the Enacom parallel filter from his parent company Combak at the power input.



**Conventional: The control unit with program and computer chip for the Philips drive is the only thing conventional in the Reimyo CDT-777**

Harder to see are the cable connections, each of which was specially selected for this new CD transport depending on where they are to be used – nothing off the shelf in here. Only the developer himself can really know how much experimentation it took before the transformers and power supplies were ideally positioned within the device.

Still, you can see one important thing from the outside: the obvious amount of care involved in designing the chassis. Here aluminum plates in various thicknesses of eight and fifteen millimeters are used, which are apparently manufactured of different alloys. You can see this by the darker hue and different feel of the solid, enveloping top cover. Apparently Kiuchi applied all his mystifying skills and experience gained from his Harmonix products into managing the resonance factor. With the CDT-777 he takes the recommendation he makes in the owner's manual regarding those unique tuning feet to an extreme – namely that they be placed well outside the bottom corners of the housing to produce an optimal effect. He even mounted what he calls feet arms on the corners which direct any remaining resonance into each of the spike-shaped bases. Indeed this shows how that old theory of simply discharging the

resonance has moved into a much more differentiated stage. When you set the transport up, a small disk is placed between the spike and the arm on three of its feet. Lengthy trials on two shelves revealed a somewhat more precise sound when the left front foot was the one without the disk. Of course Kiuchi would not with good reason be the compelling developer of his fantastic Harmonix tuning feet were he not to include a set of RF-909X spike bases for that final touch of fine tuning. Likewise a Harmonix XDC-2 power cord – the cord and bases together are worth about 1200 euros. Certainly there's no better way than this to demonstrate how important it is to him to give the customer a piece of equipment that delivers the best initial conditions for putting together any system.

What I find most cunning is how he succeeds in tuning for resonance right at the source of the sound: at the drive itself. Unlike Reimyo's CD player, this one no longer comes from JVC. Inside the CDT-777 you'll find a Philips CDM-12 Pro drive – like in most top-quality transports. However, Kiuchi removed it from its casing and embedded it instead inside a low-resonance and optically low-reflection housing of black plastic walls, which in turn rests on yet another thick plate of aluminum.



**Loner: Reimyo considers digital XLR connections to be rather dubious – the special cinch jack isn't**

**A delicacy: You've simply got to have tried out the loading mechanism to feel how something can be engineered to be so rich, airy and of such low resonance.**



First I ran the Reimyo transport on a Jadis JS 1 Mk III converter. Since Kiuchi thinks that the quality and the proper tuning of symmetrical XLR digital connections are problematic in a number of devices, he took it upon himself to outfit his transport with only one 75-ohm cinch port. The digital cable from Harmonix plugged between the Jadis equipment proved to be an equal to my preferred NBS Monitor II-XLR interconnects. In playing Lou Reed's *The Raven* the Harmonix gave the bass a slight more rumble while bestowing a hint more attention to the higher pitches of his voice at the other end of the frequency spectrum.

The notion that I was doing a comparative review professionally quickly evaporated once it was hooked up to the CDT-777. How divinely supple it played, flowing with such lively agility and powerful colors! Even before Kiuchi's new masterpiece was fully burned-in, there could be no doubt that after numerous hopeless – and often embarrassing – attempts with a number of different transports this one would be the big Jadis' equal when it came to musicality. How marvelously natural and entirely untechnical – yes, you could rightly say “analog” – it played as if that what not exactly the biggest challenge in digital reproduction today.



**Classy: A Harmonix XDC-2 power cord is included with the CD transport**

“Just Music“ is what my notepad said about Vinicius Cantuaria's new album “Cymbals” (Naïve/Indigo). That closely recorded, yet clearly defined, guitar on the left plays so delightfully smooth in *Galope*. Not like some pleasant pattering, but superbly accentuated and with delicate rhythmic shading. Even the voice is later on simply “there” and the piano can once again be designated a percussion instrument. All this thanks to a reproduction that presents itself in full, from the rush of the low notes all the way to the overtone's delicate energies.

I then dared to move on to the marvelous “Don Quijote“ by Jordi Savall (Alia Vox or Ensemble/CH), which flatters many a system with its spaciousness and dynamic presence. In order to be able to enjoy the folia by that exceptional voice of Montserrat Figueras in a manner that is strong and penetrating, yet nuanced and completely unstressed, you have to have CD reproduction that is on par with such a masterful artist.

And then when Xavier Diaz-Latorre dances, glides, flies with his fingers across the Vihuela, a predecessor of the guitar, you know that Kazuo Kiuchi has done it again. He has succeeded in pairing his DAP-777 converter with what is musically a perfectly balanced transport. Compared to the big Jadis combo – with Harmonix RF-999 MT bases under the transport I might add – its midrange is somewhat less voluminous, not that this can be qualitatively measured, mind you. The Jadis are superior only in their overall authority and the low bass. In light of the things this Japanese master introduces now and again, the other suppliers would do well to pause and give some thought of their own.

**TEST SYSTEM**

CD TRANSPORT: Jadis JD 1 Super MK II
D/A CONVERTER: Jadis JS 1MK III, Reimyo DAP-777
TURNTABLES: Brinkmann LaGrange, Simon Yorke S7
TONEARMS: Brinkmann 12", Thales, Simon Yorke 9", 12"
CARTRIDGES: Brinkmann EMT x 2, London Reference, Transfiguration Temper W
PREAMP: Kondo KSL-M7 Phono/KSL SF-Z, Red Rose Model Three Silver Signature, Jadis JP 80, Linn Klimax
POWER AMP: Jadis JA 200, Linn Klimax Solo
LOUDSPEAKERS: Merlin VSM MXe, Audio Physic Terra (subwoofer)
CABLES: Kondo KSL Vz, KSL-LP, Hovland MG-2, Breuer, Cardas Golden Reference, NBS Monitor II, Harmonix Golden Performance, Studio Master, Ensemble Dynaflux, Megaflux

**Sound base: The low-resonance interplay of the different housing components is what's so decisive**



**REIMYO CDT-777**

About €8200  
 Dimensions: 47 x 13 x 36 (WxHxD)  
 Warranty: 2 years  
 Distributor: Warren Quality Systems  
 Tel: +49 (0)6732/936961  
 www.wqs-online.de

The world test premiere at STEREO turned into a triumph for the Japanese manufacturer: Unsurpassed rhythmic sensitivity and dynamic power form a chorus in this new CD transport with an unadulterated transparency and love of tonal colors. It plays at a level far above any that would leave a technical aftertaste.

**LABORATORY**

The transport showed outstanding resistance to interference during the vibration test. Worth mentioning is its low standby power consumption of only six watts.

**EQUIPMENT**

Only one cinch digital out, metal remote control, the high-quality bases and the power cable that would normally cost 500 euros are all part of the system.

**STEREO TEST**

SOUND RATING **100%**

**COST/BENEFITS**



**VERY GOOD**

**STEREO-TEST**

KLANG-NIVEAU **100%**

**PREIS/LEISTUNG**



**SEHR GUT**