





Reimyo CDT-777/DAP-777

Prices: 8200 and 5250 euros

By Roland Kraft, Photos: Rolf Winter

“Now you can do away with your vinyl” – is the German sales maxim. One thing’s for sure: You can count me out. And it doesn’t matter how good this CD combo is ...

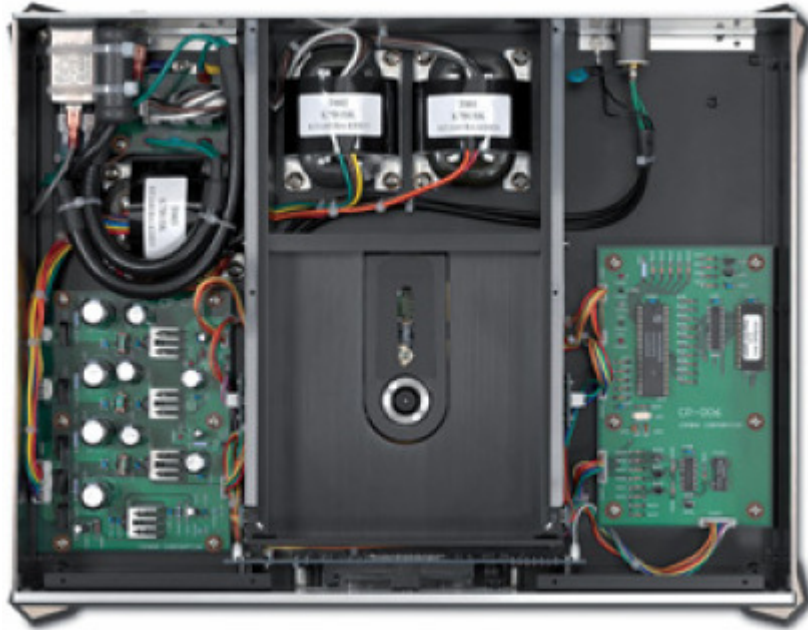
Do away with vinyl?! Yeah, right. The guy who said this must really be sold on the quality of this Reimyo combination. Has he thrown all his records away? And if so, then where are they? Can I have them? I still collect records, you know. And like crazy – even worse than before. In terms of the discussion as to how long CDs will be around, the best you’ll get from people like me is a tired smile. Believe it or not: As an old analog geek, I’ve never bought more than 30 CDs “new” so to speak in my whole life. The rest I’ve gotten over the years on the second-hand market. Now all I have to do is wait until the only thing out there are compressed audio downloads –

this should only take two or three years at the most – and then I can get my hands on those cheap piles of silver discs that every Tom, Dick and Harry will be trying to turn into cash on the flea market. Exactly the way they did, and are still doing, with their LPs. Once it’s on your hard drive, you don’t need that physical thing any more. That’s just the way things are today. I just can’t wait to buy piles of discs for a euro per stack. That’s going to be great! Food for my player... by the bushel... and no end in sight. Yeah, I’ll be sitting on thousands of CDs by the time they realize they’re being ripped off with MP3s. If they ever do

realize it. I say this because I’ve done a little research. In an act of teeth-gnashing self-abasement, I’ve listened to some laptops containing endless lists of music representing a cross section of everything from the past 30 years. Almost without exception, the proud owners of these bulging hard drives didn’t even know what format it was all in. Data reduction? What’s that? Umm, I don’t hear that anyway. And then out comes analog from the computer, “burned” or straight into the kind of system that 20 years ago neither you nor I would have found acceptable to hear in the bathroom. That, my dear friends, is the grim reality, and one where you hear the question as to



The next job for the Reimyo makers? Standardize the appearance of the transport and converter



The transport: A total of three – very special – mains transformers and all sorts of control technology to manage the power supply

whether there's a program out there to make the whole things "surround" – naturally with the assistance of the two (trash) speakers it's hooked up to. This too is reality – and simply the result of two decades of marketing with the thrust being "If it's digital, then it's gotta be good." And so now music marketers and consumer electronics have finally reached the destination they apparently always wanted to reach. If things continue like this, then in a few years we'll get the kind of 'sound' that would cause even Edison himself to despair. Maybe things will go the way they did during the big switch from

fixed-line to cellular phones: crappy voice quality, but reachable everywhere. Well, at least you can text message using Morse code. Welcome to the 21st century.

Oh, that's right. We were talking about the Reimyo transport/converter combination. The big guns for playing what will soon be obsolete software, the kind that makes sense to load up on if only because it will be the best sound you'll ever get in your entire life. The summit. Never will you be able to get closer to your favorite artists. In our special case, however, it makes no sense

to snap up the few SACDs still out there: the Reimyo only does its thing with CDs. Sorry. Would you be missing much? From a purely musical perspective? No, I don't think so.

Reimyo. That's the Japanese Combak Corporation. That's also chief tuner Kazuo Kiuchi, who not only stands out for his various toys (cables, tuning feet, power filters) designed to improve sound, but who especially impressed me with an extremely lavish 300B amplifier that was really mind-boggling good. Admittedly, this Japanese gentleman is battling on all fronts in the name of good sound:



Sliding door and CD "puck" – that takes time. But it does load fast...



Such transformers produce hardly any relevant stray fields



Separate voltage regulators supply the various sections of the transport

Electrical and mechanical measures, spikes, the most complex cables of every variety, special transformers, obscure components, heavy casings and covers and much more. The CDT-777 compact disc transport is no exception and relies on an imposing aluminum cabinet, which stands out with its tuning-feet “arms” and their finely adjustable spikes. Together with a weight of 14 kilos you can be sure that there will be no shaking going on here. In other words a perfect setup for the beautiful Philips CDM-12 Pro drive mechanism that we encounter here in the form of a top loader. The lid, well actually the horizontal sliding door, has to be opened and closed by hand, while below it there is naturally that obligatory CD “puck.” An exercise in manual dexterity for the purists to be sure, but at least the Reimyo drive loads in an acceptable time. The CDT-777 thinks a tiny bit longer; however, when a disc you’ve burned yourself lies under the lid – our just punishment perhaps. The first thing you notice inside this Fort Knox of transports are the three power transformers – specially built, we’ve heard, and with extremely low leakage. And along with that, of course, the supplying of energy to those sensitive parts of the transport is strictly separated. The Japanese also strapped one of their Enacom

parallel power filters right next to the power input filter. What’s more, the entire power supply’s wiring looks like it came right out of the magic cauldron of that wizard Kiuchi. Just so you know... the CDT-777 is with certainty the kind of base that leaves virtually no room for any mechanical or electrical improvement.

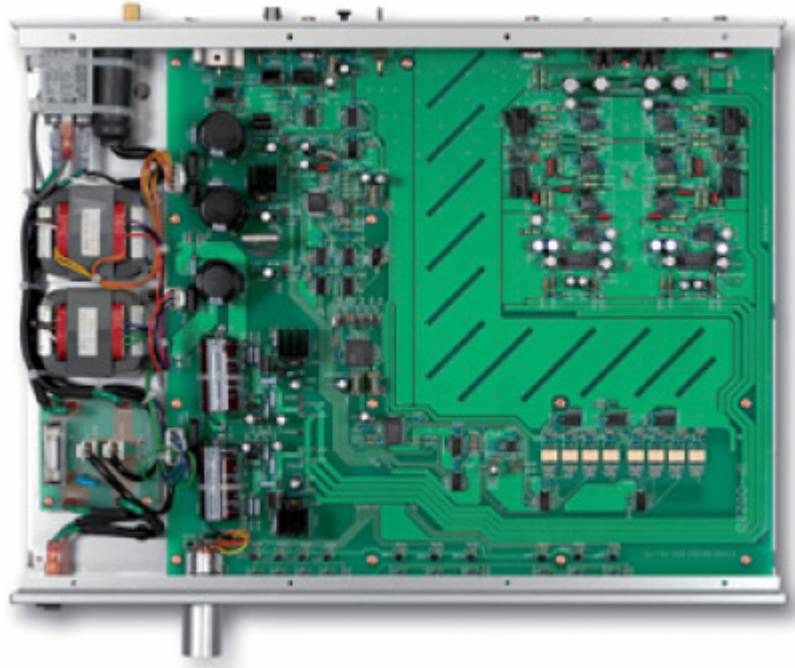
You can look, but you won’t find those standard interfaces on the back of the transport: There is just one super-special coaxial digital out in the form of a cinch outlet, that even old-timers – including me – didn’t recognize right away as being one. To go with it there is also a similarly super-special digital cable that runs to the DAP-777 digital/analog converter. Oh, yeah: The power switch for the transporter sits all by its lonesome on the back and won’t really have much to do – more about this later. Oddly enough, this DAC comes with a power switch on its faceplate. Yet appearance-wise, the converter and transport do not seem to have much in common as they were not designed at the same time and therefore come from two of the manufacturer’s different eras. So it is understandable that their different looks could bother some people interested in the products.

In contrast to the transporter’s sophisticated and adjustable feet, the converter makes do with much

less elaborate footgear, which means that a tiny piece of paper or two might be needed to achieve that proverbial state of balance. On the other hand, the back of this remarkable piece of equipment is loaded with just about everything that’s good and expensive in digital interfaces, including, by the way, the AES/EBU digital audio interface. For analog output you have the choice of symmetrical via XLR contacts or using the good old cinch plugs. The fact that there is an absolute phase switch is extremely praiseworthy, but that it’s found on the back is another reason for it to lose some points, were I keeping score.



Would you have recognized it?
No? It really is a cinch output.



Optocouplers (lower right, eight each) ensure what's called galvanic separation of the digital and analog circuits

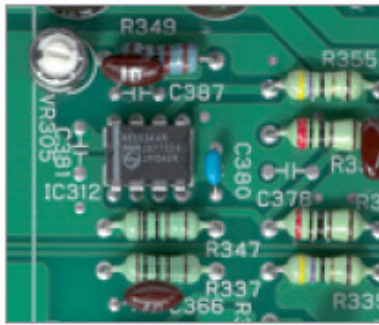
As usual, the Reimyo automatically locks in to the three accepted sampling frequencies of 48, 44.1 and 32 kilohertz. Upsampling? “No thanks” seems – unlike the fashion trend – to be the motto here. In its place we discover the 20-bit K2 processor from JVC with whose help the restoration of original signal forms succeeds a whole lot better than with the usual 16-bit standard. What’s more, this masterpiece also enables a higher bandwidth by up to two kilohertz. But that’s just one aspect of this impressive Reimyo converter under whose cover you’ll find a complex power supply with two transformers for the analog and digital parts. The complete

galvanic separation of the analog segment using optocouplers is the standard among good DACs. Along with that they’ve thrown in a relatively sophisticated, fully symmetrical output amplifier equipped with low-noise op amps ahead of which converters of type PCM1702 are hard at work. And before I forget: the DAP-777 also comes with a grounding clamp, a great idea from an electrical perspective. You can use a piece of doorbell wire to connect it to the grounding contact of the pre-amp. The only downer for me so far is that awful piece of plastic they call a remote control, which for some reason always winds up in my hand pointing the wrong way...

A more or less accidental experiment made with the transport/converter combo involved the Energia Definitiva “super power outlet” from HMS that was described in the previous issue. It also works as a convenient main switch that lets you turn the entire system on and off via remote control, whereby two of the outlets can be switched to run continuously even when the others are shut off. That explains why the DAC and the turntable are still on line, my tube amp has reached the summit of its sound within ten minutes and old habit makes the Platine Verdier hit the clutch to protect the motor from the heavy plate spinning too fast.



Symmetrically in, symmetrically out: the D/A converter



Low-noise OPs lie within the symmetrically operating output stage



The well-known PCM1702 is used as the digital-to-analog converter



The enigmatic current cleaner sits next to a standard power filter

Consequently, the Reimyo transport joined the game “cold” – a big mistake as I would quickly discover. The whole thing sounded, at least for the first 30 minutes or so, very uninspired – hell, let’s call a spade a spade: it sounded downright boring if not totally lethargic. An embarrassing surprise for the theory of electronics, which naturally states that a CD player is “merely” a mechanism designed to read out CDs with as few defects as possible. Please don’t ask me for any more in-depth explanations, since starting right now I’ve come to simply accept the CDT-777’s 15 watts of consumption.

One should also accept the fact that a multitude of electronic and mechanical measures, to include the power cords, can literally conjure up a very special, even different sort of sound. To what extent those not universally accepted and perhaps what one could call esoteric tuning elements have an impact on this is perhaps not an issue worth racking your brains out to answer. One thing is for sure as far as I’m concerned, and that is that components like these must be viewed as a complete work of art, whose individual parts cannot be

evaluated in isolation. Do Reimynos sound less “digital?” My answer is yes, if “less digital” means that the rapport between the listener and the stored audio gets more intimate. After so many years of CD listening, I am no longer willing to get involved in that old better-or-worse story of digital vs. analog. For me each has its own appeal, the same way that there are lousy records and exceptionally great CDs – and vice-versa.

Ergo, there’s not a Reimyo in the world that will get me to give up vinyl. This combination does of course provide more than ample incentive to expand my CD collection, because it brings forth that certain character that is miles away from mere indifferent reproduction. I would even wager to say that it sounds slightly softer, fuller and more pleasing than a great number of other players, while rekindling spatial information to a degree unmatched in any other price category. Playing in a manner that is stirring and tangible is something it can do more than just well, not to mention how it envelops, grasps and captivates the listener. Another thing I like is the overall tuning,

which although not mentionably tendentious, still never comes across as too austere or glass-thin, but lets its muscles show now and again, and puts its focus somewhat more on the important side. No mistake in the light of much of the newer canned music, whose overly brilliant headphone tuning awakens a yearning for tone controls.

With that the Reimyo has only fulfilled the required elements. The presentation portion, which is the part that really matters, takes place somewhere else entirely, namely deep inside each individual sound, or if you prefer, within the notes... That which elsewhere represents a sound, a tone to be registered if you will, behaves quite differently here: as a detail with the finest of structures, with more color than usual, as a multifaceted event of its own that you can be a part of without even having to concentrate. With a richness of additional information, tonal color and the most precise dynamic tuning, this combination really opens up the kind of broader horizons that only few players are capable even approaching. In truth it’s as if someone has

removed a delicate, yet noticeable, clear coat from the audio reproduction – rather like gently sweeping a fine veil aside to expose the beauty that lies underneath. This effect, by the way, no longer assumes a mere subtle nature – it lends the sound a different, more powerful stature that goes along with much greater expressiveness.

That there is – or must be – perfect timing is clear. This is the very field in which this Japanese combination performs as consummately as can possibly be, whereby a certain amount of

composure toward the repertoire is important, and that easy, melodious slipping away succeeds just as well as do the great dramas. When you put all this together with a laid-back, cool sound pattern and spatial information that stands out like a audio painting, then perhaps you could understand why someone might get the idea that the CDT-777 and DAP-777 could make vinyl recordings a thing of the past...

There are more than enough reasons for putting this

transport/converter combination in your living room as the last great audio monument to an era of consumer electronics that will soon be reaching its end. As usual, it's up audiophiles and collectors themselves to decide about the price-to-benefits aspect in such works of art, knowing with some certainty that something else, though hardly better, will be coming along. And, dear friends, as I said at the beginning: There will be more than enough CDs out there in the future.

Test System Components	
Turntable:	Platine Verdier
Tonearms:	EMT 309 (SME connector), SME 3012
Cartridges:	Shindo, Koetsu Black
Transformer:	A23 Hommage T1
CD/SACD Player:	Marantz SA-11S1 Series II
Phono Amp:	Shindo Laboratory Model Seven, Einstein The Turntable's Choice
Preamplifier:	Shindo Laboratory Aurièges-L
Power Amps:	Shindo Laboratory Palmer 300B, Welter Ebill, Pass Labs F3
Speakers:	A23 Rondo, Epos ELS 3
LF Speaker Cables:	Auditorium 23
Power Filter:	Energia Definitiva (HMS)
Power Cord:	HMS
Accessories:	"Die Bank" + D172 LF damper from the Norbert Gütte Carpenter's Shop, Acoustic Systems resonators, Acoustic Solid adjustment set

image x-tract
What we liked: The sound: subtle and refined instead of brash
What was missing: Uniform appearance and a worthy remote control
What surprised us: How much room there is for improvement and where ...
What to do: Don't set it up on shaky shelves, build no "altar" between the speakers, keep it connected to the power supply

image infos	
	
Outputs:	1 Cinch digital coaxial
Features:	Top-loader with CD "puck" and remote control
Size (WxHxD):	46/13/36 cm
Weight:	14 kg
Price:	8,200 euros
Reimyo DAP-777 D/A Converter	
Inputs:	1x Cinch digital coaxial 1 x XLR AES/EBU digital symmetric 1 x optical 1 x BNC digital coaxial
Outputs:	2 x Cinch 2 x XLR symmetric
Features:	Accepts 48, 44.1 and 32 kilohertz 20-bit K2 processor Phase inverter switch on back
Size (WxHxD):	43/6/36 cm
Weight:	5.3 kg
Price:	5,250 euros
Warranty:	2 years
image contact	
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