



COST NO OBJECT DAC OF THE YEAR Ideon Audio Absolute ε

Greek high-end audio makers are a small but extremely dedicated group of engineers. They routinely build products without compromise, and few companies typify that 'without compromise' stance better than Ideon Audio and products like the Absolute ε.

The original Absolute DAC was the product of years of R&D to find the best possible digital converter irrespective of cost. Having achieved that lofty goal, Ideon Audio didn't rest on its laurels, but instead went back to the drawing board to improve upon perfection. Three years later, the Absolute ε DAC was born, using wholly new zero-noise bridges, a redesigned symmetrical circuit layout and a combination of Thysecon drivers and a custom USB code by ESS for its receiver chip. All of which points to a DAC far beyond the ordinary.

In our test, Alan Sircom felt that, "This is a DAC of rare subtlety and finesse, like a synthesis of all the good things of all the best DACs with none of the idiosyncrasies. It demands you take it seriously and approach its settings with careful consideration, ideally performed over weeks of listening." He also felt that, "This isn't music declawed and sanitised; the energy and vibrant power of recordings is not held in check. It just doesn't have that steeliness or the bright, forward nature of many top-end DACs." And he concluded that, "in the listening it was clear this was a world-class device capable of doing what so many high-end DACs claim to do, but often fail to achieve in reality; make music sound like music. Real living, breathing musicians playing in your living room. There are lots of different interpretations of how digital audio is supposed to sound but Ideon makes it sound like real music."

The Ideon Audio Absolute ε DAC is one of the heaviest digital converters we have ever lifted onto the equipment table. The DAC also needs one of the longest running-in periods in order to get the best from it. However, the lifting and the waiting are worth the effort because it is also one of the best sounding DACs we have ever heard. +

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