



Played - heard:

- **John Zorn**
Filmworks XV
- **Marc Cohn**
Marc Cohn
- **Akademie für Alte Musik**
Bach,
Brandenburgische Konzerte
- **AC/DC**
Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap
- **Tool**
10000 Days

Periphery:

- Pre-amplifier MalValve Preamp three line
- Final stage: SymAsym
- Loudspeake: Lumen White Artisan

The Dinosaur

One can argue splendidly about this, whether the CD is a format with future or not. Nothing changes the task of eliciting information from the medium as musically as possible; billions of CDs will not suddenly land in the trash.





This, here, is a machine which should do exactly this. Considering the fact that it cannot do anything more than play CDs, it seems a little archaic in the year 2009. If this is the way you want to see it. You could also argue that if you want to obtain results of the highest standard, then a real specialist is required. In this case a player which does not play SACDs, Blue-Ray or MP3s. One which has an infrared laser which can read only CD pits but it does this really well. The SCD-010 from the Danish manufacturer Vitus Audio is such a device - and a really classy one at that. A 26-kilo monster for 15,000 Euros. In spite of all massiveness and extreme high-end gestures this is not an embellished box, this is an elegant and down-to-earth, well laid-out monument. Should black or titanium colours be preferred, this can lead to a saving of 1,000 Euros. According to rumours, the defectives quota in the production of the massive aluminium sheet plates is high - I find it difficult to speak of sheet because of the plate thickness - and for silver coloured Eloxal, the thickness of the sheet plate seems to be disproportional - this is the root of the unorthodox price politic. Vitus Audio - you don't know them? This is not surprising because although the small Danish company enjoys the highest reputation across the globe, it is not to be found on every street corner, it is produced in low quantities (and does not stint on price) and this is intended. The German country sales organization, for example, has been active only for the last two years, and they do not push these classy components in pallet loads into the marketplace, because there is considerably less equipment available than the demand. Vitus Audio has existed in principle since 1995, when hi-fi- crazy Hans Ole Vitus moved from professional electronics (marketing of digital signal processor at Texas Instrument). The "real" start was in 2005 when a man named Anders Grove came

on board; he is also said to be infected with the same high-fidelity bug as Hans Ole. Rumour has it that Grove was noticed measuring cartons of eggs with a calliper gauge in a supermarket to find eggs that could be used as high-frequency calotte membrane material.

And these two young guys knew no limit to their high-fidelity ambitions. Although the economic success of the enterprise is a given, this is in no way the decisive motivating force behind their actions. It is simply all about building the best high-fidelity components there can be. With no regard to potential losses, marketability or commonsense.

The first and only source equipment - apart from which there are also amplifiers and cables - offered by the Danes is, as with most suppliers in these sectors, a top loader. A top opening player that refuses to be crammed into a rack. A Philips disk drive appears from under the gently gliding cover, and this is in fact a strongly modified variant of the "CDpro2 LF", the highest calibre player ever manufactured by Philips. The CD is held by a non-magnetic puck on the spindle, this unusual design seems to function perfectly without slipping.

Vitus Audio has an optional completely metallic transmitter, but the series model remote control is also good.



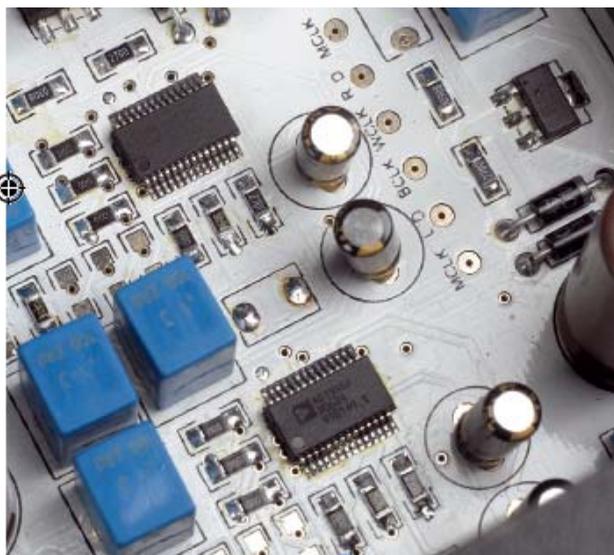


Things are moving: Four power supplies, an extremely solid disk drive and digital signal conditioning by Anagram Technologies, (pictured on the left below)

This is not a massive remote control monster but it is also not a cheap plastic device either – and this is acceptable. Externally it is difficult to improve the SCD-010; so the question remains, as to what justifies the considerable selling price, apart from the large quantities of aluminium. A glimpse under the cover reveals an absolutely technically uncompromising approach to the subject. The A/D transducer architecture is the least striking here: two AD1955 provide the full symmetrical signal conversion. The chips process input signals to 24 bit resolution with a 192 kHz sampling rate and are driven by an exclusive data feeder. Vitus Audio buys in from France two nearly legendary modules from the famous company, Anagram Technologies, namely an upsampling module and a "master clock". The first decouples the disk drive data stream from the signal conditioning jitter, made possible by the exquisite form of the clock-pulse

the data stream is processed exclusively to arrive in top condition at the transducers with less than 0.5 picoseconds jitter. Behind the converter chips, a discrete negative feedback free class-A output stage with an armada of SMDs takes command - of course fourfold, because of the symmetry. As for the device power supply, four transformers together with corresponding voltage regulation circuits are included– more than this is simply not required. . This is also the case for the underside of the Philips disk drive; the CNC miller was allowed to let off steam thoroughly on the hefty aluminium block. The result sits at the bottom of the equipment floating on bearings that decouples the disk drive from environmental influences.

Now I must admit that it has been a long time since an absolute top class CD player has fallen into my hands, and that we are used to solid and affordable representatives of the genre - reliable constructions that have stood the test of time, that sound good and give no reason to wish to exchange them. Okay, I must confess that we are perhaps a little behind with technological developments, but that which Vitus draws out of a CD has relatively little to do with what we are used to. Pulsating Jazz rotates under the sliding cover, the kind in likeness to John Zorn's "Filmworks XV".



The analog-to-digital conversion is done by two chips from Analog Devices

A discreet dot matrix display in the "ravine" between the approximately half inch-thick aluminium faceplates, shines orange through a coloured acrylic panel, offering information about the operating condition. Six aluminium keys let unobtrusively into the front panel permit access to elementary functions, directly on the apparatus, although the infrared remote control is mostly used.

The D/A transducer behaves faultlessly. Deviation in linearity manifests noticeably only at low frequencies where it is not an issue





In operation (left) a solid sliding lid seals off the drive and ensures minimal external influences affect the reading process. The CD is fixed by a puck (right) on the spindle of the drive.

An AC/DC disk is no highlight for the audio junky; it does not make Marc Cohn with his light nasal voice into a tenor hero, but such material sounds relaxed, light and soulful from the Vitus. A better job is not possible.

Holger Barske

The peaceful work characterised by a wonderful combination of e-piano and Arabian sounds by the American composer usually only works for me as easy listening music - I must confess in the meantime that I have done the album a terrible wrong. In fact the SCD-010 actually represents an absolute pleasure that immediately casts its spell over the listener. The Vitus fills the room effortlessly with a cocoon of deep tones – the normal annoying carpet of bass sound is transformed into a living, breathing sound cosmos with deep frequency vibrations of every colour. In doing so, it is not thick or slow; it has an unbelievable softness and subtlety throughout. These impressions also are found in the tones of the Arabian stringed instruments (I occasionally pluck the strings on an “oud”)

energetic, perfect, listenable, completely smooth and sovereign. This suggests rather convincingly an absolute measure of realism – with an LP this happens now and again; with a CD this was new to me. Similarly announced was the wonderful introduction of Bach’s Brandenburger concerts played by the Berliner Akademie für Alte Musik; I cannot recall that I have ever heard the musicians perform in front of such a perfect, peaceful, black backdrop. Played so competently the CD loses most of the artificiality that is often a reason for valid criticism. The Vitus does a better job all the more convincingly the better prepared the “fodder” is but also with productions from the rock/pop métier, it performs magic.



Vitus Audio SCD-010

- Sales Empire Deutschland GmbH, Duisburg
 - Telephone 0203 / 75999004
 - Internet www.empire-hifi.de
 - Price 14,000 Euro
 - W x H x D mm 435 x 130 x 430
 - Weight about 35 kg
 - Guarantee 2 years
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- Playable formats Audio CD
 - Connections analog out XLR/cinch
digital in XLR/cinch
digital out XLR/cinch
 - Harmonic distortion 1V/1 kHz 0.063 percent
 - Signal-to-noise ratio 1 V 103 dB(A)



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“Perhaps the CD belongs to a dying breed”, and perhaps the time is past as one could ask 15,000 Euro for a pure CD player. One thing is completely clear: if you listen to this unbelievable machine – you can’t give a care – it sounds fantastic.

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The SCD-010 has excellent converter selection that is also available to other digital sources; additionally the device can also communicate with other devices