

hifi
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AUDIONET

Optical In 4 Out Of Lock
D9 -39 dB

DNP
Digital Network Preampfier

AUDIONET

EPX
External Power Supply

»The Twin-turbo«-preampfier:

Audionet DNP / EPX

At the onset of my audiophile passion I was very proud of my Arcam Delta 60 amplifier, especially because of its spartan features. For until today purism has always remained an essential part of high-end, as it has often proved a recipe for sonic culture. In this regard the Audionet DNP's four-button front panel is a true blessing. But what happens behind the solid aluminium front, might be one of the most broadband equipping currently available on the market.

To begin with, the DNP (which stands for »Digital Network Pre-amplifier«) functions as a purebred analogue preamp that can also beef up e.g. the signals from a turntable (a phono module is optionally available). Then the display – certainly not just to reassure digital phobics – reads »Pure Analog«. In this case the DNP works indeed in the analogue domain. This is complemented by optical and coaxial digital inputs, which can be fed e.g. with data from a CD player or a sat receiver. An excellent idea by the way, for the ultra precise D/A converters in the DNP and the analogue output stage should easily outperform the majority of the current players on the market soundwise. Moreover the DNP offers USB and network connections, all of them 24 bit / 192 kilohertz compliant.

What takes a little getting used to, however, is the sight of a WLAN antenna that is only required if no network cable is in place. The fact that these connections have something to do with the subject of internet radio and music streaming is obvious and also correct. Something that certainly represents a totally new dimension with regard to operation and utilisation and eclipses even the most functional remote control, is the »RCP« (Remote Control Point) software which is available for Mac and PC. It allows to select the different inputs with the greatest possible clarity and also rename them, if required. Level corrections can be made for each input, and even a smart bass management (active crossover, level and delay time adjustment, room equalisation)

Review: Preamplifier Audionet DNP + power supply EPX

The Audionet DNP is the perfect synthesis of digital and analogue amplifier. With the EPX power supply it climbs the peak of sovereignty.

for different speaker configurations is there. Wait a minute, there's more to come.

Armed with the free Audionet Carma 4.0 software, laptop and microphone you can check your private listening room for strong and weak points. After the measurements the gathered data are imported directly into the RCP programme. With up to five fully parametric filters the biggest flaws can be levelled out. In a specially built test setup we managed to suppress a bass resonance at 39 hertz efficiently so that music listening became also possible in a difficult room. To spare the user a full reprogramming cycle each time depending on source devices and speaker configurations, the Audionet offers 20 memory locations. During the review I was using at least three of them.

On the rear side of the DNP there is also the 7-pole connection for an external power supply. Yet this contact is not designed for the established and proven EPS, but for the new super power supply called EPX. A component of which I had first thought that I wouldn't need it because of the sound quality the DNP can deliver already on its own. Up to that point in time when I took the EPX out of my chain again and had to notice that its performance makes itself felt primarily between the notes. The view under the bonnet of this deluxe powerhouse makes me rather think of a potent power amp. Two large toroidal mains transformers each with 200 VA and an army of capacitors, custom-made for Audionet and mounted vibration-dampened with an overall capacitance of 576,000 microfarads or – to illustrate this mighty dimension even better – half a farad can be seen there (see overleaf picture). Such huge efforts are made by the engineers to feed the DNP with 24 volts DC, which, however, should be without equal in terms of velocity, stability and load independence. In our measuring lab the DNP and EPX provided an impressive evidence of the technically flawless construction.

The EPX is powered on and off via the DNP. A short time after its activation the power supply

The Twin-turbo

kicks in as well. In my listening room the Audionet AMP mono blocks have also been in use for quite a while so that I could fall back on a matching amplifier ensemble. It's not only the sound quality that greatly astounds me, but the obvious gain in informative content as well as the 1:1 atmospheric transfer of the recording situation which still seems to be possible after all. In this context an experience from study days inevitably comes to my mind. I will not forget that evening in autumn 1994. Together with some classmates I was heading for the Cologne Philharmonie to visit a concert of the Hindu Trilok Gurtu whom I didn't know then. There had been talking of drums and percussion beforehand, and so I was wrongly bearing the picture of an Asian Charly Antolini in mind. But I was expected by a concert with incredible nu-

ances, entwined melodies, tonal subtleties and a resulting overall atmosphere which led to some sort of group meditation with the audience. In retrospect this impression could not be revived again over any system.

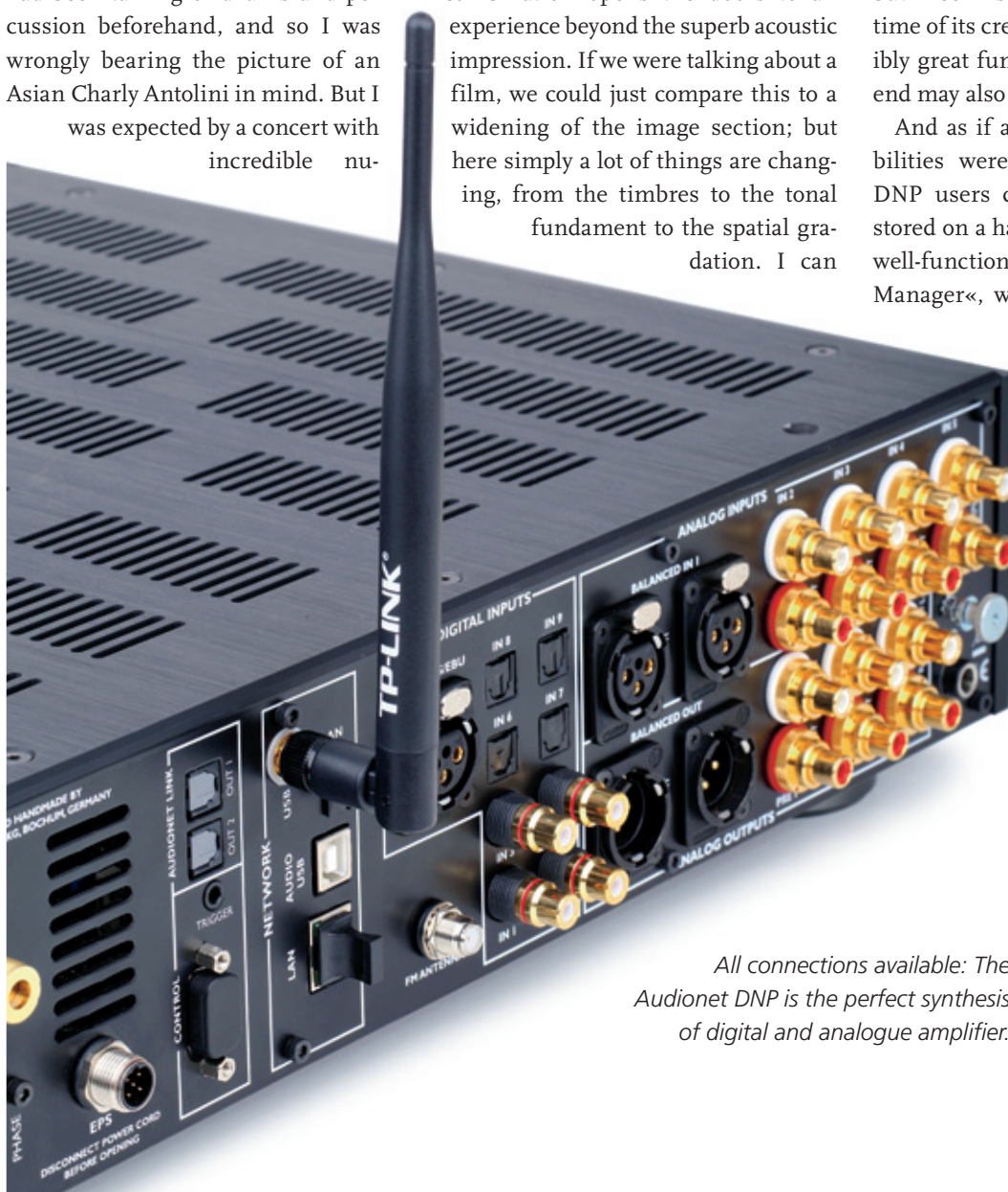
For the solo appearance of the DNP this statement still holds true, but not when it is teamed with the EPX. This combination opens the doors to an experience beyond the superb acoustic impression. If we were talking about a film, we could just compare this to a widening of the image section; but here simply a lot of things are changing, from the timbres to the tonal fundament to the spatial graduation. I can

figure that ears which are trained to a superficial listening cannot appreciate this, or only on a very limited scale. It would be absurd indeed if the DNP could be turned into a new preamp just by adding the EPX.

When »Spinning Wheels« by Blood, Sweat & Tears is playing, I do not only hear this track without any limitations, but I feel instantly taken back into the time of its creation – and this is incredibly great fun. You got me right, high-end may also be a bringer of fun!

And as if all those numerous possibilities weren't already enough, the DNP users can manage their music stored on a harddisk by means of the – well-functioning (!) – »Audionet Music Manager«, which is available for the

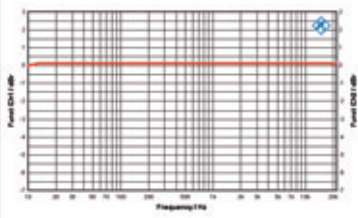
iOS and Android operating systems. So I'm sitting in front of the system with the iPad, compiling a playlist and I'm convinced of the sound quality. For the first time I give up the malapropism of the Supertramp song »Dreamer«, for at trade shows like the High End the phrase »Streamer, nothing but a streamer ...« kept crossing my mind as an adaptation of the original lyrics, because so many representatives of this device



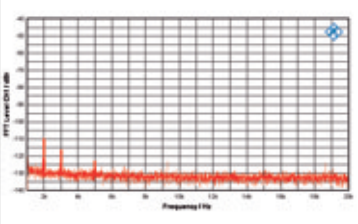
All connections available: The Audionet DNP is the perfect synthesis of digital and analogue amplifier.

Lab report

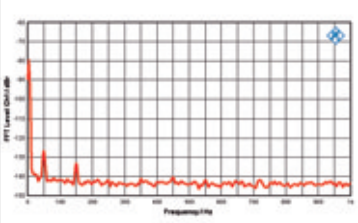
Frequency response: Audionet DNP/EPX



Harmonic distortion: Audionet DNP/EPX



Noise: Audionet DNP/EPX



Preamplifier Audionet DNP/EPX

Gain factor	3,3x / 10,3dB
max. output voltage	6,56V
Distortion (THD+N)	0,0005 %
IM distortion (SMPTE)	0,0005 %
IM distortion (CCIF)	0,0003 %
S/N ratio (unweighted)	-102,5 dB
S/N ratio (A-weighted)	-105,0 dB
Upper cut-off frequency (-3dB)	> 185 kHz
Channel deviation	0 dB
Input impedance (1kHz)	44,5 kΩ
Output impedance (1kHz)	24 Ω
DC output offset	< 0,5 mV
Power consumption	~ 86 W

The measuring lab was full of praise for the DNP plus EPX; from the metrological point of view the duo with its unbalanced analogue signal path is on the same reference level like an Accuphase C-3800 or Soullution 720, whose distortion spectrum is virtually indistinguishable from that of the DNP / EPX. The S/N ratios are excellent and the IM distortions so low that they can hardly be measured. State of the art – it can't get any better. ■

type play so clinically without any rhythm. The Audionet DNP does not expose itself to the slightest suspicion of sound losses here. Au contraire, it even plays back data reduced material not on an endurable, but acceptable level, which is true independently from the use of the EPX. To me, convincing aspects of its reproduction are primarily its dynamic capabilities, the spatial gradation, natural transparency and above all the seemingly infinite energy, which never gets out of control.

In confirmation hereof I'm now treating myself to Beethoven's Ninth featuring Paavo Järvi as the conductor. My foot! Not a bit of »O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!« [Oh friends, not these sounds!] – the Audionet equipment becomes a hundred percent concert transmitter, a large window appears



Audionet DNP/EPX

WxHxD	43 x 10,5 x 36 cm
Warranty	3 Years
Price	9.990/4.990 Euro
Distribution	Idektron
	Herner Straße 299/Gebäude 6
	44809 Bochum, Germany
Phone	(0049) 2 34 - 50 72 70



The EPX offers more than half a farad of energy storage capacity for the DNP.

between the speakers, revealing an undiluted view of the music. The systemic boundary between listener and music is completely dissolving, particularly when the external EPX power supply comes into play. I haven't known this from my listening spot, and therefore it will probably take quite a while before I will have revised all my treasures in the light of the Audionets.

Result

Already today the Audionet DNP gives the answer to the question how a future high-end command centre must look like. The symbiosis of analogue, digital and USB/network components in one enclosure is simply a perfect success. In combination with the EPX precision power supply we have an audiophile twin-turbo, which to me seems to be without any alternative right now. *Olaf Sturm* ■