

M2TECH DAC YOUNG MKIII

Riccardo Mozzi listens to the latest DAC of the M2Tech family, an entry-level audiophile converter that is also offered with the MQA encoder

M2Tech is active on the national and, above all, international market for several years, thanks to the intuitions of its owner Ing. Marco Manunta. The first product I met was the HiFace interface system that at the dawn of liquid music has allowed the first approaches to this system of reproductions to many fans (it was offered at less than 100 Euros ...), including yours truly.

I then had the chance to listen to the Vaughan top-of-the-range DAC, currently out of production, which aroused in me quite contrasting impressions. In the face of extraordinary transparency and reproduction detail, at times it seemed that this DAC offered a somewhat artificial, not very natural sound.

The DAC Young was a bit like the workhorse of M2Tech. Already from its first version it had the possibility of conversion very extensive and typical of products of another price level; this third version implements new possibilities, as well as confirming the continuous evolution of sampling frequencies that reach 384 kHz for the PCM and a good 4x for the native DSD. A great novelty lies in the possibility of decoding MQA files, a system created by Meridian that promises to supplant the 'universal' MP3 with a quality similar to that CD and with a 'heaviness' comparable to that of compressed MP3 files: if they are roses ... (on this topic we will come back heavily on a future issue of Audiophile sound: I have heard too many conflicting opinions not to dedicate to the work of Bob Stewart of the Meridian articles that will make A/B comparisons to see if it is pink water or No. Various critics will write their impressions and I will make a maxi comparison between master, CD in WAV files and WAV files encoded with MQA.

A juicy news for this version is the possibility of being connected to a Bluetooth source, in addition to maintaining the indispensable optical, coaxial, AES-EBU and, of course, USB connections.

There is also an analogue input, which allows the Young III to also act as a preamp thanks to the possibility of adjusting the volume (adjustable steps 0.5 or 1.0 dB), also possible by remote control. These plugs will thus be able to connect the latest Nash phono preamp that, together with the Crosby finals, could constitute a chain of high performance level, relatively modest cost, attractive aesthetics and, why not, reduced size.

The outputs are only balanced, but M2Tech provides a pair of XLR - RCA adapters so you can connect to any preamplifier. The trigger output for switching on other devices is also present. The power supply is external and also seems a little minute, but of course the House also provides a separate power supply (van der Graaf) that should provide even higher performance than the already good of our Young with his phone transformer, probably as regards the dynamics of reproduction.

The front panel boils down to exhibit the multifunction knob and a function selection key, in addition to the indispensable matrix display for controlling the appliance. A practical remote control implements all the functions and allows the control of the entire M2Tech chain of the Rockstars series.

SOUND ANALYSIS

The Young MkIII was 'hosted' in the system (quite modest ...) present in the studio, but to test the actual performance possibilities I used it mainly in the admiral plant, comparing it with the 'old' Playback MPD3. Yes, because a DAC of over six years of life would be considered obsolete; evidently Koch's vision (the patron of Playback Designs) has been such that this machine is still up to date not only in the decoding capacity (384 kHz to keep this machine still in view of the performance in the listening room. I still have this machine and various commitments I have not had the opportunity to listen to it too long (and therefore probably rode it properly ...), so the ones that follow are only the first listening notes: we promise to return to ' topic once all critical listening analyzes have been exhausted.

The listening system continues to rotate around fixed points made up of Avalon Eidolon loudspeakers, Spectral amplification (pre DMC3OSL G2 and final DMA260) and, above all, from the room with an acoustic treatment which involves not only the immachable DAAD but also the Low Master traps of the Oudimmo (and the Acoustic Art panels) and the AStri panels.

Already from the first listen you can appreciate the sound imprint that seems to be typical to keep this machine still current that is great transparency, richness of details and openness in tonal balance. to keep this little machine still current in the constructive nature of the hyperrealism of the Vaughan converter seems to be here a little more contained, in favor of a greater equilibrium: the sense of airiness that this machine emanates is really excellent, proof of a design that did not keep this machine still mentioned this possibility of super-feeding. The timbric balance is therefore directed towards the light and clear colors, although the presence of a bass still maintain this machine lucidity. All the details of the score are taken into consideration and it seems that something has been left out only when the comparison with the aforementioned (and overly praised ...) Playback MPD3.

The speed test gave a very positive result, since the Spectral did not seem to have ever been slowed down by the presence of the Young: far from it. In this regard, it is worth mentioning also the good performance with regard to the faithful reconstruction of the soundstage that appears as well as airy (but this we have already said) also well shaped, with a width that only the top of the range seem to achieve, which allows to outline the music-keep this machine still current Once installed inside the plant placed in a less performing system, the Young has had an easy life compared to the very good Denon DA30, however, cost about a quarter ... The performance differences are however less marked than those that could emerge if the two DACs had been placed in a more performing listening chain, precisely because of the not excessive resolution of the implant placed in the study (amplification NAD 317 and loudspeakers JBL L150).

CONCLUSIONS

The list of Young MkIII is 1400 euros, but on the net I have seen that it is proposed to significantly lower figures, which makes it even more attractive, considering the versatility very pushed and the possibilities of conversion that will foresee a distant obsolescence; in addition, of course, to the excellent performance (in reference to the price list) that this converter is able to offer in the listening room.

Riccardo Mozzi