

## Italo high-tech DAC

Test: M2Tech Young MkIV

*With the 4th edition of the Young DAC, M2Tech presents the latest version of its successful converter. We have ordered the external, high-quality power supply Van Der Graaf MkII and have tested both together extensively.*

*The DAC Young MkIV above, the Van Der Graaf MkII power supply below.*

In our DAC purchase advice series, we introduce you to another, rather unknown digital converter, the M2TECH DAC Young MkIV, which has an insider tip status. We were all the more curious about the device.

M2Tech Srl is based in beautiful Pisa. High-tech electronics are not the first things people associate with Pisa. Like many of you, the tester stood in front of the world-famous leaning tower many years ago and took the usual tourist photos. Hopefully nothing is wrong with the high-tech company M2Tech, because M2Tech sells its products worldwide (even New Zealand is served with high-tech made in Pisa). The test device was made available to us by the Swiss distributor Audio Léman. The M2Tech range is quite extensive, only speakers and turntables are completely missing. But Italy is full of good loudspeaker manufacturers and so the focus in Pisa is entirely on electronic components.

The digital/analog converter tested here, called Young MkIV, is part of the “Rockstars” series, which even includes an A / D converter for vinyl recordings. Together with the Young DAC, we received the Van Der Graaf Mk II power supply, which is also part of the Rockstars line.

### **The test object**

The Young MkIV DAC costs CHF 2250, the optional power supply Van der Graaf MkII costs CHF 1099. The equipment of the Young MkIV is almost complete. The small 20x20cm housing seems to be crammed with electronics right up to the aluminum ceiling. Visually, all Rockstars components are almost identical, the design is somewhat based on the Bauhaus style. Everything is functional, reduced to the minimum and makes for understatement - almost a bit Swiss for an Italian product.

Technically, the latest MkIV version is equipped with the very last gadgets in the digital audio world. The AK4497 converter from AKM used by M2Tech processes the MQA format, as well as the PCM format up to 768 kHz and DSD 512. The volume control enables the owner to use the Young DAC as a preamplifier. The volume of each individual output can even be regulated individually. The supplied remote control is clear and can be operated intuitively, and there is also an app for Android smartphones. A high-quality 6.35 mm headphone output, which is driven by a Class AB amplifier from Texas Instruments, completes the equipment. The golden cherry on the M2Tech DAC cake is definitely the aptX-coded Bluetooth receiver. So every smartphone can easily pass the blue tooth radio signal to the Young Mk, bravissimo!

We were also able to test the M2Tech Van Der Graaf MkII power supply together with the Young DAC. The 3 kg power supply has four outputs and drives additional M2Tech components. Visually identical to the other Rockstars components, it blends in inconspicuously and can be switched on and off with the remote control.

## **Listening test 1 - without Van Der Graaf power supply**

The first listening session without a Van der Graaf power supply took place after a break-in time of approx. 50 hours. Digital supplier was a popular streamer, my work device, the now well-rehearsed Aavik I-180, was used as an amplifier.

I played through my regular repertoire of my Qobuz test playlist. What immediately stood out was the enormous resolution of the Young MkIV! He definitely prefers high quality recordings; poorer recordings are punished mercilessly and not pimped up. A certain relationship to the recently tested RME DAC could be heard. After all, they both have the same AKM DAC chip. The M2Tech conjured up a much larger stage in my listening room, the musical performance was almost holographic. The tonality was rather bright, as modern DACs sound like today. But it was absolutely never harsh. The bass was well timed and seamlessly embedded in the sound. But I couldn't suppress my curiosity about the power supply from Van Der Graaf for too long ... and so it goes on:

## **Listening test 2 - with the external Van Der Graaf power supply**

The conversion from the simple plug-in power supply to the Van Der Graaf was described in the operating instructions available online, but I still had to fumble a bit. Whether that was due to me or the operating instructions or both, we cover it with silence.

The mentioned fiddling was more than rewarded! Wow what happened there? I no longer recognized the Young MkIV. Without the Van Der Graaf power pack he behaved like a subtle model pupil and now became an emotional animal - and in an absolutely positive sense! The music now got the famous groove and drive - and it was grounded. It seemed as if Patricia Barber simply had more air on "A Taste of Honey"; and Brian Bromberg's funky bass had even more drive. At the same time, there was more calm and precision in the sound without losing the holographic space. The famous foot rocking effect set in and I just didn't want to stop listening to my playlist. What better compliment?

## **Conclusion**

The digital/analog converter M2Tech Young MkIV from the Italian high-end forge M2Tech has an insider tip status for a reason! It is cutting-edge and fully equipped and, together with the Van Der Graaf power supply, it grows into absolute high-end realms in terms of sound. Not that it would be bad without the high-quality power supply, but the better is always the enemy of the good. You can do it without an optional power supply unit, but you are definitely missing out. The fact that you can also upgrade other M2Tech components with the same power supply unit makes the additional financial investment almost a bargain! Bravo, M2Tech - grazie per la musica!