

07.10.12

by Gianluca Polidoro



English label and living legend of the market, Musical Fidelity has manufactured in the last years very interesting equipments. With its thirty years of experience in audio devices and through the agency of the last manufacturing technique innovations, it has become a company capable of offering to the hi-fi world equipments with an optimum quality/price ratio. No need to say that we all have had at home a MF gear, haven't we? You surely remember the model **A1** - 20 watts Class A integrated amplifier - made in 1984: a fantastic amp – damn! I sold it – still demanded among hi-fi enthusiasts, or the **A370** made in 1986, that the press defined at that time the best British solid-state amp among all the others. In 1990 came out the **SA470**, another grand amp, and in 1996 the **X10D** line-level preamplifier, with its cylindrical shape and technological content. And all the other models that you can find on the Musical Fidelity Official Timeline (<http://www.musicalfidelity.com/about-us/timeline/>) and that have marked the time of the worldwide hi-fi.

For this test we have at our disposal a digital two chassis pair made of a transport and a converter called **M1CDT** and **M1DAC** respectively. The two devices have been delivered to me in two cartons weighing 3.5/4 kg each, well protected and wrapped with care.

Let's start with the M1CDT, list price around 745.00 euro. The M1CDT is a perfect partner for the M1DAC; together they are a valuable duo if compared to their price. This transport can read several formats like CD, CDDA, CD-R, CD-RW and has also the CD Text function.

The front panel has a simple design with all the controls below the CD slot. In fact, we are dealing with a slot-loading CD transport, unusual thing for a device with so high performances. The display is easy to read, clear and not annoying also in the night sessions. Also the white silk-screen prints on the black frontal are clear. The controls



are just the essential ones: power on/standby, play/pause, stop, track back, track forward, eject buttons, IR receiver lens for remote control. Is that it? That's it. It is a Brit product.



The front panel is satinized and coarse, but also anti-imprint and scratch-resistant. The chassis stands on solid and strong feet and it is made of thick metal sheet inert to strokes.

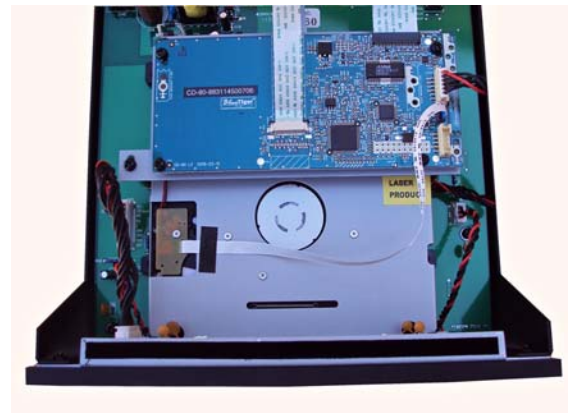
The back panel presents the IEC mains input for the 220 V, the optical Toslink digital connector S/PDIF, the digital coaxial RCA connector S/PDIF and one unusual AES/EBU balanced digital output, besides the usual RCA line connectors. Various indeed the possibility of interfacing. Looking inside, you immediately note the reading mechanism, just below the control card and the power supply stage. This last one is very trim and is composed of seven separate sections with a double filter as power conditioning system. The wiring is minimal and very tidy.

A remote control and a power cable are provided too. I personally have run the test with this cable although it can be changed with something more valuable.

The transport is quick while searching the tracks and in the control of the initial stage, never wrong during the tests and noiseless.

The M1DAC converter, as I said before, is a great match for the M1CDT transport and even if its look is quite conventional, inside it hides original peculiarities.

For its price, of about 520.00 euro, it represents a unique and very performing DAC.



In the back panel are the four digital inputs: XLR balanced, AES/EBU digital inputs, RCA coaxial S/PDIF 32-192 kbps 16-24 bit stereo PCM, optical TOSLINK connector 32-96 kbps 16-24 bit stereo PCM and USB type "B" for asynchronous computer, an innovation as compared with the former model, which allows a 360° interface of the apparatus, making possible to listen to the streaming music from PC or Mac. The computer scanning is given with musicality without compromising or mortifying the normal hi-fi listening parameters.

To complete the inner analysis, I want to underline the opposite high-quality power supply circuitry, fed by a R-Core transformer which gives more immunity from noise.



Turned on, the l'M1DAC indicates with a blue led the input signal velocity at 32KHz, 44.1KHz, 48KHz, 88KHz, 92KHz, 192KHz.

Other LEDs are vertically piled up on the right, above a switch that enables the selection of the input signal.

On the front panel are also the power mains and a 192 KHz upsampling green signal LED.

The digital to analogue conversion is made by two **Burr-Brown DSD1796** chips in dual-differential mode to get the lowest noise floor. They are supported by a pair of **Burr-Brown SRC4392** sample-rate converter chips. All the input signals are oversampled to 24 bit/192 Hz before the conversion, to let any noises outside the audible range.

The chassis, solid and tidy, offers a good damping to vibrations. The aluminium feet give a stylish look, the signs are clear and the components are of quality. PBC well done and internal cleaning of the wiring. In sum great care of the particulars. Nothing is leaves to chance.

There has put great care also in the sound. The M1DAC has an open and very dynamic character, it makes the listening easy and easily if fascinates.

The bass range is harmonious and agile; the mid clear and expressive catch the sound and give it back without altering the timbre. The high range is subtle and sharp when required, but without exaggerating.

Basically a pleasant, energetic and involving DAC that offers several inputs and can interface itself with several transports or PCs.

I have started my test with the PC: my **Sony Vaio** laptop, **USB M2Tech** pen drive, with digital cable.

The setup I have used is composed, as usual, by two mono amps with the 211 interchanged with the D class small amp and my reference **Glas't** speakers: two-way in pneumatic suspension.

The sound is very enjoyable and the soundstage very wide.

I have started with the test disc *The Ozone Percussion Group* by the Manger's album, *Musik wie von einem anderen Stern*. Track 14, very energetic with a variety of sounds, percussions and bells that lay bare the limits of the components. Practically a severe test track. As soon as I have increased the volume I have heard big hits of drum bass... but knowing the limits of my system I have come back to the volume I usually have.



As second track I have chosen the voice of Diana Krall with *Just The Way You Are* from the album *Live in Paris*. I have listen to the entire work of this amazing performer! The M1DAC is more refined if compared to my M1DAC of the same manufacturer, but also more detailed, more capable of better handle the most complex passages. There is more breath and the scene is wider, the timbres are more natural and the bass is rounded without being dry. The voice are thicker and more natural. Maybe that is due to a better power supply that this DAC employs.

In all the tests the tracks have the right sound, in a pleasant musical and free day.

After the streaming music now it is time to test the silver discs.

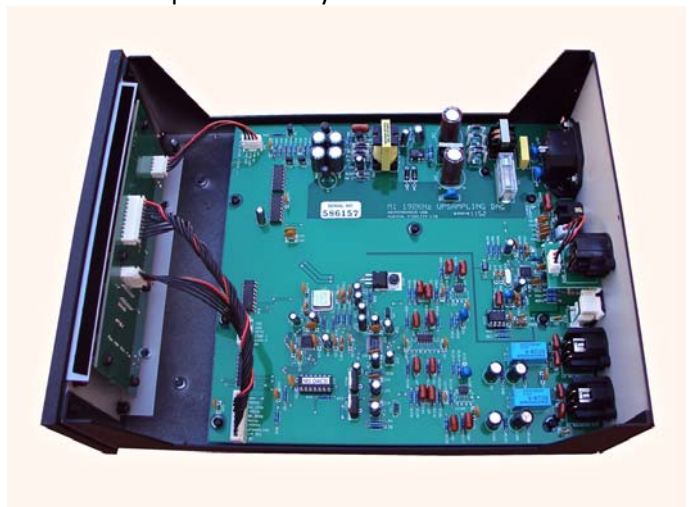
A famous group of the '70s. The group with the greatest number of African and Afro American styles, mainly jazz e R&B: the Earth, Wind & Fire.

I have to thank a friend of mine who made me discover this amazing group. He used to listen to them twelve hours a day pacing the music while he was driving. I have started with the most famous songs like *Sing a Song*, *Fantasy*, *Can't Hide Love* and a CD collection. I have got the entire discography, by the way.

I have got-together in one of those Afro American parties of the '70s with a pair of showy bell-bottom trousers and bushy hair. The rhythms are strong and involving, full of energy and the Musical Fidelity is giving back that energy without any effort. I have started to beat time on the table as did my friend on the wheel of his R5 Parisienne!

The M1CDT together with the M1DAC forms a valuable two chassis duo at a profitable price considering the versatility of the DAC and the quality of the transport. If we also add the M1CLiC universal digital commander, you can handle the music both in digital and analog format through the M1ViNL pre Phono MM/MC module. You can put them side by side or piled up, maybe also distant: the outcome does not change.

Unfortunately also these electronics have taken flight leaving an empty space in my listening room.



Official technical specifications:

M1CDT

Outputs: 1x line level RCA, 1x RCA coaxial connector (Digital SPDIF), 1x Toslink optical connector (Digital SPDIF), 1x XLR AES/EBU balanced digital connector

Dimensions: 220x100x300mm (WxHxD)

Weight (unpacked / packed): 3.5 kg / 4 kg

M1DAC

Jitter: <12 picoseconds peak to peak

THD(+ noise): <0.0025% 10Hz to 20kHz

Frequency Response: +0, -1dB, 5Hz to 100 kHz

Inputs: 1x XLR AES balanced digital input, 1x RCA coaxial connector SPDIF 32-192 kbps (16-24 bit stereo PCM), 1x TOSLINK optical connector 32-96 kbps (16-24 bit stereo PCM), 1x USB type 'B' connector for computer/PDA - 16-24 bits, 32-96 kbps (determined by source file/computer settings)

Outputs: 1x line level RCA (phono), 1x line level XLR (balanced)

Dimensions: 220x100x300mm (WxHxD)

Weight (unpacked / packed): 3.4 kg / 4.1 kg

Official current price in Italy: M1CDT 745.00 EUR, M1DAC 525.00 EUR

Associated equipment: to Gianluca Polidoro system

(http://www.remusic.it/index.php?MasterId=g1_276&id_item=276&lng=3&node=330&rif=587dce2a39)

UPSAMPLING
D/A CONVERTOR

m1DAC

by MUSICAL FIDELITY

UPSAMPLING
AT 192kHz

COAXIAL

AES BALANCED

OPTICAL

USB

INPUT SELECT

POWER STBY

44.1kHz 48kHz 88.2kHz 96kHz 176.4kHz 192kHz

INCOMING SAMPLE RATE

CAUTION

MOUNT UNIT ON SOLID SURFACE. DO NOT REMOVE SCREWS OR COVERS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. NO USER SERVICEABLE COMPONENTS INSIDE. REFER SERVICING TO QUALIFIED ENGINEER. SEE OWNERS MANUAL FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

XLR BALANCED OUTPUT

RIGHT



LEFT



AUDIO OUTPUT

L



R



DATE OF MANUFACTURE

MAR 2012

AES BALANCED DIGITAL INPUT



USB DIGITAL INPUT



OPTICAL DIGITAL INPUT



COAXIAL DIGITAL INPUT



m1DAC

192KHZ UPSAMPLING DIGITAL TO ANALOG CONVERTER

by

MUSICAL FIDELITY

SERIAL NUMBER



DESIGNED IN ENGLAND BUILT IN TAIWAN

INPUT VOLTAGE 90-250V

50/60Hz

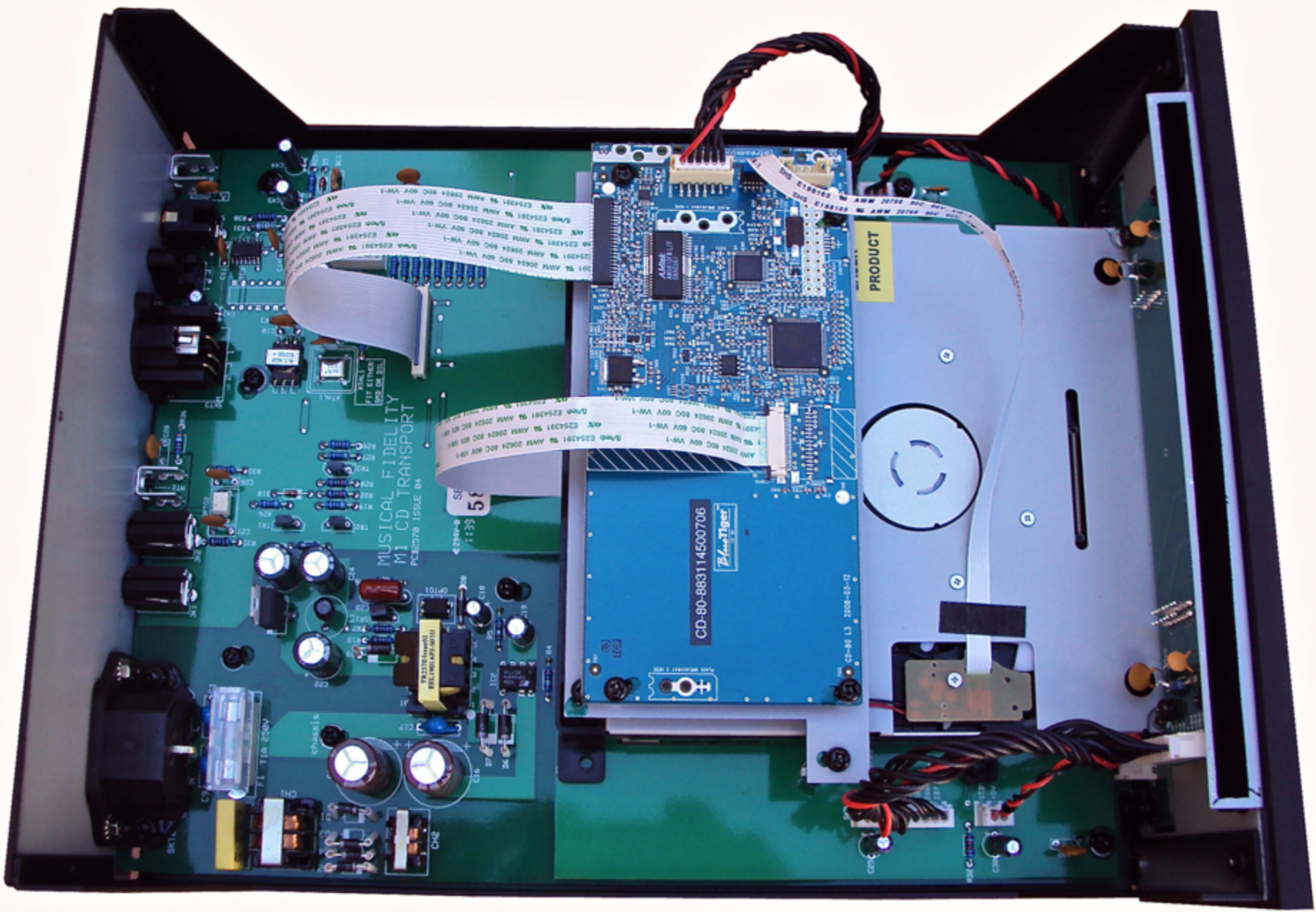
THIS APPLIANCE MUST BE EARTHED

IMPORTANT



POWER CONSUMPTION 10W





MUSICAL FIDELITY
MI CD TRANSPORT
PC33078 159UE 04

CD-80-883114500706
BlueTiger
ELECTRONICS

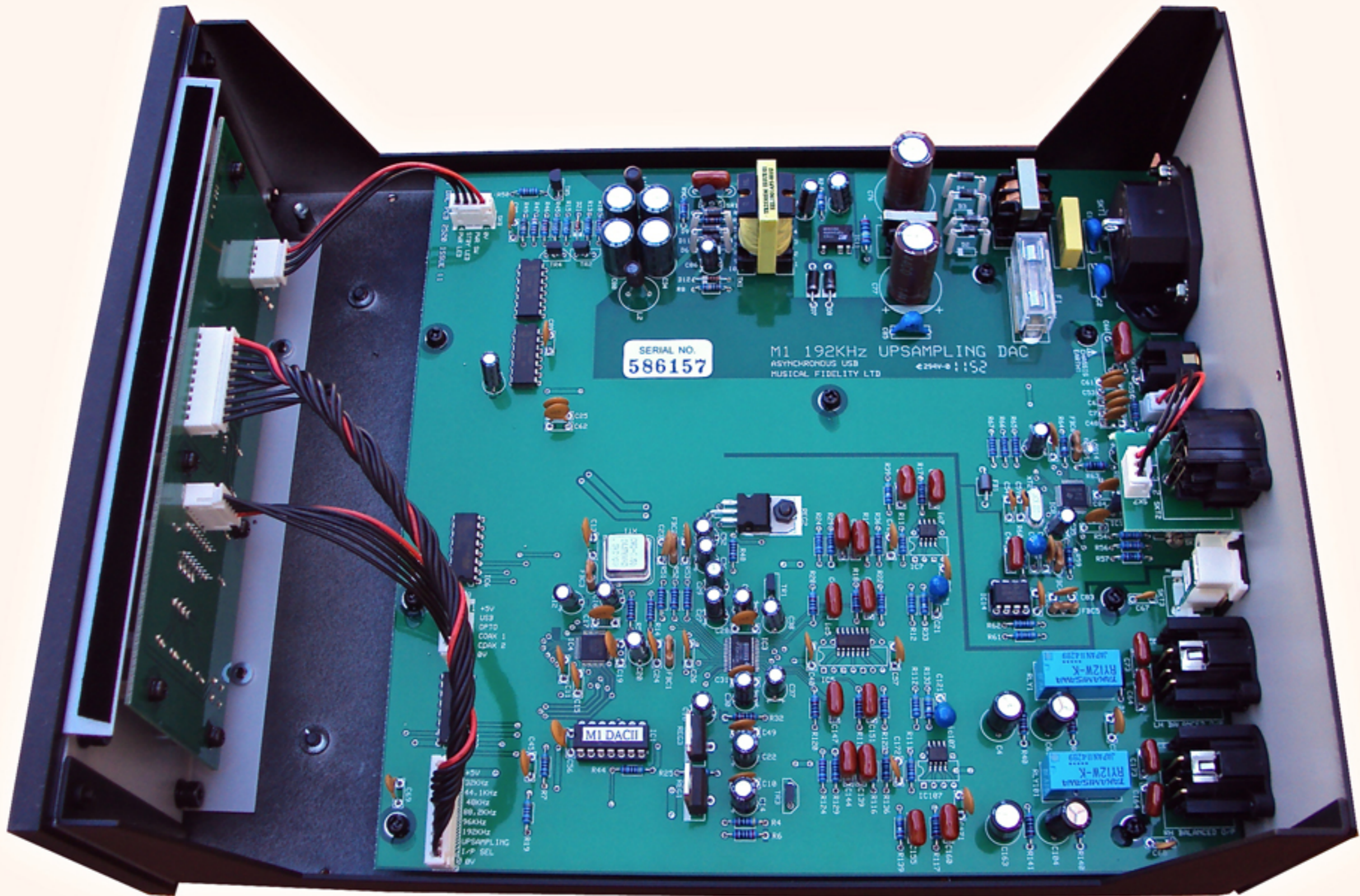
PRODUCT

CHASSIS

TR1378 (Rev.03)
BELLINGHAP-00710

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CD-80 L3 2008-03-12



SERIAL NO.
586157

M1 192KHz UPSAMPLING DAC
ASYNCHRONOUS USB
MUSICAL FIDELITY LTD

M1 DAC1

ROHM&SONAR
R12W-K

ROHM&SONAR
R12W-K

+5V
300Hz
44, 100Hz
480Hz
88, 200Hz
96kHz
192kHz
UPSAMPLING
L/P SEL
0V

+5V
USB
OPTO
COAX 1
COAX 2
0V

TELEPHONE BATTERY
RECHARGEABLE

BALANCED GND

