



The essence of 30 years of digital engineering

It was with great excitement when George at Padood (UK distributor for Weiss Engineering) phoned to tell us that we had our new DAC 502 on its way, and that this would be the first unit in the UK. We are long time admirers of Weiss, and the new DAC 501/2 have been eagerly anticipated in audiophile circles. So now it is here, and I've had the pleasure of living with it for a few days to get more acquainted with its features.

For anyone unsure, the 501 and 502 are the same design, only with the 502 coming in a full width chassis and balanced headphone socket on the rear panel. This is the only difference.

Leaving a lasting impression

First impressions count, and with the 502 these were impeccable and like nothing else I have seen in hi-fi.

The DAC comes double boxed, with the internal box having a wood grain appearance. The top is embossed with the Weiss logo, in a striking gold leaf finish. The DAC itself is contained in a velvet like sleeve, reminding me more of an exotic swiss watch than consumer electronics, but perhaps this is the level at which the two combine.

The remote control is a weighty metal affair – feels built to last.



Controlling the DAC 502



The DAC 502 features a combination of rotary dial and touch screen, which together give quick and easy access to the main settings.

Of particular note here are the ability to dim both the LCD and backlight to achieve a subtle yet

easily read display. I am equally enjoying the ability to quickly attenuate the output in blocks of 10db. In use, this means I can always have my amplifier (the Audio Note OTO SE) in its optimal range of use, and quickly set the DAC 502 to 0db when in the mood for louder music, or 20db for quieter listening. I have yet to ask Daniel what the exact nature of this attenuation is, but result is superb and has an overall impact I wasn't expecting.

Digital inputs aplenty...

The DAC 501/2 provides a range of digital inputs, with analogue RCA and balanced XLR outputs. The network connection is DLNA/UPnP certified, with Roon compatibility on the 'to do' list. Network setup is a breeze, by running an ethernet cable between your router and the Weiss. I had great results using mconnect on the iPad, allowing me to stream Tidal and Qobuz and access my stored music library. The USB interface is exceptional. Using HQPlayer on mac, I achieved some quite stunning results.



DSP and future firmware plans

The concept behind the 501/2 was to create a DAC that needn't be a fit and forget unit, as with traditional DAC designs. A DSP module is already installed and ready for future firmware updates, to incorporate an integration with Swiss company Illusonic. Out of the box, the 502 has been simply captivating. The addition of room correction, through a well implemented DSP can only serve to take this DAC to a magical new level.

The 502 is heading back to 'The Barn' now, and is available for home demonstration.