

Test Reimyo CDT-777 and DAP-999EX

HiFi Muzyka, Poland

October 2008

Listening impressions

The two box Reimyo has arrived for the review, so it was expected that it would not behave as intended. Even if it was like that, the superiority over three times cheaper Accuphase DP-500 was clear at once. Not that there was any wide gap - the "five hundred" is a high class unit - but the depth and saturation of sound left no doubts that we had a source from a higher bracket. In the following days we learnt that it had been just the taste of things to come. The Japanese player needs about a week to reach optimum performance. Later the details got polished and the sound took on its final refinement.

It is good to keep these devices constantly warm up. The converter in particular needs a lot of break in time to get back to form after it is switched off. The transport can be switched to standby. Particularly at night, when its display can be too bright.

At its full force Reimyo offers seductively musical message without any showiness. We could use the stereotype that it abandons digital character and leans towards a classy analogue source. We perceive it as free from grunge, coherent and fluid, and spontaneous at the same time. These features are combined and interknit and constitute the inherent parts of musical message. The source hides its binary heritage very thoroughly. It prefers to be perceived as an descendant of the old analogue family, and at the same time it uses the best of what is available with modern technology. Natural coherence and preservation of details can be noticed regardless of musical repertoire. Of course it is less prominent in rock or electronic music than in acoustic chamber music, but true class cannot pass unnoticed. We will hear sound free from nervousness and free from disorder. Harmonious, well composed, and also airy and attractive. Exceedingly simple, but internally complex.

A beginner listening to the Japanese player might come to conclusion that it is good, but there is nothing extraordinary in it. People has experienced more system with lots of feature may be impressed at first but fail to appreciate its feautres, but when they do appreciate them, return to less refined setups will cause serious discomfort. It is the same problem as with Linn CD Twelve - at first everything seems obvious and we do not understand what is the reason for special admiration. But after we get used to the sound and the player is disconnected we realise how many details are taken away.

The Reimyo transport extracts more information from discs, and the converter brings out more music. Our ears are treated with sound full of details with perfectly

reproduced stereo image and realistic reverberation. The tonal balance is so good that we can hardly analyse it very quickly. The sound is not divided into bass, midrange and treble, remaining in good proportions, but it is a cohesive whole which should not be divided. The completeness transports us into the state of bliss, so that you just want to listen to music. We are enveloped by excellently tuned sound, but if we want to, we can start getting into details. Reimyo provides a lot of material for analysis, but at the same time it gives you the temptation to forget about this.

The features that make a point are smoothness and harmonic saturation. These units give noble sound, with a romantic nuance, without sharpness. There is no grunge, there are no ragged edges. Sound remains vivid, and full of details. Top end of the spectrum was open and uncompressed, and its variety leaves no room for criticism. Bass builds stable harmonic foundation, but at the same time it does not need to turn power up. It is strong, full in the lowest registers, and creates beat without hesitation. The term "hard" does not suit here, although the outlines are clearly defined even in fast passages. The records with electronically generated low frequencies reveal that there is no reluctance to reach the lowest parts of the spectrum. In more interesting acoustic music we can appreciate natural decay of double bass and the energy of plucked bass guitar strings or tympani strike. Every time there is just as much bottom as necessary. Reimyo has a lot of potential in this area, but it does not show off at every opportunity. Only when the sound engineer had really intended to expose low range, waves of deep bass flow over the floor. The reach and intensity of low frequencies depends only on the abilities of the system. On the other hand you should not expect atomic effects similar to those from expensive sources like Mark Levinson or Krell KPS 20. American equipment can produce bass which can crush walls. Reimyo has much more subtle approach. In comparison it is like a poet versus an aircraft carrier.

Stereophonic image has stable source placement and uncanny ability to reproduce information about acoustics. It is not an example of grand American scale, but we will never think about lack of space. Depth reaches far away and the perspective does not get narrower. Even big symphonic works are reproduced without congestion. The musicians have a lot of space around them, and at the same time we get a lot of information about the hall acoustics. The front is privileged only where necessary, that is in the recording of smaller groups.

The real magic appears when vocals are the stars of the show. If someone still believes that "japanese sound" means bright upper midrange and overexposed sibilants, listening to Reimyo will change that opinion. Human voice is reproduced in a phenomenal way - harmonically rich, tactile, with natural warmth. Whether it is Helen Merrill with her melancholic ballads, or Dunedin Consort in its breathtaking interpretation of Haendel's "Messiah", it is hard to stop listening. When you listen to vocal music you will quickly understand that the new Reimyo offers quality far better than standard. Surely it is not the end of the world, because there are the analogue gems, but as long as digital technology is concerned, the Japanese have really made a big effort.

And finally dynamics. Again, just as necessary, without showiness. The player does not try to welcome the listener with a wall of sound coming out of nothing. It can strike hard when necessary, but it controls emotions. Punctuation and more violent events are reproduced without hesitation, but they are put in a wider context. It is not about impressing the listener so that he hands his credit card to the salesman after a quarter of an hour. Musicality and naturalness are most important, and those listeners who look for these qualities will certainly appreciate the skills of mister Kiuchi.

Summary

The two box Reimyo is equipment for affluent music lovers, who do not like splitting hairs, and for demanding audiophiles, who are past the stage of excitement over special effects, and expect their equipment to bring them closer to the essence and the emotions of music. I liked its subtlety combined with precision very much, and I think that such sound will be very good in the long run. It is especially important considering the price of CDT-777/DAP-999EX. You do not spend 56 kPLN on a CD player everyday.

Conclusion

Solid like a rock, delicate like a gossamer thread. Romantic samurai, walking with his head in the skies.