

**In the great concert of the world's high fidelity brands, you start to think you know them all. And then, one day, an unknown brand arrives.**

**The products don't look special, and yet, finally, they offer you one of the most pleasant listening experiences ever.**

**Reimyo. Remember that name, which has popped up from nowhere.**

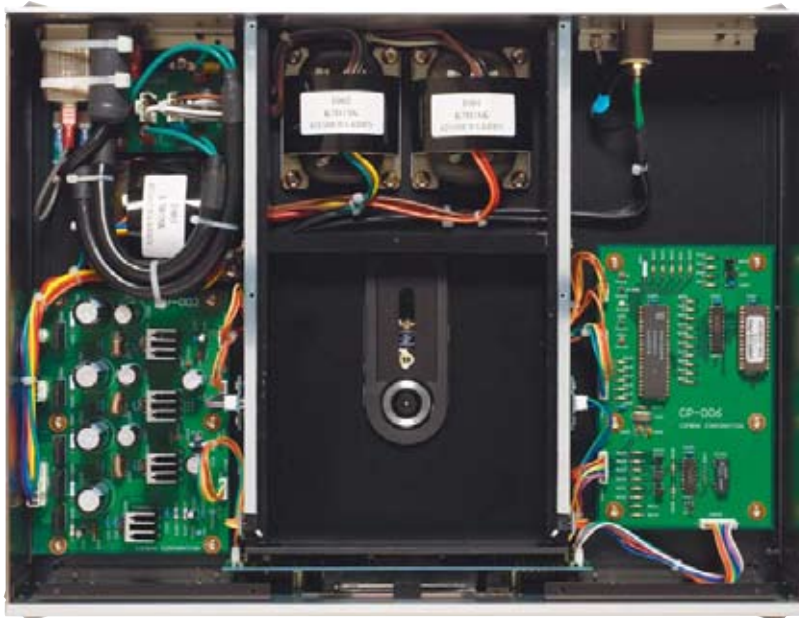


In actual fact, if you yield to the temptation to type "Reimyo" into Google, you'll discover that the brand, or more particularly the two products reviewed here, benefit from an exceptional international reputation. Reimyo is one of the brand names of Harmonix, which in turn belongs to the Combak group, in a corporate structure whose subtleties we admit we have not totally grasped. But no matter. Reimyo is now distributed in France in regular, effective and serious fashion, and that's what counts. We can however add that Harmonix is known for a great variety of accessories – stands, cables, and turntable components as original as they are sophisticated. Note finally that the company is Japanese, run by Kazuo Kiuchi, who isn't afraid to get his hands dirty. Reimyo offers all of the links in a high fidelity system, and notably tube amplifiers and a power line

**REIMYO** CDT-777 & DAP-999EX

# Extraterrestrials!





*Note the three power transformers, aligned at top, with complex voltage regulation for each section (the printed circuit at left)*

filter. But it is its digital products that have built its reputation.

#### **A PACKAGE THAT IS ANYTHING BUT CONVENTIONAL**

Calling the appearance of these two units disappointing would be unfair, yet we are

obliged to note that neither the CDT-777 transport nor (especially) the DAP-999EX looks impressive, and they don't even match. The first is a top-loading unit, with a sliding cover riding on rails that appear quite conventional. Its only obvious innovation is its staggered feet, which can be decoupled with the spikes that are included. It's also the case of the two Harmonix power cords, included in the purchase price. The classic remote control that comes with the units has the advantage of being at once simple and pleasant to use. As for the DAP-999EX converter, it is a compact chassis with just four buttons on the front panel to choose the input. The two things that surprised us, especially concerning the price of the Reimynos, is the dissimilar styling of these two products designed to be used together, and also the dated and garish logos that decorate both panels. Of course they're an improvement over the simple decals that were found on the first models... All that to say that the Reimynos, initially, may disappoint those who believe that the links of a high fidelity system must already be impressive by their appearance, even before they are turned on. That said, actually listening to

#### **TECHNICAL SPECS**

##### **CDT-777 Compact Disc transport**

**Origin:** Japan

**Price:** 8,240 euros

**Dimensions:** 47x9x32.5 cm

**Weight:** 14 kg

**Transport mechanism:**

Philips CDM-12 Pro

**Output:**

RCA, 0.5 V peak-to-peak

±20%, 75Ω

Interconnects and decoupling

spikes included

Remote control

Disc stabilizer

##### **DAP-999EX converter:**

**Origin:** Japan

**Price:** 8,240 euros

**Dimensions:** 43x4.4x34 cm

JVC K2 technology, 20 bit 4x

oversampling

**Sampling rates:** 32, 44.1,

48 kHz

**Frequency response:** DC

to 20 kHz (±0.5 dB)

**Signal-to-noise ratio:**

>114 dB (IHF-A)

**Dynamic range:**

>100 dB

**Harmonic distortion:**

<0.003%

**Channel separation:**

>105 dB

**Supplied power cord:**

Harmonix X-DC2 (1.2 m)

the Reimynos swept aside any silly aesthetic doubts... But let us look in more detail at each of these units.

#### **THE CDT-777 COMPACT DISC TRANSPORT**

It's a replacement for the now-discontinued CDP-777. Opening the top-mounted drawer reveals the Philips mechanism, the CDM-12 Pro, seemingly unmodified. True, it is mounted in a cabinet of perfect rigidity (a total mass of 14 kg), with, a bonus, the already mentioned decoupling by the feet that extend out from the chassis. Reimyno seems also to have used the standard equipment Philips control section, mounted however on a proprietary outboard printed circuit with custom flash memory. The most



# REIMYO CDT-777 & DAP-999EX

*The DAC may not look particularly exceptional, but its connection set is complete, The power cord is standard equipment.*



important aspect, however, is the power supply. It uses no fewer than three identical custom-made transformers, designed to radiate a minimum of energy. They are connected to an Enacom input line filter, another of Kazuo Kiuchi's specialties... Beyond the transformers can be found, as you might expect, a regulated supply for each section (the transport as such, the display, the command processor, etc.), which are fully independent. The sections are laid out in clean and exemplary fashion. But the final surprise can be found at the rear: there is just one solitary digital output...an RCA jack. True, it is of excellent quality, recessed in the rear panel, but it is surprising to see, in a product claiming such quality, not to find also an AES/EBU XLR output. It is doubly surprising because the matching converter does have an XLR input. Note however that its absence doesn't seem to have much of a negative effect on the sound. What's more, the Harmonix product line includes coaxial cables intended specifically for this purpose. Finally, the CD is held in place by a small pressure pallet. The times for reading the CD and beginning play are average, neither very fast nor desperately slow. It is in any case faster than many top-loading transports, and especially those using Philips mechanisms.

## THE DAP-999EX CONVERTER

Like most converters of this type, it is not visually arresting. The successor to the DAP-777, it has swapped the rotary input switch of the older unit for a series of four pushbuttons, allowing you to select AES/EBU, BNC, coaxial or optical inputs. At the left, two groups of light-emitting diodes indicate the sampling rate of the incoming signal: 38, 44.1 or 48 kHz, the presence of pre-emphasis, the locking to the transport clock, and finally the presence of reading errors, if any. That's it. Of course at the rear you find the various input

jacks that correspond to the four pushbuttons of the front panel, while the output offers twin standards: unbalanced with RCA connectors, and balanced with XLR's. The Harmonix power cord is, let us recall, furnished as standard equipment, whilst a full-system power switch is included on the rear panel.

But of course it is on the inside that things get interesting. First of all, the power supply is every it as finely developed as that of the CDT-777. Same input filter, and an "audiophile grade" special fuse. Two distinct power transformers separate the electrical supply of the digital and analogue sections respectively. Indeed, this separation is maintained throughout the circuits, with a bank of optocouplers. The independence of the two sections is visible on the unit's sole printed circuit board: there is a large, vacant L-shaped section that separates the two sections.

For digital-to-analog conversion, Reimyo has selected a solution totally at odds with the principle of simplicity! That calls for explanation. We have written numerous times that we favor the simplest possible filtering, 16 bits at 44.1 kHz sampling rate, accomplished with the strict minimum number of parts. This is how it is done at 47Labs, or in the Consonance CD120 Linear. Reimyo has gone to the opposite extreme. It has favoured seldom-used converters, JVC's K2, a 20-bit system of great complexity, requiring the aid of a microprocessor and attendant software for proper operation. Well, why not if excellent performance results...

You will see that this is indeed the case, beyond the shadow of a doubt.

## LISTENING

**TIMBRES:** When we listen to a high fidelity system, in the majority of cases our brain in some measure gathers in the information, and then interprets that information in accordance with a

scale of quality whose nature will vary depending on the listener's experience and taste. In the case of the Reimyo – as in the case of a few other rare products – precisely the opposite occurs.

From the first seconds, it seems as though the work is accomplished not by the listener's brain, but by the many links in the system: everything is instantly revealed with perfect clarity, in terms of both general realism and the natural accuracy of timbres. And so one remains silent and listens, and eventually one puts one's hand against one's lower jaw to prevent from gaping from both pleasure and astonishment...

And so there is an instantaneous surprise. If we were not afraid to pick up a cliché much in current vogue, we might be tempted to conclude that it is as though the Reimyo were able to mate the best of analog technology to the best of digital technology.

The bandwidth is greatly extended, linearity is perfect, the timbres are extraordinarily accurate, and of course there is a total absence of any sort of hardness or electronic coloration. Fabulous! Dynamics: The dynamic range as such, in its simplest sense (the difference in volume between the softest and loudest sounds) is, in this case, neither extraordinary nor notable. What is incredible, however, is the constant way it is able to reproduce rhythm so very perfectly. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it reproduces even the most subtle level differences between two notes of a musical instrument, or two intonations of a human voice. All is exceptionally precise, much like nature itself! Better yet, the Reimyo seems to have a gift for making us forget any electronic alteration of the music that may have taken place during the recording session or the mixing. You find the timbre of each instrument, the intonations of each voice, just as you would in "real life." Finally, you

stop asking persnickety questions. It is true that this magical duo can show up all too well the weaknesses in the original recording, letting you wonder what sort of system the producers can possibly have used to do their work. But fear not: these units have everything it takes to let you totally rediscover the vast majority of your favorite recordings.

Transparency: Given the assets we have just listed, need we add that the sonic reproduction, overall, is limpid, with a constant fluidity that is simply remarkable? As we often write concerning the best of the products to which lend an ear, what we have here is not transparency for the sake of transparency. What is far more important is the grain and the texture of the sound, which is perfectly respected, not only moment to moment, but also in the continuity of each note and each melodic line. What is more, the Reimyo pair is remarkable in its ability better to judge the true capacity of associated gear, right down to interconnect cables.

Speaking of interconnection, we preferred an unbalanced connection from the converter, using Harmonix's own digital cable, rather than the balanced connection available on our ATC preamplifier. Not that we

were in any sort of position to analyze the reason this might be.

Soundstage: It is this last point which finally convinced us. The Reimyo duo is one of the very rare ensembles that, in digital playback, brought us so very close to the true sonic event. We are not talking of greater or lesser breadth of image, or of more or less illusion of depth. Rather we mean to speak of a true spread of instruments, which we can literally "see" suspended in three-dimension space. Here again, we rediscovered certain recordings which had always seemed rather "flattened out" in the true sense of that expression. It is during such listening experiences that we can determine that, truly, it is not useful to add to the reproduced music a video image to occupy our eyes. Worse than useless, it is actually negative. Such an image could never, at the present state of video development, seem as natural, if only by its lack of a genuine 3-D space. Long live sound and music...

**VERDICT**

When we discover a product that comes preceded by an excellent reputation, we can't help feeling a little disappointed – indeed, that is often the case, considering

**SYSTEM USED**

**ELECTRONICS:**

ATC SCA-2 preamplifier  
FM Acoustic FP30  
Plinius SB-301

**LOUDSPEAKERS:**

Dynaudio C2  
Focal Electra 1037Be  
JM Reynaud Offrande  
Suprême

**CABLES:**

Harmonix, Acoustic System,  
Hi-Fi Câbles et Cie,  
Harmonix (for speakers)

the unconscious expectations that are the inevitable result.

But in this instance, sincerely, no: this Reimyo duo represents the best we have heard in digital reproduction, alongside such products as the dCS Scarlatti or the Kalista Metronome. It's unfortunate, once again, that once again such performance comes at a high price...

That said, we are in a totally different qualitative world, that of the best digital music sources. It makes us think that, after all, analog has lived a charmed life, which is coming to an end...

Let us note, finally, that even if we resisted the possibility of reviewing the transport and the converter separately, it seems that it is the DAP-999EX converter that deserves much of the praise for the prowess of the Reimyo couple. This is not to say that we can attach any blame to the execution of the CDT-777 transport. It is simply that, if there are, after all, other high-flying digital transports, the choice of the JVC K2 converter used here seems to be THE major find of this review.

Ghislain Prugnard



*Note the considerable (intentional) physical distance among the power supply, the all-digital section (at left) and the analog output circuits (upper right)*

<b>BUILD QUALITY</b>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
<b>TIMBRES</b>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
<b>DYNAMICS</b>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
<b>IMAGING</b>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
<b>TRANSPARENCY</b>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
<b>QUALITY/PRICE</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>