



Review by Jaap Veenstra



Rating: 4.5

For : Sounds good Against : No Remote

Well-made

Half size unit

Musette : A baby version of the Pavane and Menuet Dacs, utilising the same D/A modules but for just a little more than EUR 1200. That sounds like the deal of the century.

Musette, the successor to the Octave is a good musical device. More on that later. Let's see exactly what we have to deal with.

In the contemporary audio world, pretty much everything is digital. Many devices only have digital outputs. Just take a close look around you. Many TV's offer only Optical out. For Set-Top boxes the same applies. And with PC's ? There you actually do not use the Analog output - USB sounds much better.

Digital device outputs can also include Coaxial (RCA), BNC, USB or even HDMI for example. The Musette offers USB, Optical and Coaxial x 2. Four inputs total. Would you like to step higher ?

If so then Menuet and Pavane offer AES. The more luxurious models also offer S/PDIF via BNC – the perfect 75 Ohm connection.

With four inputs, the Musette is flexible enough for most users. Especially in view of the fact that USB offers High-res capability.

For those who still do not know, Metrum always use NOS-chips for conversion from Digital to Analog. NOS Stands for Non Oversampling. In other words, there is for example a 16 bit 44.1 kHz digital signal to the DAC chip, which is then converted to an analogue signal. No 'conversion' to 24 bit or higher sampling rate and also no conversion to 16 bit with a plural of 44.1 kHz, purely 'what goes in comes out'. Very pure.

In the past, Cees Ruijtenberg used (for us) unknown, industrial NOS-DAC chips. And although that worked perfectly, there was a desire to provide better performance. The result - his own creation 'Transient-chips'. The first Dac with these chips, is the Pavane. A crazy musical Dac with stunning technology under the hood.

The Musette uses the same chips, but there is a big difference in approach between the Pavane and the Musette. Where the Pavane uses four Dac modules per channel, Musette uses one. A special self-programmed FPGA module is also employed, where the 24 bit signal is split into two 12 bit channels to feed the DAC chips. The Musette uses one chip per channel and there is no split.

Each module will get the full digital signal. Logical in view of the price point. The Menuet however follows in Pavane's footsteps - except 2 modules per channel are employed.

Conclusion : The Musette is in our opinion a hit. Sounds very fine and very musical. There are plenty of inputs - Coax, Optical and USB. Everything necessary to keep modern music lovers happy.