



### **dCS Vivaldi Apex DAC** **\$46,500**

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Brittania may no longer rule the waves, but the UK-based company dCS has reasserted its dominance in the digital world with the superb Vivaldi Apex DAC. The principal improvement is a new all-analog output board that is said to lower the noise floor by no less than 12dB, immensely improving the overall musicality of the Vivaldi DAC by eliminating many of the pesky artifacts that have often plagued digital sound. The benefits of the analog board are immediately audible, particularly in the realm of instrumental imaging, where the grandeur of an orchestra is conveyed with true panache and verve. Not only do trumpets and drums explode out of a loudspeaker with greater verisimilitude, but orchestral instruments are also more robustly fixed in their respective spaces. The interaction between the various sections of an orchestra is much easier to decipher, ensuring that the music draws you in rather than posing a challenge to interpret.

Streaming is also a real pleasure with the Apex, which is compatible with a number of music management services, including Roon and Tidal. A staggering variety of music, retrieved with the utmost fidelity, is literally at your fingertips. Throughout, the linearity of the frequency spectrum and the timbral weight of vocals and instruments render the illusion of live music less elusive. The Apex, you could even say, stands at the apex of digital musical reproduction. (333)