



## TEST

### Ansuz Acoustics Digitalz D-TC Supreme, Mainz D2 and Darkz D-TC Supreme

19.05.2020 / / DIRK SOMMER

In the report on the Ansuz PowerSwitch D-TC Supreme, I just focused on the switch, but I didn't refer to the powersupply, because this can't be used for company Ethernet cables like the Digitalz D-TC Supreme. So, this is about an Ansuz power cable and very special feet: a PowerSwitch with everything.

As already explained in the article on the PowerSwitch, this is a combination of a LAN switch and power supply for the cables of the D2, D-TC and D-TC Supreme lines. There are ten sockets for four-pole 3.5-mm jack plugs. As I said in the report, I was able to measure various, very low frequency alternating currents on the contacts of the plug. They are generated by what are referred to as analogue dither switches and affect the dielectric of the LAN cables, as Ansuz Acoustics head developer, Michael Børresen, explained to me. It has been known for more than 75 years that identical radar facilities on the ground cannot "see" quite as far as on ships or in aircraft. The reason for this is that the power supply from the wiring system is less stable. Slight variations had a higher range with regard to resolution. So, with high-quality Ansuz cables, we affect the dielectric to achieve better signal transmission. Michael Børresen does not, however, reveal why Ansuz uses five analogue dither switches, why four-pole plugs are needed to connect to the signal cable, exactly what the structure of the Digitalz D-TC Supreme looks like, and which of the components are connected to which voltages. Since it may be possible to travel again in the not-too-distant future, I hope to find out more at a visit to Aalborg.



*The Mainz D2 has no special features on the surface. Ansuz reveals no information on its structure*

Even if these – admittedly rudimentary – explanations on the analogue dither make listening to the Digitalz D-TC even more interesting, I have to be patient a little while longer, because other test objects have priority. For one of them, I actually need the Audioquest Tornado, which currently connects the PowerSwitch to the mains. So, I'm testing the Ansuz Mainz D2 power cable first of all, as recommended by Morten Thyrrstedt for use with the PowerSwitch. For the first test, however, I'll leave it out. The D2 is located in the upper half of the Ansuz hierarchy, and below the D-TC and D-TC Supreme. It is, however, priced at 8,000 euros. There has to be, however, a marked sound improvement compared with the Audioquest Tornado to be able to give a positive assessment for the D2. Luckily, the Ansuz really brings a little bit of everything to the PowerSwitch once again: a deeper space, a more tangible, vivid depiction, a little more thrust in the base range, and apparently more motivation for the musicians. With this Mainz on the PowerSwitch, music is simply even more fun.



*The plug housing of the Mainz D2 is made of metal*

Not that this amazed me: At the time, for the test of the SOTM switch with the 10-MHz clock, Oliver Göbel came over out of pure curiosity, and brought with him the Lacorde Statement Power cable for the Keces mains socket that powered the clock, which we then tested on the linear power supply that is ten times less expensive than the power cable: The SOTM combination sounded a tiny bit better with that. So far, I have not published anything on this experiment – for very obvious reasons. But when you deal with the highest increment of Ansuz digital signal distribution, it feels totally uninhibited after that. I can also confess that even the phase shift of the Göbel's power cord was audible. A colleague, Roland Dietl, likes to say about such shared experiences: "The extremely high resolution of the chain is not just a blessing." But it is extremely helpful if you want to know what is technically possible soundwise.



*The Digitalz D-TC Supreme is connected with a four-pole 3.5-mm plug to the PowerSwitch*



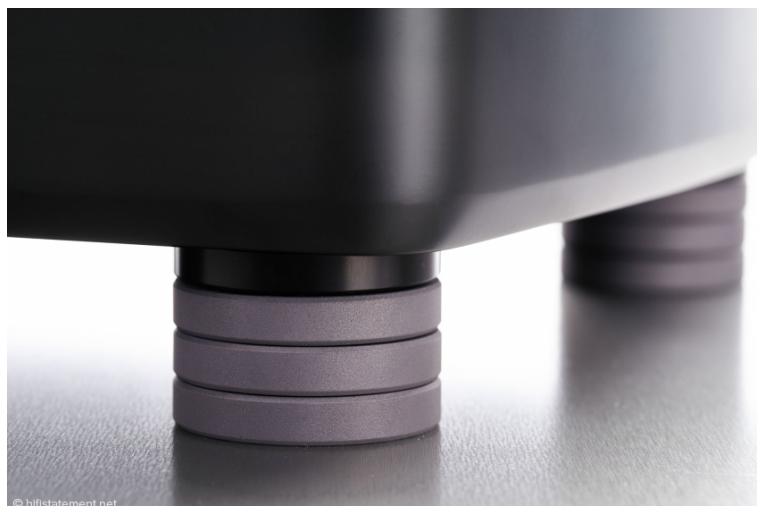
Once the famous Jeff-Rowland combination has found its way back to the shelves, I have enjoyed listening once again to loads of LPs, and all digital components can draw their energy via the Audioquest Niagara 1200, it's time to take a look at the Digitalz D-TC Supreme Ethernet cables. As they were designed for use with a PowerSwitch or a PowerBox, I will only listen to them with a connected AC voltage source. To that, I connect the four-pole cable that comes with the D-TC Supreme to the sockets of the PowerSwitch, which had already put to the test its enormous capabilities in connection with the Göbel Lacorde Statement Ethernet. The first D-TC Supreme replaces the Göbel between the switch and router: Straight away, I can enjoy a touch more thrust in the base. The tonal balance shifts slightly, and the sound feels warmer and rounder. The best thing about it is: The exquisite spatial representation and the enormous attention to detail don't suffer in any way because of it.

Before I brood too long over whether the minimally covered high tone range takes away a hint of freshness from the rendering, I switch the cable between the Melco and the PowerSwitch. Subjectively, the combination plays two to three beats per minute faster, and the bass has lost nothing of its impact, and at the top end, a touch more airiness comes into play, but that is not accompanied by coarseness or excessive analytics. Now, I can enjoy the teensy bit more thrust in the bass, without the balance being shifted by it. During the search for a test piece for the last cable exchange, the one between the switch and the Auralic Aries G1, I lingered with Arild Andersen's album, *If You Look Far Enough* and the track "If You Look": amazingly dense percussion, spacious synth sounds and bass. Until now, I'd never heard such a distinction between the small bells, the bells and the rest of the brass instruments. The deep drumming in the second half of the piece comes with – via Göbel's *Epoque Aeon Fine* – previously unheard impact, and the sound surfaces extend far and wide into the space. No, for a more meaningful comparison, the impressive sound spectacle lasting more than three minutes is just too complex. Thanks to the PowerSwitch and both Ansuz Ethernet cables, I would notice, even after listening to it for the third and fourth times, yet another detail here, and an even more intense tone colour there.



*Thanks to the shrink tubes, the Digitalz D-TC Supremes find room in the closely packed sockets of the switch*

I like to look back to what I'm familiar with: "God Bless the Child" in the version by Keith Jarrett Trios on *Standards, Vol. 1*. After the first beats, I notice that I have chosen a slightly lower than usual volume for Einstein's *The Preamp*, which doesn't even have a level indicator. Yes, the song develops an irresistible rhythmic maelstrom, and the reproduction is grandiose. And, the third Digitalz D-TC Supreme has not yet even come into play. As soon as it does, it brings a little more clarity into the tonal image, the trio develops an even more intense groove, and the bass drum adds even more thrust: amazing enjoyment. I then listen to a few of my unavoidable test pieces, just to make sure that the extra tonal colours, thrust, space and resolution don't tip over at some point into something unpleasant or edgy: It doesn't do that at all. The well-known songs feel fresher and more exciting than ever. Simply fantastic!



*The Darks D-TC Supreme high-end-feet look totally unspectacular under the PowerSwitch*

Since I was totally won over by the PowerSwitch and the associated Ethernet cables, I'm not taken aback by the use of the matching Ansuz feet. What's more, the standard feel of the PowerSwitch didn't impress me in the slightest. Morten Thyrrsted reassured me, however, that the undamped aluminium feet that could be described as rings with a reversed, flat u-profile, are far superior to the usual rubber feet. The best versions are the Darks D-TC Supreme, which are on sale for 1,200 euros – each! They comprise three disks of high-grade titanium that were coated at the Technological Institute in Aarhus in a particle accelerator with layers of zirconium, tungsten and aluminium-titanium-nitride. The process currently takes about 62 hours – on the website, a simpler and more concise procedure is described – and results in an extremely hard surface. The disks are in contact with each other via titanium balls. For the connection between the Darks D-TC Supreme and the PowerSwitch, three titanium balls are need for each one.

In the first article about the PowerSwitch, it simply stood on the Melco, since there were no more levels free on the Artesania audio rack. This time, it is shared with the Synergistic Research Active Ground Block SE, one of the special shelves that can be obtained from Artesania. All of the positive changes mentioned until now, thanks to the Mainz D2 and the Digitalz D-TC Supreme, were clear to see with the standard feet. After listening to Shostakovich's "Polka" from the Ballet Suite, Opus 22, three times, I put the four Darks D-TC Supreme with their three titanium balls each under the feet of the PowerSwitch. That adds a little more openness, greater spatial depth and somewhat more accentuated fine dynamics. But the improvements are really marginal.



*Titanium balls are used between the titanium disks of the Darkz, and make contact with the feet of the device*

So, I'm testing it again with the "Improvisation" from Le Concert des Parfums. I had never listened to the piece with the combination of the PowerSwitch with Mainz, the three Digitalz and the Darkz – and I'm really thrilled with it. Then, I take off the expensive feet again. As is so often the case, the difference is more marked if you take a step back from the better version. Not using the Darkz takes a lot of the three-dimensionality from the reproduction: The extension of the stage in width and depth remains almost the same, but the height of the space shrinks considerably. The loss of a little solidity in the bass associated with that, as well as a touch less openness, is much easier to endure. The switch from standard feet to Darkz does not appear to be immediately necessary, but if you get used to just three of four titles on the Darkz using the PowerSwitch, and then you take it away, you become painfully aware to what extent the Darkz contributed to the sound.

In the first article on the PowerSwitch, I mentioned that Lars Kristensen, one of the main shareholders of Ansuz Acoustics, gave impressive presentations decades ago during which he used cables whose price was higher than the total value of the good, but affordable chain. I had no intention of emulating him by talking about the PowerSwitch. And the total of all the Ansuz equipment for the distribution of digital signals is a decent way off the value of the entire system, but is still above the price of the converter including the up-sampler. It's not ideal, but I just wanted to know what was possible in the digital signal distribution world. I won't get carried away with something like that again soon. Promise.

## STATEMENT

At the end of the report on the PowerSwitch, I was firmly convinced that it marked the end of the road as far as sound goes. I was wrong about that. The combination of cables, switch and mechanical elements from the Ansuz portfolio produced clear synergies. In companies, the PowerSwitch has reached new heights in sound. But it doesn't actually make much sense to highlight a single component: I think that Ansuz Acoustics solution for signal distribution via Ethernet is simply unique!

### TESTED WITH

NAS	Melco N1Z H60/2, WDMMyCloud
Streaming Bridge	Auralic G1
Up-Sampler	Chord Electronics Hugo M-Scaler with Poweradd
D/A converter	Chord Electronics DAVE
LAN switch	SOTM sNH-10G i with Keces P8, Ansuz PowerSwitch D-TC Supreme
10-MHz clock	SOTM sCLK-OCX10 with Keces P8
Pre-amplifier	Audio Exklusiv R7, Einstein The Preamp
Power amplifier	Einstein The Poweramp
Loudspeaker	Göbel Epoque Aeon Fine
Cables	Goebel High End Lacorde Statement, Audioquest Dragon HC, Tornado (HC) and NRG-Z3, Swiss Cables, SOTM dBCL-BNC
Accessories	AHP sound module IV G, Audioquest Niagara 5000 and 1000, Synergistic Research Active Ground Block SE, HMS wall plugs, Blockaudio C-Lock Lite, Acapella bases, Acoustic System feet and resonators, Artesania Audio Exoteryc, SSC Big Magic Base, Finite Elemente Carbofibre° HD, Harmonix Real Focus and Room Tuning Disks, Audio Exklusiv Silentplugs