

The story of two Sirius DACs and a Lampi shootout

I have been a real DAC-O-MANIAC the last couple of years . After purchasing and evaluating a number of great sounding DACs (for instance , Lampizator Level 6, Metrum Pavane Mk3 , Sonnet Audio Morpheus) and a number of other DACs using off the shelf DAC chips , I came to the conclusion that :

I prefer a DAC using NOS (Non-Oversampling) R2R converter type over any DAC with Delta Sigma converter type. It just feels more natural and musical ! I also like very much what tubes in the output stage adds to the experience , hard to define, but it just brings a bit of "magic " to the sound. So, with that in mind, I decided that I will not purchase any more DACs unless they have both of those ingredients .



My first Sirius DAC !

A friend of mine have the Lampizator Level 7 Dual Chassie , using a pair of 300B DHT tubes in the output stage , and I always liked the sound from that , so I started looking for a Lampizator DAC , when another friend just by accident asked me if I ever checked out the Veridian Utopia Sirius DAC . Never heard of it I said, but I searched on internet and found the website, and I also started to read on my neighboring country 's , (Norway) , Hifi Forum . I found a lot of interesting readings from users that praised the Sirius DAC , also comparing it with much more expensive DACs such as Audio Note . I contacted Ondrej , the man behind Veridian Utopia , asked a lot of questions and got a lot of good answers back immediately. After many emails and discussions on what I wanted, we ended up with a Sirius DAC, single ended , with just USB input (as I only use one source for streaming and my music collection, at that time , a SOTM SMS-200 Neo with USB output, ROON for music handling.) . Many options were recommended by Ondrej , and I went for capacitor upgrades in the digital section , a number of chokes for most silent background , a gain switch so that it could easily match different amplifiers etc. With a price about 3-4 times less than a new Lampizator DAC, it was an easy decision to make .At the time, I used a Line Magnetic LM845IA amplifier connected to my Usher 8570 Be speakers .

After receiving the DAC and adding some of my favourite NOS tubes and letting the DAC play for a week, I did some serious listening . Wow, it sounded very much like my previous Lampizator level 6, but more detailed , better bass definition and more presence of voices . So far, this was without doubt the best sounding and most musical DAC I had ever tried. I enjoyed the DAC for some months and thought about next step to upgrade my system, and I considered to use my LM845IA as a pure power amplifier, bypassing the preamp section, as it is probably the weak point. I had a DIY resistor ladder volume control at home, and connected that between the Sirius and the LM845IA , and yes , small improvement in clarity and better soundstage ! I knew that Ondrej also offered the Sirius with a built in remote controlled resistor ladder volume control, so, I contacted him again, and soon I ordered my second Sirius DAC from Ondrej !

After receiving the new Sirius DAC with remote controlled volume , I was a happy camper ! I also sold the Line Magnetic amplifier and bought a pair of Cayin 9084D Monoblocks , using 300B with 845 output tubes, which also made a big step up in sound quality in my room.

My friend having the Lampizaor level 7 visited me and was very impressed. He suggested that we do a DAC Shootout (comparison) at his home with his gear .So, we did , listening to his great setup with DeVore 96 Orangutan Speakers , Air Tight ATM-S1 amplifier , SOTM streaming via ROON. Both DACs were using their built in resistor ladder typ volume controls. We were 3 Hifi pals in the room , and after listening to both DACs, the comments on the Sirius DAC were “ it is very very similar , it has the same PRAT as the Lampi , it has great bass definition, wow , it has more quite background “ etc. We listened for several hours , and both DACs offered a very lifelike and musical expereince . My feeling was that the Lampi had a slight edge in “magic” probably by using the 300B tubes in the output stage. But the difference was subtle, and with the cost difference in mind, I actually did not care.



My friends rig , with interesting sound treatment , including a fire extinguisher !



The mighty Lampi Level 7



and the Sirius !

Now, I am enjoyng music more then ever before, and I am very curious on what Ondrej have up his sleeve for the future .



My current rig with my second Veridian Utopia Sirius DAC (now with volume control included)