



Slavonic Dancer

Do you know Canor? While STEREO featured them for the first time about ten years ago, they have already been making audiophile treasures for a quarter of a century. Now their new AI 2.10 hybrid integrated amplifier arrived in our listening room.

Tom Frantzen

Canor's attractive looking integrated amplifier AI 2.10 is designed as a hybrid: it is supposed to combine the best of two worlds, or, to be accurate, of two amplification classes. Thus, the high-level preamplifier works with two 6922 tubes, while the power amplifier uses a powerful Class D construction.

In designing it, the development team around Zdeňek Březovják in Presov, Slovakia, certainly didn't take the easy way. For example, the power section is specially filtered and equipped with a linear power supply instead of a switch-mode PSU – for the sake of better sound. Ten years ago we had

already noticed that Canor shields the transformers capacitively. That's what everyone should do to make the devices HF-resistant. However, it is hardly ever done.

The AI 2.10 therefore reaches the impressive weight of 15 kilograms. Also the matching CD player uses tubes of the type 6922 – four of them in fact – also reaching a full twelve kilograms.

Since the tubes' names are rather uncommon, you might wonder what exactly they are: the 6922 is a double triode and corresponds to an ECC88 on the electronic level. However, this is a high-end version, i.e. closer to a 88CC, which is made according to military specifications.

These tubes are considered to be robust, reliable, consistent and also very good in sound. Canor even conducts its own tests, called „Aladdin“, so that only the best and matching tubes („Aladdin's magical lamps“) find their way into the equipment. In addition, the Canor starts with a very gentle procedure when switched on, which heats up the tubes for operation.

Two double triodes 6922 (high-end preamp tubes according to military specifications), contribute to the colorful and magical sound.



The AI 2.10 offers two XLR inputs which are implemented fully balanced right up to the power amplifier as well as four connections for RCA sources.

High-quality speaker terminals for one pair of speakers, which accept banana plugs, spade plugs or naked wires, are featured. The device is designed with three poles (Schuko) on the mains side and has the mains switch and the fine wire fuse on the back. The front panel, where the level control and the On/Off switch are located in the middle and where the source is selected via buttons, looks much nicer. An unusually large, dimmable display in Canor-typical yellow keeps you informed about selected input and volume settings. The latter has 63 steps and runs very precisely via relays.

High Quality and Craftsmanship

Canor attributes great importance to the quality of components and of the circuit boards, which it manufactures and assembles itself in „premium CMT technology“. Their factory also has CNC milling machines and its own EMC test laboratory. In general, the workmanship is exquisite, and has an ideal match in the unmistakable design. Also, the similarity to the components from 2010 is immediately obvious – Canor has remained true to itself. That is especially noteworthy since all to often newer devices won't optically match older ones of the same company you may have bought „yesteryear“.

I find the idea of hybrid amplifiers pragmatic and economically reasonable, among other things. Obviously, you can also achieve ambitious goals in sound reproduction. To be

honest, I was not very enthusiastic about the first Class D amplifiers, even though it was obvious that they would become increasingly important due to their higher efficiency. The sound of these early Class D-concepts tended to have a certain paleness to it, not to mention the problems with the frequency response depending on the impedance, meaning the result not always being linear.

In the Canor AI 2.10, the amplitude frequency response at 4 ohms is nearly perfectly linear up to almost 25 kilohertz and at 8 ohm even up to 50 kilohertz. This shows that the amplifier circuitry/coupling has received the necessary attention, both in the purely technical and the audiophile sense. In the usual hearing range there are thus no problems arising from the impedance of the speakers.

The STEREO laboratory also confirmed this: values for distortion and noise are just great – especially for a device equipped with tubes. Up to high power levels, distortions and intermodulations remain one or two zeros below the decimal point, and the damping factor is beyond 60 – unthinkable for pure tube amps.

The manufacturer's specifications of 2 x 100 watts output power at 8 and 2 x 150 watts at 4 ohms are achieved almost exactly. At times, the Canor even unleashed around 200 Watts – per channel, of course.



ROBUST

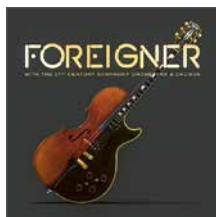
The remote control is made of metal and also controls the matching CD player: functional, high quality and easy to use.

Two balanced (XLR) and four unbalanced (RCA) inputs are available.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

**Foreigner:
With the 21st Century
Symphony
Orchestra**



A first-class listening experience was in the making when Foreigner, under Mick Jones, presented and recorded hits such as „Say You Will“ and „Urgent“ with a choir and a classical orchestra live in front of an audience in Switzerland. The spectacle even arrived in the classical music charts (!) and is sensational on vinyl as well as CD, but especially on DVD – this applies explicitly to the sound.



You can switch sources on the Canor-Amp, dim the display or provide silence via muting using the buttons on the front.

Magical performance

Now, the AI 2.10 had to prove itself in our listening test. First things first, there is no doubt that this amp has a delicate side to it and that it is able to play with high resolution and accuracy. It sounded multifaceted, light-footed and featured excellent spatial depth as well as a remarkably controlled bass, which lacked at most a little bit of blackness, in all its glory.

Above all, the musical performance was lively. The Canor AI 2.10 showed a fantastic flow, a dynamic temperament and lots of emotion, so that listening to it became a real pleasure. The paleness of earlier Class D amplifiers was completely gone, and the tube preamp provided for the rest. The AI 2.10 seemed to produce music without any effort at all. Even voices were rendered downright beautifully.

Here, one must not forget that we are far from dealing with a 10,000 Euro amp, but, in fact, with one for 3,500 Euros. However, that can easily happen when listening to it, thanks to its pure musical joyfulness and superb tonal colors.

The Canor is not cheap, but incredible. Such coherence and magic are rare enough, and on top of that everything was really fun to listen. The high power reserves even allow for the use of less efficient speakers.

We would, however, have liked to find a headphone jack and pre-outputs so that we could pass on the merits of this preamp to active speakers, for example.

Canor is extraordinary – and obviously very good! We want more! ■

TEST DEVICES

CD-Players:

Audiolab 8300 CDQ,
Canor CD 2.10, Lua
Appassionato MkIII

Integrated Amps:

Audionet Sam G20,
Cyrus 8.2 DAC QXR,
Sansui AU-X1,
T+A PA 1100E

Speakers:

DALI Epicon 6,
Spendor S3/5,
Visaton Vox 252

Cables:

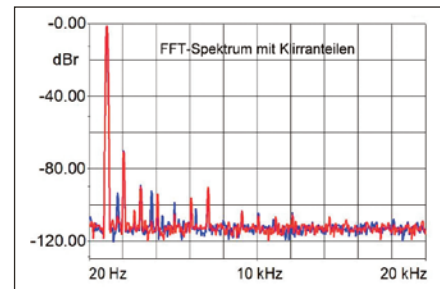
Supra Cables

Canor AI 2.10

Price: around 3500 €
Dimensions: 44 x 12 x 43 cm (WxHxD)
Warranty: 2 Years
Contact: IDC Klaassen
Tel.: +49 231 9860285
www.idc-klaassen.com

Highly musical integrated amplifier, combining a superb tube preamplifier and a mighty Class D power amplifier. Extraordinary design, choice of materials and excellent, hand-made, European workmanship match the high sound quality.

Measurement Results



Continuous Power (8 Ohm / 4 Ohm)	99 W/158 W
Pulse Power 4 Ohm (1kHz)	196 W
THD 50mW/5W/1dB Pmax	0,02 %/0,03 %/0,45 %
Interm. 50mW/5W/1dB Pmax	0,007 %/0,02 %/1,5 %
Signal-to-Noise Ratio at 50mW/ 5W	73 dB/91 dB
Damping at 4 Ohm (63Hz/1kHz/14kHz)	63/57/6
Upper Cut-Off Frequency(-3dB/40hm)	28 kHz
Crosstalk Line 1 > Line 2	83 dB
Synchronization Error Volume at -60dB	<0,1 dB

Lab Comment

High output power 100/150 Watt with pulse reserves, very good distortion and noise values, high damping factor, excellent channel synchronization, no input crosstalk, good channel separation, impedance dependent bandwidth of almost 30 kHz at 4 and 53 kHz at 8 Ohms.

Features

Metal remote control, two balanced and four unbalanced high level inputs, no pre-out, no headphone jack, connection for a pair of speakers.

STEREO - TEST

SOUND-LEVEL 85%

VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★☆

EXCELLENT