



SOUNDREBELS

Extraudio USB One



Opinion

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I suppose that, although for most of our readers, and for ourselves, the Dutch brand Extraudio is primarily associated with high-end electronics like the "Orange" XP5 preamplifier & XP-A1500 power amplifier or their original DAC2, it is crucial to be aware that their catalog also includes a surprising variety of cables and accessories. It's curious that while the basic models of amplifiers or digital-to-analog converters start at a prohibitive price for many potential interested parties in Poland, around 9700 euros—a point at which the most renowned competition usually concludes their presentations—in terms of cabling, the Leidschendam, The Netherlands team is decidedly more lenient on the buyers' wallets. It turns out that prices start at approximately 600-1000 euros for the initial One series. And precisely from this series, as a good starting point, we have decided to select a digital interconnect USB cable, which carries the significant name of Extraudio USB One 1.8m.





It cannot be hidden that, after describing the ostentatious and golden ZenSati sILENzIO, our guest today seems quite modest both in terms of design and appearance, which is quite rough. However, instead of criticism, it deserves praise, since while in the ultra high-end represented by the Danish ZenSati, everything must be top quality and often exudes luxury, at the strictly budgetary level it is much more sensible to focus on the quality of the material and, therefore, on the sound, instead of squandering the budget on expensive braiding, jewelry finishes, and boutique boxes. The manufacturer clearly indicates that by opting for the "One", you only pay for the sound and not for the "apparent value", such as a "fancy look" from a re-labeled "printer" cable. According to the manufacturer's claims, the One is adorned with an "exclusive" ultra-quiet textile sleeve and its copper-graphite conductors are subjected to cryogenic treatment, topped with a ferrite ring and gold connectors. I would add that, due to its flexibility, the USB One is also extremely convenient for organizing behind the connected devices, so, if they do not have much space behind them, it is worth considering for that reason.

However, it turns out that not only because of its flexibility, the Dutch USB One connection should be in the spotlight for those looking for something more than the standard USB cable offerings on the market. As you will surely have realized, another argument in its favor is also its "sound" and the signature it imparts. This, quite obviously, reminds me, at least, of what the Japanese fidata HFU2 represented in my system for several years. I'm referring to the addictive musicality from the first bars, based on a discreet brushstroke of refined sweetness and truly silky smoothness. Moreover, this musicality does not monopolize the entire presentation, still leaving room for resolution or dynamics, without which the set could sound too secure or even boring. For instance, "Third Degree" by Flying Colors is a phenomenal album, but at the same time extremely demanding for the system, because not only does so much happen in each minute of the recording that it would easily suffice to fill a complete song and much beyond the "radial restrictions", but also the entire presentation is offered a bit too light and ethereal, so that Casey McPherson's voice is a hair's breadth from stridency and offensiveness, Mike Portnoy's percussion set sounds a bit anorexic (especially the anemic bass drum), and Steve Morse's guitar tries fervently to remove our dental tartar. Of course, the above description is clearly an exaggeration and totally intentional, but believe me, it is better not to resort to this album when we want to show the dynamics and depth that our polished system possesses. And the titular Extraudio connection not only corrects all the aforementioned sins, but, in an authorial manner and, it must be admitted, quite successfully, tones them down, normalizing and bringing the whole to a much more acceptable form. This does not mean, however, that the message is dimmed or blunted, but a slight downward shift in the tonal balance, gilding the highs and giving the entire set the right saturation. Fortunately, the ventilation and freedom that reigns on stage remain intact, so, despite the aforementioned beautifying treatments, the music does not lose the breath and vitality it so needs.

And, how does the Extraudio USB One behave in recordings where nothing needs to be improved, such as in "Echoes of the Inner Prophet" by Melissa Aldana? I must honestly say that on a highly satisfactory level. Maybe it does not have the resolution and refinement, or the liveliness of the ZenSati Zorro, which serves as a reference point, but combining the previously mentioned smoothness of the fidata with the coherence of the Vermouth Audio Reference USB, it focuses on the emotional aspect and the presentation of the musical spectacle as a whole indivisible entity, and not on breaking down sounds into atoms and inspecting the usually shaded corners. Although we are not dealing with a mere superficial slide without the ambition to delve into the subsequent plans, but from a certain point of view, an authorial narrative, where the distribution of accents is thus and only in the viewer's preferences resides whether it will be convenient for them to follow it. Returning to the aforementioned jazz album, it is worth noting that both the definition of the apparent sources and the precision of their location on stage did not cause dissatisfaction, and the tracing of their contours with a slightly thicker line than I usually have did not cause the loss of the ability to precisely indicate where each one is located and how/from what they extract the specific sounds.

It cannot be denied that, using colloquial language, the Extraudio USB One is a very "cool" cable. Above all, because even in high-class systems it should not spoil anything, offering the musicality and smoothness so necessary during the exploration of files that are not always produced in a referential manner. On the other hand, in much more budgetary configurations, where due to its uncontroversial price its reason for being seems much more justified, it will pleasantly satisfy and, metaphorically speaking, "untangle" the transmission.

Marcin Olszewski

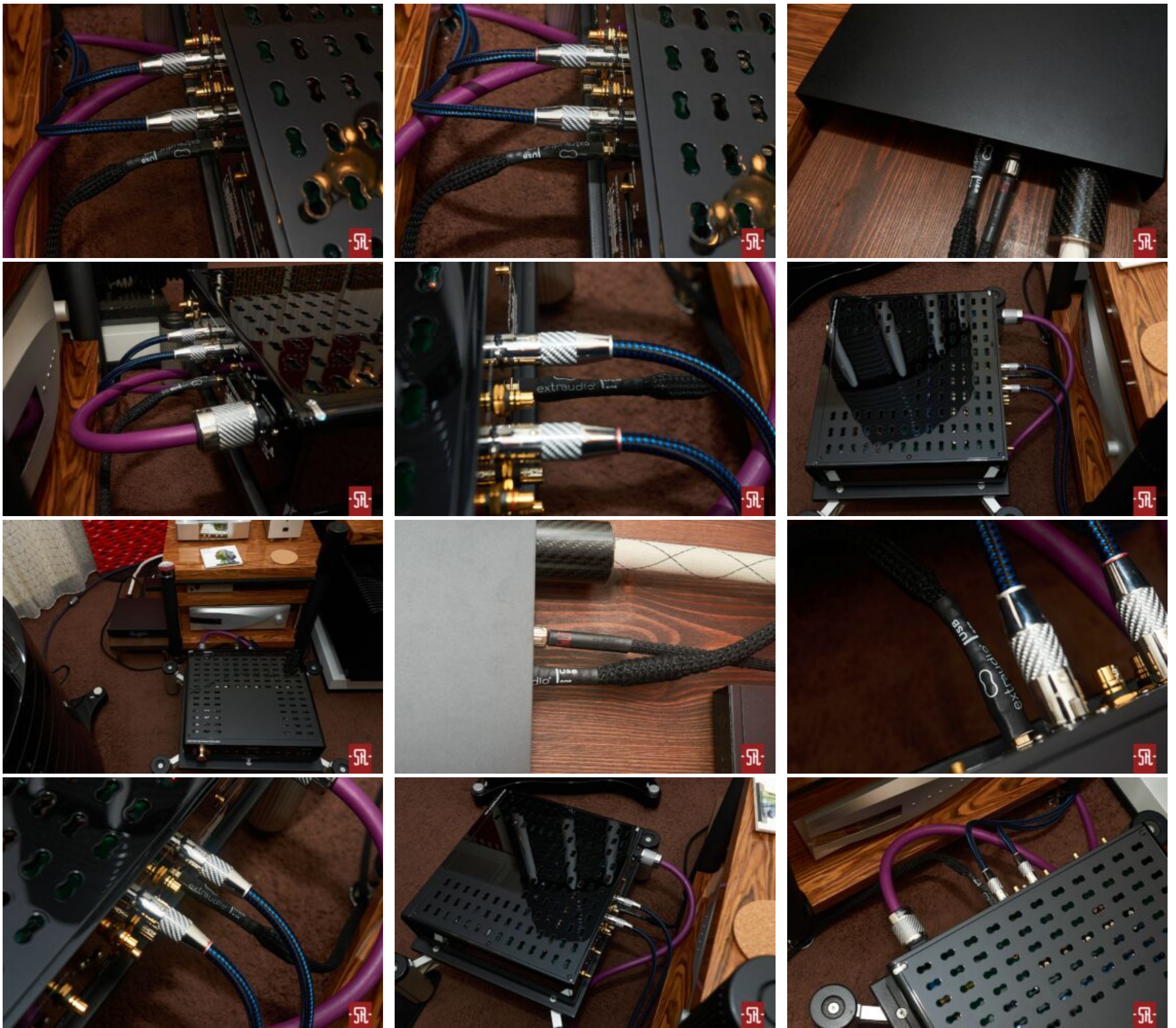
System used during the test1:

- CD/DAC: Ayon CD-35 (Preamp + Signature) + Finite Elemente Cerabase compact; Vitus SCD-025mkII
- File player: Lumin U2 Mini + Farad Super3 + Farad DC Level 2 copper cable + Omicron Magic Dream Classic; I-O Data Soundgenic HDL-RA4TB
- Turntable: Denon DP-3000NE + Denon DL-103R
- Phono preamplifier: Tellurium Q Iridium MM/MC Phono Pre Amp
- Digital source selector: Audio Authority 1177
- Integrated amplifier: Vitus Audio RI-101 MkII + Quantum Science Audio (QSA) Violet
- Speakers: Dynaudio Contour 30 + Acoustic Revive SPU-8 pads + quartz platforms Base Audio
- IC RCA: Furutech FA-13S; phono NEO d+ RCA Class B Stereo + Ground (1m)
- IC XLR: Vermouth Audio Reference; Furutech DAS-4.1
- Digital IC: Fadel art DigiLitz; Harmonic Technology Cyberlink Copper; Apogee Wyde Eye; Monster Cable Interlink LightSpeed 200

- USB cables: Wireworld Starlight; Vermöuth Audio Reference USB; ZenSati Zorro
- Speaker cables: Signal Projects Hydra + SHUBI Custom Acoustic Stands MMS-1
- Power cables: Esprit Audio Alpha; Furutech FP-3TS762 / FI-28R / FI-E38R; Organic Audio Power + Furutech CF-080 Damping Ring; Acoustic Zen Gargantua II; Furutech Nanoflux Power NCF
- Power strip: Furutech e-TP60ER + Furutech FP-3TS762 / Fi-50 NCF(R) /FI-50M NCF(R)
- Wall power socket: Furutech FT-SWS-D (R) NCF
- Switch: Silent Angel Bonn N8 + Silent Angel S28 feet + Farad Super3 power supply + Farad DC Level 2 copper cable
- Ethernet cables: In-akustik CAT6 Premium II; Audiomica Laboratory Anort Consequence, Artoc Ultra Reference, Arago Excellence; Furutech LAN-8 NCF; Next Level Tech NxLT Lan Flame
- Anti-vibration platform: Franc Audio Accessories Wood Block Slim Platform
- Rack: Solid Tech Radius Duo 3
- Acoustic panels: Vicoustic Flat Panel VMT

Opinion 2

Do you remember the cheerful and presentable Dutch electronics (**pre-power**) from **Extraudio in silver-orange tones**? Yes, that's the same brand as the recently tested black and gold **DAC2 converter**. What's wrong? Don't worry, there's no dramatic disaster, they've just brought another interesting test proposal under their wing. What do we have in our hands this time? After two encounters with sound-generating designs, this time the distributor from **Chelmża, Poland, Quality Audio**, has proposed for testing an essential element in the audio chain for all users of file-based systems: the reasonably priced Extraudio USB One digital cable. Modest in appearance, but surprisingly competent in terms of sound. What does that mean? Unfortunately, the introduction is not the place to reveal all the details, so I invite those interested in unraveling the term "competent" to read the following text.



Jeśli chodzi o budowę naszego bohatera, wiemy, iż sygnał prowadzony jest drutem wykonanym z mieszanki miedzi i grafitu. W jego trzewiach znajdziemy dodatkowo podwojony rdzeń ferrytowy. Podążając za ostatnio częstymi praktykami poddano go obróbce kriogenicznej. Zastosowane wtyki mogą pochwalić się pozłacanymi pinami. Zaś pakiet danych wieńczy informacja o nieprzypadkowej, bo likwidującej zakłócenia cyfrowe, RFI długości 1.8 m. Mało? Być może dla dociekliwych odbiorców tak, jednak dla większości z nas taki pakiet informacji jest zupełnie wystarczający, bowiem clou tej konstrukcji jest jej brzmienie, a nie bardziej lub mniej kwieciste opisane dane techniczne.

Regarding the construction of our protagonist, we know that the signal is conducted through a cable made of a mixture of copper and graphite. Inside, we also find a duplicated ferrite core. Following recent common practices, it has undergone cryogenic treatment. The connectors used can boast gold pins. The data package is topped off with information about a length of 1.8 m that intentionally eliminates digital RFI interference. Is that little? Perhaps for the more inquisitive consumers, yes, but for most of us, such a package of information is completely sufficient, since the core of this construction is its sound, not the more or less floridly described technical data.

When we come to the part dedicated to the sound of the USB One, it's time to explain my intention in using the word "competent" to describe its approach to music. It might surprise some, but it's simply the fact that our protagonist avoids extreme and therefore risky actions in the field of emphatic musical world creation, in favor of extracting the largest possible package of musicality from it. There is no forced effort to extract what is called the last juices in terms of clarity at the ends of the acoustic spectrum—I refer to the sharp definition of the bass and the middle of the spectrum supported by an extreme illumination of the highest registers—instead, it shows the beauty of resonances and the essentiality of the material very coherently presented. Material that, on one hand, can boast of an excellent level of juicy fluidity, and on the other, of a clear definition, necessary to find its place in the whirlwind of stage events. Of course, the weight of the sound and its impact cannot fully convey the joy and polychromy inherent to the material, so a very important element of the transmission was also skillfully displaying the sound tones, albeit working in service of granting freedom to the presentation, i.e., without any tendency to follow its own path in the highest registers. In summary, all the articulated components sought in music a beauty based on its well-understood, because adequately compact and sonorously rounded nature. However, I warn in advance that the set turned out to be so well balanced in its aesthetics that it found a thread of understanding with my system, which is already well defined in this matter. I'll say more. Not once did I find the set struggling in displaying even the most demanding instrumental passages. This, of course, refers to the resolution not only of the bass but especially the mid-range, which when it comes to positioning the system in the mass often struggles to properly represent the edges of virtual entities. A good example of maintaining good timing and showing a good package of information in these ranges was the jazz album "Goodbye" by the Bobo Stenson Trio. It refers, of course, not only to the work of the drums, strong at one moment and delicate at another, but especially to the unpredictability in the visualization of the double bass. Sometimes fast, offering a burst of quick plucks, and at other times majestic in the vector of extension suspended in the ether, which too condensed in the domain of string vibration and additionally too smoothed in terms of drawing its sound edges, generally turns out to be boring, because it melts into a single sound-emitting impulse. Yes, yes, analyzing the previous phrase, you'll notice well, for me the double bass is one of the most important instruments defining the capabilities of the system. Because it is about that, apparently being very inflated in terms of size, with that round body, but with a nice cut at the waist and four strings currently synthetic or metallic, shown with all the mastery it houses too explicitly, shows in today's case the qualitative capabilities of the tested USB cable. And if a product, like the hot spot of today's meeting, comes out of the confrontation with it with what is called a shield, I have no resistance to classifying the USB One as a very successful construction. Naturally, based on the previous description, the Extraudio cable can boast of a sound aesthetic oriented more towards musicality than prowess, however, that does not change the fact that what it does, it does excellently.

Do I see any potential configurative danger for our hero based on my observations? Of course, there will always be a small percentage of completely incompatible sets. However, I assure you that it really has to be a very affected set for a musical cable, but at the same time full of vigor and agility to say enough. Personally, despite many visits to friends and thus having a broad knowledge about the diversity of their sound, so far, I have found nothing that could waste the potential of the Extraudio USB One. And if so, and they are in the process of selecting this type of cabling, it would be a sin to negligently overlook the titular construction in the process of selecting the most suitable one. Even more so, given the current price frenzy in terms of positioning in this interpretation, it maintains common sense.

Jacek Pazio

System used in the test 2:

- - Transport: CEC TL 0 3.0
- - Streamer: Lumin U2 Mini + Silent Angel Bonn N8 switch
- - Digital to Analog Converter: dCS Vivaldi DAC 2.0
- - Reference Clock: Mutec REF 10 SE-120
- - Reclocker: Mutec MC-3+USB
- - Shunyata Research Omega Clock
- - Shunyata Sigma V2 NR
- - Line Preamplifier: Gryphon Audio Pandora
- - Power Amplifier: Gryphon Audio APEX Stereo
- - Speakers: Gauder Akustik Berlina RC-11 Black Edition
- - Speaker Cables: Furutech Nanoflux-NCF Speaker Cable
- - IC RCA: Hijiri Million "Kiwami", Vermouth Audio Reference
- - XLR: Hijiri Million "Kiwami", Furutech DAS-4.1
- - Digital IC: Hijiri HDG-X Million
- - LAN Cable: NxLT LAN FLAME
- - Power Cables: Hijiri Takumi Maestro, Furutech Project-V1, Furutech NanoFlux NCF, Furutech DPS-4.1 + FI-E50 NCF(R)/ FI-50(R), Hijiri Nagomi, Vermouth Audio Reference Power Cord, Acrolink 8N-PC8100 Performante, Synergistic Research Galileo SX AC
- - Rack: BASE AUDIO 2
- Accessories:
 - - Fuses: Quantum Science Audio Red, Synergistic Research Orange
 - - Anti-vibration: Harmonix TU 505EX MK II, Stillpoints ULTRA MINI
 - - Anti-vibration platform: SOLID TECH
 - - Power accessories: Harmonix AC Enacom Improved for 100-240V
 - - Power strip: POWER BASE HIGH END, FURUTECH e-TP80 ES NCF
 - - Acoustic panels: Artnovion
- Analog path:
 - - Turntable: Clearaudio Concept
 - - Cartridge: Dynavector DV20X2H
 - - Phono preamplifier: RCM Audio The Big Phono
 - - Record clamp: DS Audio ES-001
 - - Reel-to-reel tape recorder: Studer A80
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Distributor Poland: **Quality Audio**

Manufacture: **Extraudio**

Price excl. VAT: 599.- euros / 1,8m

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