

Super trooper

Naim's new SuperUniti is an all-in-one system heavily armed to combat conventional separates, says **Malcolm Steward**...

As an all-in-one device that combines the functions of the SuperNait integrated amplifier with the UnitiQute network audio player, should Naim not have called this device the SuperQute?

Regardless, the £3,250 SuperUniti actually is something of a UnitiQute on steroids with all the 80 watt muscle and DAC (up to 32-bit/192 kHz capable depending on format) of the SuperNait tucked inside its reference series casework, alongside a comprehensive list of sources and features. There is no CD transport as per the original Uniti.

Included, though, is an integrated wireless UPnP network stream player, a USB audio player, an iPod and iPhone docking facility, an internet radio, DAB radio, FM radio, a 10-input digital and analogue preamplifier, a digital-to-analogue convertor, and an alarm clock.

Naim is not being in the least reserved when it comes to describing the SuperUniti. Its performance, the company says, is reference level, something along the lines of the SuperNait. This integrated has proven to me it is more than up to the task of driving 'difficult' loudspeakers with ease; its quoted 80W output is said to become 120W at 4 ohms. The amplifier, more importantly, can deliver current by the bucket-load when called upon so

to do. It's certainly *not* one of those amplifiers that struggles for breath when faced with the loudspeaker equivalent of a steep incline, I found.

It's not all about performance, though. SuperUniti delivers high-quality audio with commodity-like ease of use. Control is either by the supplied remote handset, through the fascia buttons or, for the least effort and ultimate slickness, Naim's n-Stream app for Apple iOS devices; the latter is a real boon.

Sound quality

Listening to the SuperUniti proved a thoroughly rewarding experience, one that comfortably exceeded expectations. For example, Aaron Lewis' vocals on *Town Line* had real meaning and convincing authority – his singing was intensely persuasive.

Similarly, Zoe Muth and The Lost High Rollers' *Starlight Hotel* sounded like the pure modern country it is, but it nonetheless betrayed its wide variety of modern, non-country influences. Even the phrasing on the guitar runs did not always sound one hundred per cent country. Yet, the SuperUniti proved consistently capable of making the hairs on the back of my neck bristle...

As one would expect, the SuperUniti is fully up to speed in the

DETAILS

- PRODUCT:** Naim SuperUniti
ORIGIN: UK
TYPE: all-in-one system
WEIGHT: 12.8kg
DIMENSION: (WxHxD) 432x87x314mm
FEATURES:
- analogue inputs: 2x RCA phono, DIN, 3.5mm minijack
 - analogue outputs: RCA phono line, DIN pre-out, 2x subwoofer
 - digital inputs: 2x coaxial, 3x Toslink, 1x mini Toslink
 - quoted power: 80W/8 ohms
 - radio: internet, FM, DAB
 - formats: Internet radio (WMA, MP3 Streams, MMS) Playlists (M3U, PLS) MP3, M4A, AAC (up to 320 kbps, CBR/VBR), Apple Lossless (from iPod)
 - Windows Media – formatted content (up to 320 kbps) LPCM16/24, WAV, FLAC, Ogg Vorbis, AIFF
- DISTRIBUTOR:** Naim Audio
TELEPHONE: 01722 426 600
WEBSITE: naimaudio.com

timing department. Its propulsive drive is a match for pretty much any other component from the company; it's certainly up there with the SuperNait in terms of its portrayal of rhythms. It is particularly convincing when the rhythm is not overtly stated, as on tracks like Colin Hay's *Send Somebody* from the album *Gathering Mercury*. It was equally convincing with more temporally intricate, syncopated music such as *Weibayuwa* from Aurelio Martinez' *Garifuna Afro-Combo* album.

Naim's representative strongly suggested that I try the digital output of the SuperUniti, feeding a stream through the Naim DAC into my reference-level system. When I tried the SuperUniti like this, effectively with it operating in place of a high-end source, I have to admit that it was far more capable than I expected. Its ability to communicate seemed greatly magnified and it truly confirmed to listeners, for example, that Staind was using vintage instruments throughout its *Illusion of Progress* album. The primitive beauty of those 1960s and 1970s Fender and Gibson guitars, and the drum-kit, was lucidly portrayed.

The SuperUniti/DAC combination displayed phenomenal finesse and poise. The Toad Lickers from Thomas Dolby's album *A Map of the Floating City* demonstrated just how adept the combination was at unpicking a mix and extracting from it the finest sliver of detail or dynamic nuance.

Subtlety and finesse are definitely strong points of the SuperUniti. Its sympathetic portrayal of gentle, simple music, such as the Gillian Welch album, *The Harrow & The Harvest*, was mesmerising from start to finish.

Conclusion

Very good, then! I think it would be unfair to describe the new Naim SuperUniti merely as a hi-fi bargain, for it is a truly fluent maker of music. ●



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

- SOUND QUALITY** ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Superb rhythms, strong power delivery, features and connectivity
- VALUE FOR MONEY** ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Nothing at the price
- BUILD QUALITY** ★★★★★ **WE SAY:** Superb one box offering powerful, incisive sound, allied to excellent build quality, ease-of-use and features
- FEATURES** ★★★★★

OVERALL

