LHC-208 - The LHC-208 is an integrated amplifier, network player and ultra-high-resolution digital converter in one modern and elegant chassis.

darTZeel has opened up a new world of digital audio reproduction possibilities with the LHC-208.

Designed to handle high-quality digital music, the LHC-208 is in fact a « danalogue » integrated amplifier, with built-in streaming system and DAC.

darTZeel has ventured into the world of digital to offer its signature brand of unparalleled sound reproduction, through its groundbreaking approach to signal processing.

With an active Ethernet connection, the LHC-208 decodes and reproduces digital audio files, including DSD256 and 24/384 formats.

The LHC-208 can be operated using its remote control or any DLNA-compatible UPnP application.

The LHC-208 offers excellent digital conversion quality, ease of use, a compact and elegant chassis, powerful output stages and development potential with its modern interface.

Attention to detail
Before it could offer an unforgettable musical experience, the darTZeel LHC-208 was developed gradually over more than three years in our lab, where attention was paid to every last detail. For the first time, you can listen to very-high-resolution music with non-PLL clock distribution, for an unparalleled analogue listening experience.

Future-proof
The darTZeel LHC-208 offers regular software updates, a single cooling system, a groundbreaking clock system and an upgradeable digital platform.

All for music
With five analogue inputs, six digital inputs, a dedicated headphone amplifier, and a touch screen, along with analogue circuits modelled on the NHB-458, the LHC-208 really has everything.

Except a pair of speakers and your music library.
Specifications

Nominal Output Power
200 watts RMS (220 watts peak) @ 8 ohms
300 watts RMS (330 watts peak) @ 4 ohms

Line Gain
0dB nominal, up to +12 dB

Power Stage Gain
26 dB @ 8 ohms

Analog Input Impedances
1 x Zeal BNC 50 ohms
3 x RCA line > 30 kohms
1 x Aux 3.5 mm front panel jack > 10 kohms

Digital Inputs
1 x RJ45 Network
1 x USB
2 x SPDIF (RCA 75 ohms)
2 x TOS Link

Analog Line Output
1 x Headphone 6.35mm front panel jack

Speaker Output Impedance
< 0.33 ohms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz (measured under 8 ohms)

Frequency Response
7 Hz - 170 kHz, <0.3 dB

Rise Time
< 0.8 µs

Slew Rate
> 100 V/µs, peak-peak

DC Output Voltage
< ±15 mV max

Total Harmonic Distortion (THD)
< 1 % from 7 Hz to 77 kHz within the output dynamic range

Temporal Distortion
None, at any level and load, as specified above

Crosstalk
< -40 dB @ 1 kHz
Signal to noise ratio
> 105 dB (A) @ nominal power

Power consumption
2 watts Standby, 40 watts @ idle, 900 watts @ maximum output power

Size in mm
440 x 350 x 130 (WxDxH)

Size in inches
17.32 x 13.78 x 5.12 (WxDxH)

Net weight
16 kg

Review

What did all this mean when it comes to reproducing exquisitely recorded music? I became mesmerised........... - Paul Millar

REVIEW SUMMARY: Fed high quality recordings, the LHC-208 proved capable of tremendous fine detail retrieval and bewitching image dimensionality. There is an impressive naturalness in the way it presents images of musicians in space and the soundstage always appears deep and wide.

The sound is charming and inviting in its overall balance – with thrilling dynamics when the music commands – and as others have observed with darTZeel’s costlier amplifiers, its tone is vibrant without ever appearing ‘coloured’. It seemingly never fails to draw you in, making you want to relax and listen to the music rather than analyse its constituent elements.

Using a squeaky-clean Melco N1A server [HFN Aug ’15] for playing CD rips and hi-res downloads, we listened to the LHC-208 driving a pair of Focal's lovely Sopra No 2 floorstanders in the editor’s media room. Bass was extended and rich, perhaps not as tightly controlled as with some muscle amps, yet nicely integrated and always self-assured.

Midrange and HF was what many might describe as ‘valve-like’, so what you hear as a result is almost always easy on the ear unless bashing out Metallica at full throttle!

I don’t want to paint an impression that the new ‘baby’ darTZeel sounds soft and cuddly. Interestingly, The Fab Four’s ‘And I Love Her’ [2009 remaster at 44.kHz/24-bit sounded eerily stark and calmly uncluttered, allowing forensic observation of the performers and the subtle inflections in their phrasing that often go unnoticed. Certainly the LHC-208’s strong suits appear to be its convincing speed and attack through mid to-high-frequencies – making acoustic guitars wholly believable – together with seemingly effortless transparency. So while its midrange wasn’t warm and ‘tubey’, neither was it ever wiry or artificial sounding. Indeed, in that regard it almost could be described as sounding like a tube amplifier!

What did all this mean when it comes to reproducing exquisitely recorded music? I became mesmerised listening to guitarist Antonio Forcione’s and singer Sabina Sciubba’s version of Stevie Wonder’s ‘Visions’ from their album Meet Me In London ....

Offering fine sound quality and enough inputs to satisfy most system set-ups, darTZeel’s LHC-208 is a highly desirable integrated amp/network player/DAC solution for audiophiles determined to stand out from the crowd. It might not drip functionality, but what it does it executes exceedingly well, with promises of many software updates in the pipeline for those privileged to own it.

Link