

Pro-Ject DAC Box S2+

This multi-source machine ditches portability in favour of flexibility

PRO-JECT'S DAC BOX S2+ stands out from the crowd not just in terms of form factor (as the name suggests, it's quite boxy) but in functionality. As well as its USB input, it has optical and coaxial digital audio connections. It also has the widest sample rate handling in this test, with 32-bit/768kHz possible via the USB input, and 24-bit/192kHz via optical/coax. And its internal ESS9038K2M DAC has four adjustable filters, plus one developed by Pro-Ject.

There's no headphone socket here, only a pair of phono outputs, and – unlike its rivals – it runs off an external power supply. There's no MQA support either, which might be a blow for Tidal users.

The 10cm-wide chassis feels very well made, and is available in black and silver.

The DAC Box S2+ didn't have the same punch and energy as the iFi Zen DAC, but had a dimensionality and detail to its delivery of Norah Jones' *How I Weep* that was impressive

Choose from five digital filters

for a fairly affordable design. It didn't sound as dynamic as the MQA DACs (the track was unfolded by the Tidal desktop app), but its performance with Qobuz's 24-bit/96kHz FLAC version was lovely. With Aurora's *The River*, what the DAC Box S2+ lacked in full-on aggression it gained in space and fluency.

As for the filter options, selectable by the front panel, I didn't find any made a night and day difference but the Pro-Ject one was, by a small margin, my favourite.

You can, of course, connect your smartphone to the Pro-Ject DAC Box S2+



via adapter cable, and those digital audio inputs will be useful for people with other multiple stereo sources.

Overall, a flexible and fine performer.

HCC VERDICT ★★★★★

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→ £220 → www.project-audio.com