



The 12th Annual Positive Feedback Writers' Choice Awards for 2015 – The Best of the Best!

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Brian Moura



Merging Technologies NADAC MC-8 DAC \$11,500 [HERE](#)

Merging Technologies is best known for its line of professional Analog to Digital (ADC) and Digital to Analog (DAC) converters for use in recording studios, music venues and TV and radio production in DSD, DXD and PCM digital formats. This year Merging brought their technology to the home audio market with the Network Attached Digital to Analog Converter (NADAC).

Available in two models—Stereo (ST-2) and Multichannel (MC-8), NADAC is unique on several fronts. It uses Ethernet as its input format, not the much more common USB. This includes support for the Ravenna protocol that Merging helped develop for music recording. It also allows buyers of the MC-8 multichannel model to flip a switch and merge the 8 DAC channels into 2—bringing you the features of the ST-2 and MC-8 converter in one box

Even though it was released fairly recently (late September 2015), NADAC has already received a number of kudos and rave reviews at audio shows where it has been auditioned. It's for good reason. NADAC offers a clean and very detailed portrayal of the music it is playing—be it DSD, DXD or PCM. The clean and detailed sonics are essential for judging a musical performance in the recording studio and presenting it at a concert hall, club or professional venue. It is just as important in the home audio market where NADAC is very likely to receive a warm round of applause and strong sales. Bravo!

- **Merging Technologies NADAC MC-8 Meets Multichannel**
- **The Show Newport 2015 DSD Panel**



8 Ensembles in 1 Bit

Initially DSD 256 (also known as Quad DSD) was used as a technology to record music that would be later released in the more commonly supported DSD 64 and DSD 128 formats. With the emergence of home audio DACs with DSD 256 in Stereo and Multichannel from vendors led by exaSound in Canada, things changed and there was interest in and demand for DSD 256 releases.

One of the first companies to address this demand was the team at Native DSD. They recruited 8 talented young music ensembles in Europe (Breno Viricimo Group, De Gebroeders Harteveld and Fretz, Kobra Ensemble, New Amsterdam Voices, Odd Pearls, Thomas and Eva, Vercammen and Roinishvilli and The Pipays) to record an album.

What makes *8 Ensembles in 1 Bit* unique is that it was recorded natively, without post-processing, in DSD 256. This meant, for example, that the recording team had to physically move the musicians to bring them into balance vs. doing this with recording gear. The 26-minute video *8 Ensembles in 1 Bit: Behind The Scenes* with album Co-Producers and Recording Engineers Jared Sacks (Channel Classics) and Daan van Aalst (Navis Classics) provides a fascinating insider's look into the recording of this album and how it differs from standard recordings.

The result is an album featuring a wide variety of musical styles including Jazz, Acoustic, Bossa Nova, Classical and Vocal. The ensemble members found that the clarity and dynamic range of the DSD 256 format allowed them to perform music in its full bandwidth and provided startling clarity. As Lampizator's Lukasz Fikas remarked after hearing the album through his company's DACs "If you ever wondered, this is how the most amazing quality DSD gets done." Truly a showcase for music in DSD 256.

8 Ensembles in 1 Bit: Behind The Scenes (Video)

Just Listen Record Label \$14.95 (Stereo) to \$19.65 (Stereo + Multichannel DSD "Combi Deal")



Bob Attiyeh, Yarlung Artists [HERE](#)

Bob Attiyeh is one of the largely unsung heroes in the world of very high quality music and audio. This year he celebrates the 10th Anniversary of his music company Yarlung Artists.

Yarlung is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that records and releases music from young and very promising musicians in the highest audio quality. This includes Analog Tape, Vinyl LP and most recently Music Downloads. The result is some of the best sounding recordings on the market, not to mention an amazing calling card for these young musicians just starting their career.

Attiyeh records Live to Analog Tape using a specially modified tape recorder. The music is then mastered with the assistance of Mastering Engineer Steve Hoffman. This year Attiyeh expanded his company's offerings with the release of 20 albums that were transferred from the album Analog Master Tapes to the DSD 256 format. Almost overnight, with Attiyeh's work, DSD 256 went from a recording studio tool and upsampling option for home audio to a real live release format.

Attiyeh credits his bold entre into the world of DSD and more specifically DSD 256 to *Positive Feedback* Editor in Chief David Robinson, who loaned him a Merging Technologies HAPI converter to make these transfers. Attiyeh also credited assistance from Native DSD Mastering Engineer Tom Caulfield in making this tape to DSD project a reality. Today, Yarlung continues to have more DSD 256 albums transferred from Analog Tape on the market than any other record label.

Having heard a number of the Yarlung DSD 256 releases, I can attest to the very high quality of these Classical and Jazz recordings. For his tireless work to advance the audio state of the art and his work in helping shine a light on the talented young musicians starting out today, Bob Attiyeh is very deserving of the Writer's Choice Award.

The Show Newport 2015 DSD Panel