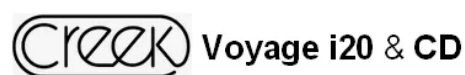


## CREEK Voyage i20 & CD

[Amps / Preamps](#)
[Test benches](#)
[Sources](#)

April 12, 2021



Origin : Great Britain

Integrated amplifier - Dac i20

CD player - Dac



This **Travel** range was expected, because it marks a form of renewal for the manufacturer. Still designed by Mike Creek, the integrated amplifier and CD player are now produced in Slovakia. This approach facilitates, among other things, the establishment and distribution within the European Union.

If the overall conceptual philosophy remains, the general presentation of the two references partially changes. Sobriety is always the order of the day, but these novelties have a more luxurious touch than that of the previous EVO series. The finely polished aluminum fronts help make the i20 and the CD pleasing to the eye, without evoking the ergonomics which also gain.

Integrated transistor amplifier - Dac

Power at 8 ohms : 2 x 120 watts

Power at 4 ohms : 2 x 240 watts

Frequency response : 1 Hz to 100 kHz, +/- 2dB

Signal / noise ratio : 102 dB A

Distortion rate : <0.002% - 20 Hz at 20 kHz

Crosstalk : > 80 dB at 1 kHz

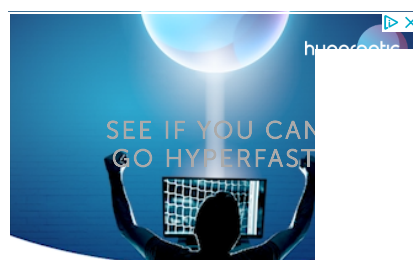
3 RCA

line inputs

1 XLR line input 1 RCA preamp output

1 6.35 jack headphone output

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### M2TECH Young Mk IV Dac / preamplifier: a perfect control unit

D / A converter - Young Mk IV preamplifier M2TECH unveils a very

interesting little preamplifier - dac, which logically follows the Young Mk III model. The Yo ...

April 8, 2021

2 coaxial S / PDIF  
digital inputs 2 optical Toslink digital inputs  
1 USB-2 PCM 768 kHz, 32-bit, [DSD](#) 22.4 MHz input  
1 Bluetooth connection - aptX HD



#### CD player - dac

PCM sampling rate : 8 kHz to 384 kHz

[Dynamic](#) : 123 dB

[Signal-to-noise ratio](#) : 113 dB

1 pair of RCA analog outputs

1 pair of XLR analog outputs



#### Amplifier - Dac i20

Wishing to be in the era of the times, the integrated amplifier i20 combines an analog preamplifier, a D / A converter and a power pack that relies on a single stabilized power supply, housed in a very slim package.

The D / A converter card is similar to the one fitted to the CD player. The designer chose an AKM AK4493EQ 32-bit 768 kHz chip that can support 22.4 MHz [DSD](#) signals .

The preamplifier section has four analog inputs, one of which is fully balanced. They are directly coupled to a sophisticated electronic control circuit of volume and balance "Muses".

The Muses Resistance Ladder Attenuator provides fine tuning over an 80dB range, in 1dB steps, with extremely low distortion. The Voyage i20's preamplifier circuit is normally set for unity gain (0 dB) but, if required, each input can individually amplify the input signal, in 3 dB steps, up to a maximum of + 12 dB. Each input can also be set to bypass the preamplifier and volume control. This user-selectable DIRECT mode allows the i20 to be used as a power amplifier with four inputs, or a series of combinations to meet individual needs.



Originally, the i20 does not have a built-in phono stage. An optional Sequel-mk4 plug-in phono card can be added on request. This module is intended for high efficiency MM and MC cartridges. It allows the selection of the gain at 40 or 50 dB, the capacitance of 100 pF or 200 pF and IEC filtering, in order to reduce the distortion frequencies of the disk. It benefits from the specific stabilized diet.

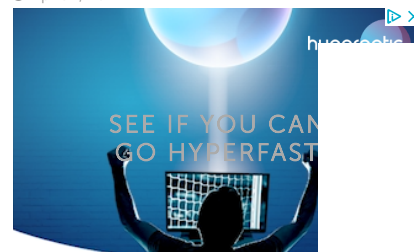


Evo 150 & Evo 75: the CAMBRIDGE spirit for the two new "all-in-ones"

"All-in-one" EVO 150 Drama from

CAMBRIDGE: the brand unveils two new products for this spring. The manufacturer wanted to take into account the demand since ...

April 7, 2021



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The power stage is based on six high current Mosfet Sanken STD03 transistors. To guarantee the advertised output power, CREEK has chosen a switching power supply. Thus, the designer is free from the conventional toroidal transformer (s) and filter capacitors.

Sanken thermal tracking bipolar power transistors immediately correct quiescent current, to accurately control and minimize crossover distortion and keep warm-up time to a minimum.

The output stage is configured in Class G. It is based on two power supply sections. The first section works in full tension and the second in half tension. When the signal requires a higher voltage in order to meet the demands of rigorous signal tracking at higher power levels, the power Mosfets in the Class G output circuit switch the half voltage to full voltage. As soon as this peak has passed, the voltage which supplies the bias current also decreases.

The supply half-voltage "works" at a quarter of the power, and goes up to full power to adapt to dynamic variations. In addition, this principle helps to reduce the size of the heat sink, while making the most of the dynamic nature of the music, and ensuring that excess calories are minimized.

A thermal tracking system is used to correct the quiescent current and minimize crossover distortion. Being DC coupled, decoupling capacitors are eliminated to improve musicality. An electronic servo circuit compensates for small DC offsets and keeps the amplifier output at zero DC volts. Finally, three protection formulas have been developed: overcurrent, DC offset and temperature; the output will be cut until the fault disappears, and ensure, if necessary, the protection of the loudspeakers.



To optimize performance and maintain left-right symmetry, CREEK has developed a modular plug-in voltage amplifier circuit. The discrete transistor type and their relatively low negative feedback allow input signals to be sent to the power amplifier without the need for additional gain at the preamplifier.

To combat any form of unwanted inductance and help achieve the best possible linearity, CREEK has developed a high power, low inductance AC resistance module, using multiple surface mounted resistors. To improve speaker damping by maintaining the amplifier's ultra-low output resistance, the left and right channel outputs are routed

through separate 10A relays. Internal wiring is kept to a minimum and the insulated terminals allow connection of banana plugs, spade lugs or bare cables, as required.



The front panel has two aluminum wheels around the Oled screen which informs the user about the functions in progress and the various settings available to him. To the left of the screen, a 6.35 headphone jack is welcome for those who also like to listen to headphones.

The supplied remote control, common to both devices, is used to control the amplifier and the CD player. It is intuitive and allows access to all functions.



The rear of the cabinet houses all digital and analog connections and the four superb speaker terminals accept banana plugs, prongs, and bare wire. CREEK has opted for very high quality RCA plugs directly bolted to the rear face and meticulously isolated from it.

## CD player - Dac

The Voyage source is an integrated CD player with a Slot mechanism. Thanks to its AKM AK4493EQ 32-bit 768 kHz chip and Velvat Sound™ technology, it can also be operated as a D / A converter.

The manufacturer specifies that the sound adjustment is managed by six types of 32-bit digital filters in order to meet a wide range of applications. Besides, bit-perfect operation can be achieved when streaming digital signals to the asynchronous Class 2 USB input, which is based on an 8-section XMOS microcontroller circuit, implementing custom Creek firmware and clocked by two low phase noise, low jitter oscillator circuits.



The Voyage CD player can support PCM signals sampled at 384 kHz and 22.4 MHz of direct-stream digital data ( [DSD 22.4 MHz](#)), making it ideal for high-resolution digital playback.



The back of this source is split into two sections: the analog outputs to the dual standard RCA and XLR original Neutrik, and the digital inputs and outputs, i.e. 2 digital S / PDIF coaxial inputs, 2 digital Toslink optical inputs, 1 USB input - 2 32-bit / 384 kHz asynchronous . You will also find 1 digital S / PDIF coaxial output, 1 digital Toslink optical output.

The Dac section has been the subject of a special development, the analog output stage has benefited from the same treatment. Two Texas Instruments OPA2134 Sound Plus™ operational modules handle flawless signal processing in the most linear fashion possible. Wima low tolerance polypropylene capacitors and Melf surface mount resistors filter out all forms of residual digital imperfections.



To further optimize the performance of the Travel CD player, CREEK has developed a custom high-frequency power supply to provide a regulated, noise-free DC voltage to power the DAC and CD transport circuits. This power supply operates transparently from a mains input voltage of 85 V to 265 V AC. This type of modern power supply guarantees optimal performance, whatever the quality of the network, the voltage or frequency, or even the mains voltage.

To improve the quality of the mains current and minimize all forms of unwanted interference, CREEK has installed bipolar mains filters in common mode, combined with the natural immunity of the specific power supply unit. Several discrete power regulators provide a "clean" and precise voltage for each circuit.

Also, the manufacturer specifies that it is not necessary to have recourse to a conditioner of sector to obtain optimal performances.



### Test conditions

Although each element was designed to "work" together, each of them was listened to individually under the usual conditions.

The Voyage i20 amplifier was paired with the YBA CD Player 2 and the Voyage CD player was linked to the YBA Classic 3 DT preamplifier and power pack.

In addition, the Voyage player was connected to the amplifier via traditional analog I / O and coaxial digital I / O.

These different operating formulas have made it possible to examine precisely the behavior and musical temperament of each of these references and to draw a common synthesis in the lines which follow.

Finally, the headphone output has also been the subject of special listening with the Sennheiser HD 430 headphones. If the headphone module does not offer musical performances rivaling the best separate headphone amplifiers, it does not for all that demerit. From this point of view, CREEK is still doing better than the competitors, especially Japanese, whose headphone releases are more anecdotal than really effective. You can count on this headphone output to find the characteristics described below.

I would like to thank the **Stentor distribution** team - importer of the brand, for providing me with this Travel set, allowing me to share my impressions with you through this test bench.

### Listening and impressions :

The listening tests were carried out at home with the following elements:

- loudspeakers PEL Kantor, DAVIS Nikita 3.0, RECITAL Audio Mutine EX,
- ESPRIT Aura and Beta 8G 2019 modulation cables,
- ESPRIT Eterna coaxial cable,
- HP ESPRIT Beta 8G 2019 cables, ESPRIT Aura, MELODIKA Sugar Brown SSC45.

For the mains supply: FURUTECH F-TP 615 and ESPRIT Volta strip, mains cable G-314Ag-18E and FT-SWS-G wall socket of the same brand. ESPRIT Celesta & Eterna power cables.

• **Selected CDs:** Naim CD test Sampler N ° 6 - Le Son Plaisir ~ Onkyo CD test - La Folia de la Spagna ~ Gregorio Paniagua - The Glory that was Gershwin ~ Frank Chacksfield - La Tradition Symphonique ~ Tri Yann & the Orchester National des Pays de la Loire Vol. 1 & 2 - Direction: Hubert Soudant - Meedle ~ Pink Floyd - Two Pianos in Hollywood ~ Ronnie Aldrich and the London Festival Orchestra - Les Marquises ~ Jacques Brel - Barry Lindon Soundtrack of the film - Sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti ~ piano: Mikhail Pletnev - Mademoiselle in New-York & The Voice of the Trumpet ~ Lucienne Renaudin Vary & BBC Concert Orchestra - Dance into Eternity ~ Omar Faruk Tekbilek - Jazz på svenska by Jan Johansson - Quiet Nights ~ Diana Krall - Richard Galliano plays Bach - The Singing Clarinet ~ Giora Feidman - Celtic Spectacular ~ Erich Kunzel &

### Tonal colors

🔗 [Medium /high s register](#)

- The Glory that was Gershwin ~ Frank Chacksfield



English sound or not? Those who appreciate the musical philosophy that once made the reputation of overseas electronics may be a little surprised, but not disappointed. Regardless, this travel couple works on a clever mix of sweetness and "insight" on the high end of the spectrum.

The CD player as well as the amplifier get along wonderfully to "distil" timbres of remarkable finesse, immaculate cleanliness on the highest frequencies. In short, "it goes high" without a hint of acidity.

In their respective capacity as end analyst, the new CREEK versions will delve into the sound message in depth. It is a real pleasure to rediscover the great works of *Georges Gershwin*, including the essential instrumental version of *Porgy and Bess* which "shines" with a thousand lights. The balance between the highest frequencies and those in the middle of the spectrum is well assured. This confirms both the insight of electronics and the respect for stamps.

The violin sections are smoothed, the transverse flute chirps a few notes in your ears, while the harp arpeggios are delicately scattered in the space giving this sparkling, recognizable texture signed CREEK.

The brass instruments and, more particularly the solo trumpet, have a "shiny", gleaming texture, which knows how to remain natural. She is devoid of any trace of aggression. The cymbal strokes perfectly reflect this respect for timbre without adding coloring or distortion. We can say that in terms of linearity, Voyage behaves in a healthy manner in accordance with the specifications of the designer.

### 🔊 Transparency - fluidity

#### • Naim CD test Sampler N ° 6



As a continuation of the above, there are no questions to be asked about the behavior of the reader and the amplifier in terms of transparency. Two tries (and more) are better than one. Thus, *Tears of Joy* by *Antonio Forcione* will show you all that is capable of reproducing this latest generation CREEK set. The notion of openness is obvious.

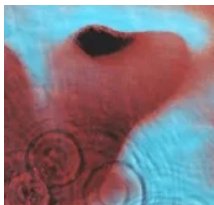
You can hear the guitar frets perfectly when changing chords. We will equally appreciate the multiple percussions which brighten up and enrich the sound message.

Precision is an asset that also deserves a point of attention. Harmonics are particularly well taken care of; we will then be able to appreciate the evolution and extinction of the notes in time and space.

If, undoubtedly, the music offers a remarkable grain, the fluidity allows a well-ordered sequence of each musical phrase. The unfolding of the scores is carried out spontaneously, without alteration as I have seen on *Rember the River* whose reproduction is perfectly oiled. Piano and double bass ensure a sustained rhythm around the saxophone playing with a warm, brassy, nuanced tone showing the magnificent agility in the unfolding of musical phrases. Listening becomes simply irresistible.

### 🔊 Serious register

#### • Meedle ~ Pink Floyd



If you want to know what a deep bass register is, go and get to know these CREEK products. No caricature or pretense. This set and each element analyzed individually have all the predispositions to easily explore the deepest frequencies.

*One of these Days* is a test to judge the behavior of Roger Waters' (double) bass guitar. Quickly we observe that the bass playing is well controlled. No trace of dragging or smearing disturbs the readability and the follow-up of the notes. In addition, the fabric of the bass combines harmoniously with the firm appearance

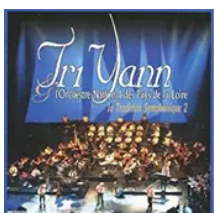
degraded, well stretched, which is far from always being the case.

On the same excerpt, we can only applaud the "volume" of the bass drum, which despite the impressive impacts offers a first-rate base which suits very well this extract of music, to say the least "demonstrative".

We also witness a magnificent contrast between the drums and the bass guitar where each of the instruments evolves in different frequencies of the low register without ever tangling the pencils. On this point, with the variations in intensity, we feel that the Class G technology used is absolutely mastered.

### Response capabilities - [dynamic](#) - [rigor](#)

#### • The Symphonic Tradition ~ Tri Yann & the Orchester National des Pays de la Loire Vol. 1 & 2 - Management: Hubert Soudant



Since all time, CREEK has always stood out for the sparkling side of its creations, especially with regard to amplifiers.

Travel is no exception to this rule. Lively by nature, without doing too much, the amplifier and the CD player do not hesitate to make you benefit from a Celtic Symphony where traditional music, rock, and the "power" of a symphony orchestra and choirs.

The responsiveness and liveliness are very real. The Voyage torque is a set of great stability coupled with excellent control. He shows discernment between the different desks and the frenzied rhythm.

The dynamics are appreciated on the most tonic passages. It gives the feeling of a vigor which completely disregards all subjective limits. Each element does its job in the purest respect for the sound recording, without hesitation or encountering large differences in dynamics. The great flights of violins or brass, the imposing choirs, the hits of the timpani, the drums give the feeling of a formidable energy coupled with an uncompromising rigor. But, above all, it is the flamboyant side that is tasty and allows us to attend a live show.

## Sound space and stage

### • Two Pianos in Hollywood ~ Ronnie Aldrich and the London Festival Orchestra



Generous in every way, this Voyage set features a holographic-like soundstage. Even at low listening level, you will benefit from a soundstage of remarkable magnitude. In a large listening room, you will be surprised at the extension of the sound space.

On the *Two Pianos in Hollywood* album from the *Decca Serie Phase 4* repertoire, we realize that the notion of space has undoubtedly been at the heart of the designer's concerns.

The soundstage is very well structured by the positioning of each piano as well as the arrangement of the different planes. The groups of instruments and solo instruments that make up the *London Festival Orchestra* find their place. We are delighted to discover a series of very well brought up contrasts which demonstrate that the amplifier and the CD player have been developed with undeniable meticulousness. Therefore, the listener will benefit from all the information of a sound recording.

In addition, the concept of ventilation takes on its full meaning here. The music breathes without artifice. The music is reproduced in a splendid form of quite impressive extension, I must say.

In fact, the scale, the panorama and the ventilation help to highlight the solo instruments, secondary and or which intervene in a punctual way: triangle, harp, cymbal emerge from the orchestral flow an undisguised presence and clarity.

## Emotion sequence - meaning of the expression

### • The Marquesas Islands ~ Jacques Brel



Well there we are! for its "musical journey", the new generation CREEK ensemble constitutes a real "vector" of emotions.

*Les Marquises* by Jacques Brel is a particularly eloquent extract if we focus exclusively on the vocal part. The interpreter displays an assertive presence in the listening room. The sound of his voice is recognizable among all, that's for sure. However, the latest CREEK versions bring that little extra that will not leave you indifferent: the magic of realism that freezes your back.

It must be recognized that the CD player and the amplifier get along there to reproduce the vocals in a human, warm, natural way. Each word, each sentence, each breath are perceptible: the meaning of the expression is pushed to a very high degree and shows a magnificent authenticity.

In the background, you can also taste the splendid orchestration which brings this artistic supplement which makes the wealth of *Marquesas*, among others. What lightness on the violin layers, a soft and airy transverse flute, harp notes which are delicately scattered, immerse you in the poetic universe of Jacques Brel - a nice tour de force enabled by these electronic music with a singing temperament.

### • Le Son Plaisir ~ Onkyo CD test



The big thrill! Certainly, you can count on this new CREEK set to have the end of the end in terms of emotions.

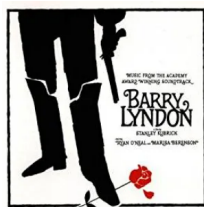
Listening to the *Kyrie* de la *Misa Criolla* by José Luis Ocelo is pure happiness. This interpretation is masterfully reproduced here with everything you need to give you great sensations. The vocal ensemble appears in front of you with presence, realism, and freshness.

The interpretation takes a deep breath: it brings a breath of fresh air. Suffice to say that these CREEK products really have a pronounced sense of openness. The margin of progress compared to previous versions of the manufacturer is significant.

In a different style, you will succumb to the charm of the *Air Varié* after *Colombi - 17th century* performed by the *Ecole de Madène*. Devil !, the sonority of the harpsichord, like that of the baroque violin and cello, is simply breathtaking in truth. The music flies in your listening room with a finesse, and a prestigious richness. The three instruments form a harmonious complement where the luminous aspect reigns supreme.

I will not forget the way harmonics are treated. Each note is extinguished in time and space with a delicacy to be specifically mentioned, without premature cuts. This helps to give more flavor and authenticity to the instruments, and to taste more of the talented interpretation that is offered to us. In addition, each of these instruments is nourished by a very pleasant fruity texture which goes well in the direction of the general harmony.

#### • Barry Lindon - soundtrack of the film



The new products of the British designer feel comfortable with all the styles of music that illustrate this soundtrack from the film *Barry Lindon*.

This is timely, since yours truly liked them in the company of the amplifier and the Voyage CD player. If you are looking for extremely expressive electronics, you will certainly be satisfied.

Traditional excerpts such as *Woman of Ireland* performed by *the Chieftains* appear in a bright light. We benefit from a particularly precise, chiseled, superbly cut violin set.

The Celtic harp notes flow in a magical way, the sonority of the uilleann pipes offers an absolutely prodigious reproduction that takes you to the guts.

What a beauty and what a sense of harmony on *The Cantina* from *Il Barbiere Di Siviglia*, just like on *Piano Trio opus 100 2nd movement* by Schubert. These more classic extracts are particularly gripping. Not to mention the brilliant *Sarabande* by *Handel* that shines in this test for the Season by his expression.

It is really great art that is offered to us by the latest creations of Mike Creek. Reproduction is simply divine. Every nuance, every inflection is made available to any audiophile and music lover in search of the smallest detail. The notion of approximation was simply banned from the specifications and this is quickly detected. The i20 and the CD go to the very end of what is possible to extract from a qualitative recording. The goal is to give us the most realistic musicality possible.



#### Conclusion :

These new CREEK Voyage versions could well reshuffle the cards in their respective category. The successful concept of each element results in a sparkling and natural musicality.

Each element, taken individually or combined, is distinguished by its melodious nature, its dynamics, the color of its timbres, its transparency, without omitting the soundstage of an astonishing scale. Musical journey and emotions are there: well done!

Synthèse :	<b>Musicalité</b> : de nature chantante, harmonieuse, pétillante
	<b>Appréciation personnelle</b> : totalement conquis
	<b>Rapport musicalité / prix</b> : excellent

Amplifier Price : 4950 € (04/2021)

optional phono board Price-mk4 Sequel : 149 €

CD Price : 2770 €

*Listening test carried out by  
Lionel Schmitt*



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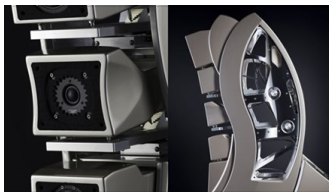
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