

PRESS RELEASE
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Optical cartridge pioneer DS Audio's 'next generation' Grand Master model is now ready for shipping



In 2013, DS Audio unveiled the world's only optical phono cartridge, which it has since followed with a small but impressive collection of further advanced models, all of which have met with rave reviews from the international audiophile press. Now, the new Grand Master design pushes the exceptional potential of optical technology for analogue sound quality even further and heralds, says DS Audio, "the third generation of optical cartridges".

When you pioneer something truly ground-breaking, you might be forgiven for sitting back and enjoying the resulting accolades and sales for a while. Especially if, some 7 years later, you're still unique in the marketplace and no other company has yet been able to match you. But that's not the way of Japanese DS Audio, who seem tireless in their quest to keep pushing their own technologies above and beyond.

The new Grand Master optical cartridge is not only DS Audio's new flagship, but its completely new design also sees in the company's third generation of what's proving to be a peerless approach to phono cartridge engineering.

A comprehensively re-designed optical system

The Grand Master's re-designed optical cartridge system now has independent LEDs and photo-detectors for the left and right channels. The result is a 75% increase in the cartridge's output voltage, from 40mV to 70mV. Despite this dramatic increase in output, the excellent signal to noise ratio that DS Audio optical cartridges are renowned for has not been compromised. In fact, it has been further upgraded in comparison with earlier models, resulting in an even lower noise floor and greater musical clarity. What's more, the new

independent design has made it possible to eliminate crosstalk, greatly improving left and right channel separation, particularly above 10kHz.

50% 'weight loss'

The new design also sees a smaller shading plate made from 99.9% pure beryllium, allowing for a weight reduction of some 50% (from 1.56mg to 0.74mg). This is less than 1/10th of the mass of a typical core and coil system found in a traditional MC (moving coil) cartridge.

Diamond cantilever, rigid construction & improved wiring

In a first for DS Audio, the Grand Master features a diamond cantilever partnered with a microridge stylus. The cartridge body has been constructed from Ultra Duralumin to maximise rigidity, while the internal wiring is 1.6 times thicker than that used in previous models, to reduce impedance.

Completely separate equalizer and power supply unit

Like all DS Audio optical cartridges, the Grand Master requires its own equalizer / phono stage – which this new design takes to a different level. Now, the equalizer and power supply come as two independent units. The equalizer features custom-built film capacitors and non-induction winding resistors. It also incorporates a total of three transformers, one for each of the left and right channels and a third handling the power supply, and each with a much greater capacity than those of the previous flagship, the DS Master One. The significantly more robust power supply design includes a massive 2.34 million microfarads of electrolytic capacitance within the equalizer and 2.97 million microfarads within the power supply, enabling much improved reproduction of deeper low frequencies.

The perfect partner for your system

Finally, the equalizer offers both single-ended RCA and balanced XLR outputs, along with six optional low frequency cut-off points, ensuring that the Grand Master will partner seamlessly with any high-end hi-fi system.

Technical specifications

Grand Master optical cartridge

Body material	Ultra duralumin
Cantilever	Diamond
Stylus	Microridge
Tracking force	2.0g - 2.2g (2.1g recommended)
Signal output	Photo-electric conversion
Output signal level	> 70mV
Channel separation	> 27dB (@ 1kHz)
Weight	7.7g

Grand Master equalizer / phono stage

Inputs	RCA
Outputs	RCA x 3, XLR x 3
Rated output voltage	700mV (@ 1kHz)
Impedance	RCA 120Ω, XLR 120Ω
Preamplifier input impedance	> 10kΩ
Dimensions	45.2 (w) x 15.2 (h) x 48.6 (d) cm (equalizer & power unit)
Weight	Equalizer 25.1kg / Power unit 29.8kg

Pricing & availability

The DS Audio Grand Master optical phono cartridge with phono stage/equalizer is available now, priced as follows (inc. VAT):

DS Grand Master cartridge:	£11,995
DS Grand Master equalizer:	£38,000

DS Audio cartridges are fully compatible with any of the company's accompanying phono stages/equalizers, allowing you to mix and match.

Consumer contacts for publication

www.ds-audio-w.biz

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