



AURALiC ALTAIR G2.1

HIGHLY COMMENDED STREAMING DAC PREAMP

The ALTAIR G2.1 is AURALiC's top all-in-one design. It combines a streamer, DAC and preamplifier in one solidly built unit that has the same Unity Chassis II found elsewhere in the G2.1 series.

This Unity Chassis II is constructed as a box within a box, the inner one being made of copper because this material shields the electronics from electromagnetic interference far more effectively than aluminium. Unlike most DACs, the ALTAIR G2.1 is a fully-featured device that goes so far as to include a MM phono stage and a single line input on RCA, alongside the full gamut of digital inputs including S/PDIF and Toslink, as well as an XLR for AES/EBU connections, and two flavours of USB input. It outputs to balanced and single-ended analogue inputs, both as a DAC in its own right, or as a variable gain preamplifier with its passive R2R ladder volume control.

There's no mention of the DAC chip AURALiC uses, but the ALTAIR G2.1 can deal with PCM at up to 32-bit, 384kHz and DSD up to DSD512 or 22.57892MHz.

Best used balanced and with AURALiC's own Lightning app to drive it, the AURALiC ALTAIR G2.1 impressed Jason Kennedy with bass performance; "the low-end on numerous albums came through with clarity and power, extending the sense of depth in the image (which as we know is directly related to bass) and rendering the low notes on all manner of instruments with ease and precision." Jason was also taken by its low-noise skills, saying that, "the perceived noise floor is very low indeed and this makes room for the quieter notes and allows them to decay in a very natural fashion."

Although the AURALiC ALTAIR G2.1 can be used as so much more than just a DAC, Jason also felt that, "USB had the advantage in timing, image scale and smoothness of delivery, however, so it's safe to say that the ALTAIR is a very capable DAC." This sets the AURALiC ALTAIR G2.1 apart from other all-in-one devices, as it's a fine DAC in its own right!

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