

TEST

Lindemann
Musicbook:Combo

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2022

Reference Class

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Lindemann Musicbook:Combo

ALL-IN-ONE PLAYER IN COMPACT EXCELLENCE

Music Management and
Multi-Room via App



**Stylish
Look**



Lindemann Musicbook:Combo

The Lindemann Musicbook:Combo perfectly fits into a modern ambience being a stylish all-in-one player.

All-In-One Player in Compact Excellence

Lindemann's Musicbook series represents audiophile-flexible music enjoyment in a stylish and compact design. The Musicbook:Combo now incorporates the advantages of the flagship series in a single all-in-one music player. With HiRes streaming, digital and analogue interfaces, including phono input and amplifier module plus a headphone output, it serves both modern and classic hi-fi. But the compact all-rounder has even more up its sleeve ...

It is a consequential decision: after Lindemann Audio presented the Musicbook:Source and the Musicbook:Power, a feed/streaming preamplifier and a power amplifier which, although made as soloists, are intended as a duo, the next logical step was to merge both top components into a single all-in-one player. That is a real challenge to keep the same design and space. The Musicbook:Combo also lives up to its name with its book-like format of 6 by 28 by 22 centimetres. However, Lindemann can claim almost thirty years of experience in forging amplifiers and digital sources. Currently, the German audio manufacturer is proving with the Limetree and Musicbook series how small components they can realise compact systems at an excellent level. But how do they live up to the Musicbook:Combo?

Stylish Look

It looks chic - because the Musicbook:Combo scores with the same stylishly reduced, modern and elegant look that has already made the Source and Power series siblings attractive sound equipment solutions in the living room. Noble, matt-finished, one-centimetre-thick aluminium are the materials chosen for the body. The curves enhance the visual appeal of the cabinet. The Musicbook:Combo invites you to stroke it and proves to be a haptic pleasure. Promoting the modern, uncluttered look, the Musicbook:Combo comes with just one power button and a multifunction wheel for close-up operation instead of a whole armada of buttons. This flat, slightly concave knurled wheel changes the volume, mutes and selects the input by turning and pressing it. The OLED display shows the current status. The large black glass panel takes up most of the front of the unit and embeds a six-by-two centimetre display. In high-contrast and crisp yellow letters and graphics, it informs us about the current level, the input, source and music service selection.



The multifunctional control wheel embedded in the noble aluminium body facilitates volume change, muting and source selection by turning and pressing.



The display in the black front delivers crisp info.

A vast offer of interfaces and streaming services

Here, the all-in-one music player offers a great portfolio. It begins with the analogue section: it features two line-level inputs and a phono input for turntables with moving magnet systems. In terms of circuitry, Lindemann used its own highly praised Limetree Phono. The digital part offers even more ways of integration: it features an electrical and an optical S/PDIF input for CD players or Smart TVs, a USB-A connection for a thumb drive, a hard drive or a CD-ROM drive for CD playback, and a LAN port for wired music streaming from the NAS. Transferring music files wirelessly from your network is also available. Two antenna connections underline this statement: one transceives Wi-Fi, the other Bluetooth. Unfortunately, Lindemann omitted the aptX codec from the Bluetooth transmission. On the other hand, the HiRes streaming potential is excellent: LAN supports PCM 384 kHz/24 bits and DSD256 and USB, Wi-Fi PCM 192 kHz/24 bits and DSD128. That is no surprise, as it uses the same superb streaming platform as in the Musicbook:Source.

Digital Delicacies: Re-Sampler and Femto-Clock

The Musicbook:Combo also offers its digital delicacies. Two excellent DAC chips from the highly reputed manufacturer AKM work in dual differential mono mode - one for each channel. The re-sampler also originates from the Asahi Kasei Microdevices Corporation. When desired,


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Model:	Lindemann Musicbook:Combo
Product category:	All-in-One-Player / Streaming amplifier / Stereo amplifier, capable of streaming and networking
Pricing:	4.490,00 €
Warranty:	3 years
Versions:	Silver
Distribution:	Lindemann Audiotechnik, Wörthsee 08153 9533390 lindemann-audio.com

Dimensions (HWD):	63 x 280 x 220 mm
Weight:	3.0 kg
Power:	- 2 x 130 W / 4 Ω - 2 x 70 W / 8 Ω
Inputs analogue:	1 x Phono MM (47 kΩ, 150 pF, 40 dB amplification) (Cinch) 2 x Line unbalanced (Cinch)
Streaming/Inputs /Interfaces (digital):	1 x Wi-Fi (dual-band 802.11 n/ac [2.4GHz / 5 Ghz]), WPS support 1 x LAN (Ethernet, RJ45) 1 x Bluetooth (4.2, A2DP, Codecs SBC/AAC) 1 x S/PDIF optical (TOSLink) 1 x S/PDIF electrical (Cinch) 1 x USB-A (for thumb stick or hard drive [format: FAT32, NTFS, ext3 or ext4] or CD-ROM drive)
Outputs analogue:	1 x Headphone (6.35 mm jack) 1 x Line Out unbalanced 1 x Speakers

Rating	
Sound (60%):	97/100
Practicality (20%):	99/100
Features (20%):	97/100
Total:	98/100
Class:	Reference class
Price/Performance:	Good



Powerful streaming capability: The Musicbook:Combo provides Wi-Fi and LAN in Hi-Res - for your DSD and PCM files from the NAS or, in this case, for an integrated music service such as Qobuz. It alternatively supports wireless playback via Bluetooth.

you can activate it in DSD mode. It then converts all digital feeds into DSD256 signals. These are one-bit streams whose resolution is 256 times the resolution of the CD. The converter finally converts the DSD re-sampling back into an analogue signal. This process filters purely analogue and controls the volume - and not digitally through a signal processor because Lindemann attests that this procedure would negatively influence the sound. Of course, the re-sampling does not offer more information than the original file. However, the higher sampling rate enables a more precise reconstruction of the analogue signal delivering a sonic advantage. The clock of digital data processing operates in the range of 500 femtoseconds and ensures all processes are perfectly on time.

Music Management and Multi-Room via App

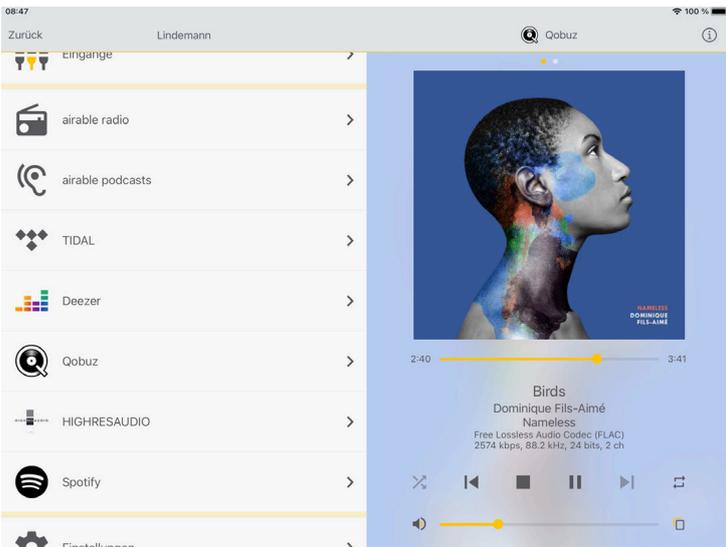
Of course, the music does not have to come from your library. In addition to NAS, hard disk, thumb drive or external CD drive, the Musicbook:Combo also provides support for music services and platforms such as Tidal Connect, Qobuz, Deezer, HighResAudio and Spotify Connect. Furthermore, it enables the reception of Internet radio stations and podcast offerings from the World Wide Web. Since the Musicbook:Combo is also Roon-ready, the excellent Roon music management system is also accessible. The Bavarians already offer their official platform in the shape of the Lindemann App. The app is freely available for iOS and Android and provides a tidy, intuitive user interface. This way, it accomplishes the complete configuration and handling of the Musicbook:Combo, the integration of the subscribed services, the creation of playlists - and via the multi-room function - the coupling or separate use of several Lindemann streamers in different rooms. The straightforward remote control also can be done via the infrared remote control included in the delivery. It also enables you to navigate in playlists or on a CD and to start, stop and skip individual tracks.



Analogue-wise, the all-in-one player offers a phono input for turntables with a moving magnet system.

Integrated amplifier combined with headphone powerhouse

As an all-in-one music player, the musicbook:Combo also amplifies the musical dishes. The built-in power amplifier builds on the musicbook:Power and thus promises the same audiophile class. Of course, the musicbook:Combo does not reach the immense power of this pure power amplifier. However, it still offers generous 130 watts per channel at four-ohm transducers. This power is available at the loudspeaker output. Only laboratory spar plugs with a diameter of four millimetres fit here. This clampless solution allows the musicbook:combo in a compact design. There is another output on the front: the headphone jack. Fortunately, there is a socket for large jack plugs. A separate, high-quality, mighty amplifier drives the headphones from 16 to 200 ohms. The third and last output is the stereo line out on the back. It permits the operation of a subwoofer, for example. Thus, in combination with two small satellites at the speaker outputs, a 2.1 sound reproduction solution is realised.



The App from Lindemann offers intuitive design and navigation.



The digital department offers USB, LAN, SPDIF electrical (Coax) and SPDIF optical (TOSLink) as physical interfaces. The all-in-one player offers Wi-Fi and Bluetooth as wireless streaming paths. Accordingly, two adjustable antennas provide reception.



The analogue section offers two line inputs and a phono connection for turntables with moving magnet pick-up. The input is equipped with an earthing socket to avoid hum loops. To use it, Lindemann includes a laboratory plug that allows you to assemble an earthing cable. A line out and a loudspeaker connection are available on the output side. Here, Lindemann uses sockets for banana plugs to save space.

Quick and snappy set-up

After connecting all physical components, such as the external music player and speakers, the Musicbook:Combo connects to the power supply. For this purpose, Lindemann includes the IsoTek Initium, a high-quality mains cable. Its solid IEC connector made reaching the on/off power switch a little fiddly. However, you only have to perform this switch-on step once, but you benefit from the plus of the official supply cable permanently. Connecting the musicbook:combo to the home network then becomes a breeze. You can either use the WPS button on the device to connect to the router or connect via the app. To do this, plug the All-in-One player to the LAN, scan the available networks with the app, select yours and enter the password - that is it! Those who now want to integrate music service also enter the access data requested for this purpose. The whole process runs smoothly and takes two or three minutes.

Lindemann Musicbook:Combo at work

We attach our Audio Physic Midex speakers and stream "Birds" by Dominique Fils-Aimé via Qobuz. Canada's gifted singer presents neo-soul with strong R&B touch - and the Musicbook:Combo immediately shows its best side. A Bass theme and a hand clap start the song - and this striking opening has a rich bass volume and a dynamic that makes us wince when we clap our hands. Listening at the highest room volume, the Musicbook:Combo still holds twenty-one-decibel volume levels up its sleeve. We are impressed by the power and sovereignty that the musicbook:Combo emits. We also physically feel the power of the bass in the low tones. Yes, even a double bass develops a rich foundation in the lowest registers, and the Lindemann can deliver. It effortlessly drives our tall floor-standing speakers. But power is of no use without precision and transparency - and here, too, the all-in-one player is impressive.

Excellent dynamics and brilliance

We already notice the impulse fidelity in the precisely reproduced bass string stroke of Jacques Roy, especially in the reduced yet effective percussion. If we already winced at the initial handclap, the following percussion proves the Musicbook:Combo's excellent dynamic performance. Laurent Saint-Pierre only uses isolated beats and patterns. But this adds to the effect, in particular, because the Musicbook:Combo reproduces these beats direct, seamless and with a fulminant gradation of velocity. Furthermore, there is immense clarity: We perceive more than pure bass tones and percussion beats. We grasp how Roy and Saint-Pierre operate their instruments, how the fingers pluck the metal-wound strings, and how the mallets touch the skins. The two musicians appear physically present. That is even more true for Dominique Fils-Aimé: the singer seems to be standing right in front of us



Alternatively, you can also use the included remote control for fundamental operation. The buttons allow you to switch on/stand-by and mute, change the volume, select the source and adjust the display brightness. By pressing the info button, the display informs us about the device and network status - and the activation or deactivation of DSD re-sampling. In ad

with her first vocal utterance - that delicate, tiny sound of her lips opening and forming a tone. This kind of detail gives you goosebumps!

Sensible intimacy and endless worlds

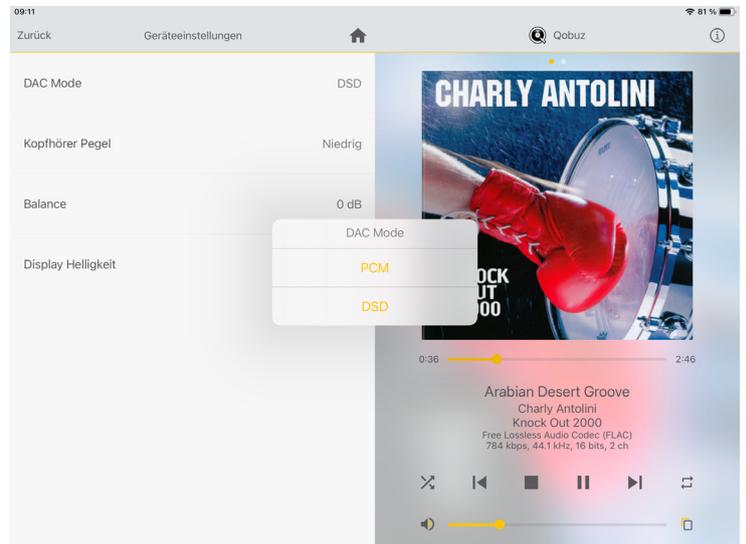
Now Fils-Aimé seduces us with her appealing voice. Already the introductory breathed, soft "mmmmhhh" radiates a vocal eroticism redeeming her subsequent singing. Canadian exceptional singer thus creates an affecting intimacy and closeness. You cannot escape this singing! The Musicbook:Combo reproduces every movement of the lips, every gasp of air, and every delicate vibrato of the vocal cords down to the tiniest nuance. The quietness and purity of the playback also enhance this richness of detail. However, the Musicbook:Combo does not result in an aseptic-sterile but more in an organic and coherent sound. The rich openness of the reproduction complements the wealth of detail. In Dominique Fils-Aimé's "Birds", the art reverb of this recording creates a beautiful three-dimensionality. The handclaps seem to drift unhindered towards a distant horizon. The walls of our listening room have long since become irrelevant. The stage directly in front shows a nice width and depth with a spacious staggering of the musicians.

Amidst the Bavarian Staatstheater

This spatiality and openness are also evident in the exquisite live recording of "Libiamo ne' lieti calici", the drinking song from Verdi's "La Traviata". Here we experience Anja Harteros as Violetta and Piotr Beczala as Alfredo teasing each other in a duet, moving across the stage in front of our ears - just like in physical opera performance. The Chorus intensifies that live quality: The singers act behind the two soloists as guests of the invited company, and we hear the constant clinking of glasses, murmuring, and even a little giggle. That creates a grandiose presentness and conveys a beautiful impression of



The headphone jack provides musical enjoyment for enthusiasts. You can set the amplification to 0 decibels or twelve decibels to accommodate different kinds of headphones.



The Lindemann app allows switching the DSD re-sampling.

stage depth. It then emerges even more powerful. In all its dimensions in the vocal tutti passages, soloists and choir merge into a common "To your health". In conjunction with the excellently staggered orchestra and the perfectly captured hall acoustics, we experience the lovely immersive illusion of sitting right in the middle of the Bavarian Staatstheater.

Re-sampling offers stunning results

By now, we streamed this opera via Qobuz as FLAC, or to be exact, as a pure PCM file. Which effect will re-sampling have? The conversion into DSD265 signals results in astonishing effects: The playback wins in transparency and dynamics. We immediately notice this with the strings, playing the waltz-like motif in unison: The bowing is a little pithier, more gripping, more accentuated. Anja Harteros and Piotr Beczala now possess an even greater presence. We seem to have made improvements in the opera house, even in the seating category, and we sit closer to the action. In addition, reproduction shows more balance. When the choir's concentrated singing power was a little over-represented in the mids, it now

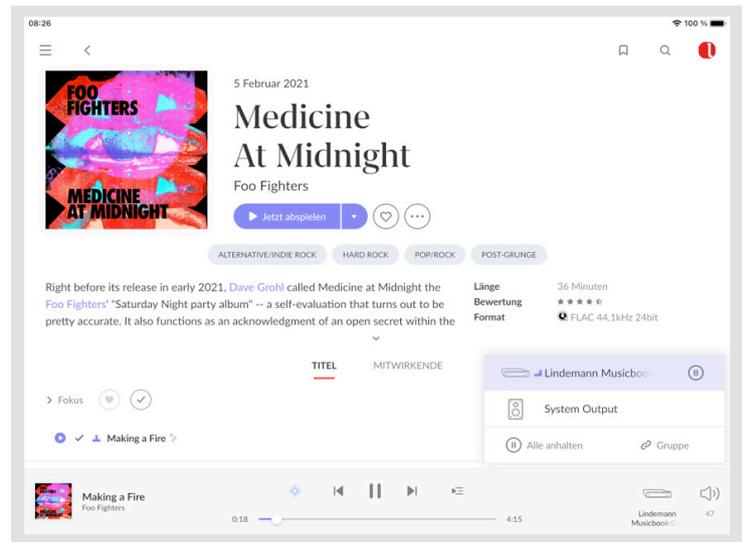


The neat, understated design includes an engraved company logo in the matt silver aluminium body.

results in a beautifully contoured recreation. A review of other pieces of music confirms these changes with the use of re-sampling. During extensive testing, we also noticed, again and again, the simple manageability, the quick response time and the simplicity of the Lindemann app.

Top-Performance up to phono and headphones

That is why reviewing the other playback paths is swift as well. Music streaming from your server works excellently even via Wi-Fi in super HiRes quality, and you can also connect the hard drive quickly. The music played via CD player sounds somewhat softer on the analogue than on the digital path. Here the Oppo UDP-203 shows that it converts differently than the Musicbook:Combo, whose playback reveals even more details and offers the option of refining re-sampling on the digital path. Bluetooth playback also benefits, which, on the other hand, does not use the powerful aptX codec. Pure analogue is still available via the turntable input - and here, the Limetree's phono module performs well: Patricia Barber's "The Thrill Is Gone" from the well-recorded "Cafe Blue" album builds on the top acoustic performance experienced so far. The song is also a delight via the headphone output - the Musicbook:Combo also proves its quality on this output path.



Musicbook:Combo is Roon-ready - thus profits from music management and multi-platform features of Roon.

Conclusion

The fusion has been exquisitely successful: The Lindemann Musicbook:Combo combines the highlights of the Musicbook:Source and the Musicbook:Power in a concentrated fashion. While streaming, but also via its digital and analogue interfaces, the all-in-one music player offers playback of excellent clarity, detail, dynamics and powerful, superior amplification. DSD re-sampling can even enhance the sound quality when played digitally. On the digital side, the Musicbook:Source impresses with its HiRes streaming of DSD and PCM files via Wi-Fi, LAN and USB. The player scores with its high-quality phono MM input and excellent headphone output on the analogue end. This way, the all-in-one music player combines listening to traditional hi-fi and modern music. Thanks to the Lindemann app, the set-up, integration of music services and operation, including multi-room management, is a snap. Alternatively, you can also operate this all-rounder via Roon. The Musicbook:Combo demonstrates: That is the way how high-end works in excellent quality, compact format and elegant design.

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