



iFi Audio NEO iDSD

IT'S NOT QUITE THE LATEST ARRIVAL FROM THE SOUTHPORT-BASED COMPANY – THE SPEED AT WHICH IT'S LAUNCHING NEW PRODUCTS HAS SEEN TO THAT – BUT THIS SLENDER AND FLEXIBLE DAC/HEADPHONE AMP/PREAMP IS A REMARKABLY APPEALING DEVICE, SAYS ANDREW EVERARD

Sometimes it's hard to keep up with the range offered by British-based outfit iFi Audio, so rapidly does it seem to launch new models. As an example, the NEO iDSD isn't the only product from its stable to feature in this issue of HIFICRITIC: elsewhere Chris Kelly finds himself rather taken with the very affordable Zen Phono, which is an excellent solution for the vinyl enthusiast on a budget, while that entry-level Zen range has also recently gained two new Signature models – a DAC and a headphone amp – featuring upgraded components and a still-very-attractive price of £249 apiece.

Given the lead-times involved in magazine publishing (although we run tighter than most in this respect), chances are there'll be even more iFi Audio products by the time you read this. They'll join a range running from the whimsically-styled hip-dac portable DAC/headphone amp up to the striking Aurora all-in-one music system and the flagship Pro iDSD. If you have a need for just about anything digital, the company has something to offer.

As a desktop digital converter, the NEO iDSD slots in between the ZEN models at one end of the range and that flagship Pro iDSD and, at £699, is a fraction of the price of the £2499 top-end model. It's mains-

powered only, with an iFi Audio iPower plugtop power supply provided – though given that the power requirements are 5V DC/2.5A, you could run it using a suitable USB cable (not that there would much advantage in doing so, given the quality of the supplied power unit). As an alternative, you can upgrade the power source to the company's iPower X, using the company's latest-generation Active Noise Cancellation, for an additional £99.

The NEO iDSD may be slender, measuring just 21.4cm wide and standing a smidge under 4cm tall, but it packs plenty of flexibility into its compact frame, along with much of the technology the company