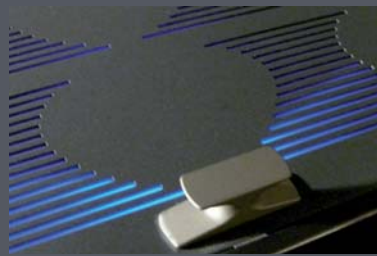


DIRONDO PLAYER™ — DIRONDO DRIVE™

STATE-OF-THE-ART CD PLAYER AND CD TRANSPORT

SONDORO™ series



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Real values will become more important than ever before, and it is the time now to invest in the access to a whole legacy of music. The potential disappearance of physical media, particularly the CD, and their replacement by virtual means, is no guarantee that the music treasured over the years will become accessible again through a download portal. CD has been around for so long that it makes indeed a good long-term investment to have a dedicated high-performance playback system for the silver discs, especially when it is foreseeable that all-in-one machines with their in-built compromises will be the only ones remaining available. The **DIRONDO SONDORO** represent a level of quality of 'as good as it gets' and have found musical acceptance even by dedicated analogue fans.

Ensemble has decided to go exclusively for the medium that has been the main music carrier and will keep an important role for a good many years to come. The idea was to do it so well that the discussion shifts away from questions of format and concentrates on the quality of recording, mastering or pressing.

Every playback medium that rests on a mechanical component sees its overall performance determined by the quality of the mechanics and pick-up as well as the control of disturbing resonances. The **DIRONDO** have a professional-grade, cast metal frame CD mechanism, which is again mounted into a milled aluminum base serving as a well for the CD to be played. This base rests again on a multilayer, constrained-mode damping block fitted with specifically made buffers absorbing vibrations from above and below.

Each functional section of the DIRONDO is screened off by mechanically damped partitions. The ultra-low-noise power supply mirrors this separation with a dedicated power rail for each section.

On an operational level the units have easy to follow functions. At the same time, instead of offering programmes like 'shuffle' or 'beginning of track' some often neglected features are brought into play that are important for true reference quality playback.

A feature that will prove indispensable with use is the possibility to invert the digital phase, either by remote or manually. Many recordings – usually the better ones – improve sonically when played back in the same phase as they were recorded.

Access to the well (into which the CD is loaded) is by way of a sliding door, which is level with the hood of the unit. Visually this construction makes the DIRONDO seamlessly integrate into the whole electronics line of Ensemble, sharing with them the same high quality finish, the decoupling feet, and the proprietary RCA connectors.

The command buttons are nice to the touch and give a feel of solidity (vandal proof according to the manufacturer). The display has crisp detail and is not overloaded by information.



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The D/A section of the **DIRONDO PLAYER** automatically transposes the signals coming from the CD into a higher sampling frequency (96 kHz, 24 bit resolution). Now that this so-called upsampling technique has become popular, the distinction that finally makes the quality lies in the way it is implemented. In this, as in all other respects, the DIRONDO PLAYER shows what careful and experienced design, meticulous attention to detail, and high-grade components can achieve.

Together with an integrated amplifier like the Ensemble FUOCO, the DIRONDO PLAYER makes a compact team that takes the listener into a musical experience without apparent limitations. Joined by a pair of Ensemble NATURA speakers, the match is true perfection.

The **DIRONDO DRIVE** – as a dedicated CD turntable – pushes the limits in the last remaining domain, which is in a more fundamental handling of the digital data. Thanks to a special algorithm, a DSP recalculates the data and puts them into a more precise time frame, thereby arriving at an enhanced virtual resolution of $19^{1/2}$ bit. Further, the re-calculated data are characterized by ultra-low jitter levels and show excellent linearity of phase. The carefully designed power supply has a medical grade isolation transformer.

The DIRONDO DRIVE offers the user the possibility to determine the sample rate of the output data (48, 96 or 192 kHz) by the touch of two buttons on the face plate.

With another combination of buttons it is possible to add 'dither' (a spectral noise used in digital technology to linearize and improve conversion), providing a chance to tame down aggressive and bright sounding recordings. At its two outputs (BNC and balanced 110 ohm via mini-XLR, alternatively switchable) the DIRONDO DRIVE delivers a signal that in the hands of a high quality D/A converter presents music in such quality that higher order formats often show only theoretical superiority.

The remote handset integrates the control of DIRONDO PLAYER or DIRONDO DRIVE and FUOCO amplifier. On the DIRONDO side it can pilot digital phase, various repeat functions and display options. Milled from a solid piece of aluminum, its functional reliability is assured by true switch type activators. The VIBRASORB™ disc damper, made of a carbon-fiber sandwich material, stabilizes playback and attenuates unwanted vibrations, thereby further enhancing the playback qualities of the DIRONDOS.

As a CD can only sound as good as the laser manages to read the information on the disc, it is strongly recommended to clean CDs with Ensemble VISIO™, a fluid (applied with the supplied microfiber cloth) that deep-cleanses the surface, improves the refractive behaviour and treats the surface antistatically.

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SPECIFICATIONS

DIRONDO PLAYER™

CD mechanism	Philips CD Pro2M die-cast frame professional mechanism
Decoding format	CD, CD-R, CD-RW: 16 Bit, 44.1 kHz sampling
Digital processing conversion	24 Bit, 96 kHz sampling rate ('upsampling')
Converter linearity	1 kHz typ. 0.3 dB (0 dBFS - 100 dBFS)
Digital out (S/PDIF)	BNC / coaxial 75 Ω; switchable on/off; 0.5 Vpp
Analog out	RCA, +12 dBu (full scale) / 3.1 V _{RMS}
Output impedance	2 ohm
Dynamic range	97.5 dB (16 Bit, lin, 20 Hz-20 kHz)
Signal to Noise (digital zero)	-110 dB (16 Bit, lin, 20 Hz-20 kHz), -114 dB A weighted
Frequency response	< 0.1 dB 20 Hz-20 kHz
Distortion THD + N	0.003 % (1 kHz @ 0 dBFS)
Crosstalk	-112 dB (1 kHz @ 0 dBFS)
Deemphasis error	< 0.06 dB (20 Hz -16 kHz)
Mains fuses	2 x 2 A T / 250 V slow-blow for 100-230 VAC
Weight	14 kg (31 lbs) net, 17 kg (37 lbs) shipping weight

DIRONDO DRIVE™

CD mechanism	Philips CD Pro2M, die-cast frame professional mechanism
Decoding format	CD, CD-R, CD-RW : 16 Bit, 44.1 kHz sampling
Digital output format	24 Bit; 48 or 96 or 192 kHz sampling (user programmable)
Outputs	BNC: coaxial 75 Ω / 0.5 Vpp; mini-XLR: balanced 110 Ω; switchable
Output level	max. 840 mV (-1.9 dBFS after DSP)
Resolution (Bit-Zoom processing)	virtually up to 19½ Bit (THD+N -120 dB, not full scale)
Distortion THD+N (full scale, @ 1 kHz, 0-80 dB)	< -100.2 dBFS / linear (-92 dBFS with extra dither, user programmable)
Rise and fall time digital signals	< -102.2 dBFS, A weighted
Jitter (full scale)	3 nsec (10-90 %)
Mains fuses	10 psec RMS, 100 psec peak-peak (worst case)
Weight	2 x 1 A T / 250 V slow-blow for 100 - 230 VAC

Power switch	115 V LED light (BA9s bayonet socket)
Mains voltage (switchable)	100 V } 115 V } 50-60 Hz 230 V }

Accessories	Universal remote handset (for Ensemble electronics)
	VIBRASORB™ disc damper
	FLEXO™ shielded power cord (1.5 m)
	ZORBO™ equipment platform

Dimensions (wdh)	optional 395 x 315 x 138 mm (15.5"x 12.4"x 5.4") 550 x 430 x 350 mm (21.6"x 17"x 13.8") boxed
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Warranty	2 years on parts with the exception of faults due to mishandling, unauthorized modification or overvoltage
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HANDMADE IN SWITZERLAND

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