



Audiolab 6000CDT

Built to partner Audiolab's excellent 6000A integrated (p68), the 6000CDT is slim, unobtrusive, slinky to use and sounds very good. If you have a decent DAC, it's worth considering.

Whether you choose the silver or black finish, the 6000CDT looks crisp, modern and purposeful. The slick slot-loading CD mechanism is smooth, the display is crisp and informative and it's all so simple and intuitive to use that it's a real pleasure to operate.

It uses exactly the same transport mechanism as Audiolab's flagship 8300CD silver disc spinner, mounted inside its own electromagnetically shielded enclosure. It additionally has a read-ahead digital buffer to reduce disc-reading failures, and the master clock is controlled by a temperature-compensated crystal oscillator, which we're informed makes for very low claimed jitter figures.

The coaxial output is fed from a differential line driver for a high-quality digital datastream. Round the back, it sports an optical Toslink and digital coaxial output, plus trigger sockets, an IEC power in and a main power switch. Audiolab says its power consumption is 15W in use, and less than 0.5W in standby mode.

It loads discs smoothly, isn't noisy while doing so, and then reads the CD's table of contents speedily. This done, it offers swift track access – maybe not quite up there with a top-class nineties Sony player, for

example, but way better than many modern rivals. This feels like a quality product, and not like you're slumming it in the cheap seats in any way.

There may still be some diehards who insist that "a bit is a bit" and therefore all CD transports sound the same, but this certainly is not my experience. Jitter seems to affect the sound subtly, as does poor mechanical isolation and the quality of the power supplies and digital outputs. The 6000CDT is superb for the money and turns in a great performance – not just with its partnering 6000A integrated, but with a host of other DACs that cost multiples of the matching amp's price.

Sound quality

Scritti Politti's *Perfect Way* is not the greatest hi-fi recording I have ever heard and yet the Audiolab digs deep into the disc to serve up a great big soundstage with lots of detail inside. There is a sense of being able to hear all the various tracks in the mix play along simultaneously. It seems able to eke right down into the mix, and carry all the different strands forth without tripping over its own shadow.

Another impressive facet is its soundstaging. Change's *Lover's Holiday* has impressive scale and space. Instruments are precisely located in the mix, and there is a good deal of depth perspective too. The Audiolab seems to have a lot of control, putting out an orderly recorded acoustic with

everything in its place, separated out nicely from other strands of the mix. In absolute terms higher end transports do better, but this is still impressive.

Rhythmically and dynamically it's a good performer too. Cue up Rush's *Red Barchetta* and the 6000CDT delivers a lively and pacy sound with lots going on within the broad three-dimensional canvas. The driving bass guitar is particularly evident, alongside the drummer's pan rolls and sweeps, all keeping to perfectly metronomic timing. This transport has a crisp and detailed sound with a controlled yet insightful character. More expensive designs do better in the bass with greater grip and power, but this is no slouch here either. At the other end of the frequency range, the beautifully crisp and delicate yet detailed hi-hat and ride cymbal work are very enjoyable.

Conclusion

The 6000CDT is a bargain – a true quality item at a price that often doesn't buy you very much of anything. Everything from its look and feel to the way it plays compact discs is worthy of respect. **DP**

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Audiolab 6000CDT

PRICE

£380

ORIGIN

UK/China

TYPE

CD transport

WEIGHT

5.4kg

DIMENSIONS

(WxHxD)

445 x 66 x 300mm

FEATURES

- Slot-loading CD mechanism
- Digital outputs: 1x optical; 1x coaxial

DISTRIBUTOR

IAG Ltd.

TELEPHONE

01480 447700

WEBSITE

audiolab.co.uk

REVIEWED

HFC 447

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★

LIKE: Great design; decent build; good sound

VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★★

DISLIKE: Nothing at the price

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

WESAY: Superb affordable audiophile CD transport

FEATURES

★★★★★

OVERALL

★★★★★