

STATEMENT OF INTENT



Combining two long-running Naim interests – network music playback and separate pre/power amps – this latest combination also contains the company’s most recent technology from the „Statement“ project.

The circuit topology of the NAC-N 272 network preamplifier and NAP 250 DR power amplifier (a feature of the Naim portfolio for 30 years in various forms) was based on nothing less than the 200,000 Euro ‚Statement‘ amp project. Mainly developed by Steve Sells and his team, Statement created a stir about two years ago at the High End in Munich – now it’s time for its technology to start trickling down.

The current NAP 250 DR was given the latest high-current NA009 output transistors: designed for ultra-low noise and thermal stability, they were developed for Statement, and are now also found in the latest DR versions of the larger and

more powerful NAP 300 and NAP 500, along with the titular „discrete regulator“ technology, again designed for stability and low noise.

The Brits, who were among the absolute pioneers in terms of high-end streaming with the Uniti and then ND- ranges, equipped their preamp (generally analog and built with selected, paired components according to purely sound-related criteria) not „just“ with a top-class DAC but also complete Naim network playback engine, capable of handling data up to 24-bit/192kHz and also DSD64. That gives the NAC-N 272 access to directly stored sources, including Internet radio, Spotify Connect and Tidal, as well as the

music data on the home, delivering them all at the highest quality.

The NAC-N 272 also profits from ideas borrowed from their in-house reference class. The extremely high-performance signal processor – which can process WAV, FLAC, Apple Lossless, AIFF, AAC, MP3, as well as DSD64 – is based on that in the NDS flagship player: with jitter optimization, filtering and data buffering all included, Naim says it has a strong impact on the achievable sound.

Digital competence

The digital commitment of the British company, which over the past few years has been not just well above average but virtually pace-setting, is all the more notable considering Naim’s past caution over all things digital: in earlier Naim CD players not only the motorized drawer but also digital connections were frowned upon. All that’s in the past: the new commitment is underlined by no fewer than six digital inputs, not to mention a control app running on iOS and Android smartphones

and tablets. Of course, analog and digital parts of the preamp are intentionally and very effectively separated from each other, using optocouplers in order to virtually preclude mutual interference.

The level control derived from the top preamp, the Statement NAC S1, is purely analog in its operation but it is controlled digitally, which ensures precision and complete channel-matching.

As well as the streaming options already mentioned, the NAC-N 272 also offers aptX Bluetooth, USB input, and multi-room capability with Naim Mu-so, ND- and Uniti models.

The integrated Class A headphone amp recognizes when headphones are plugged in and the DAC increases the output current of the preamp to a five-fold in order to fit all headphone impedances, while optional upgrades include a tuner module for radio reception in VHF and DAB+ and sound enhancements using external power supplies.

Sound orientation

We have to mention the exemplary mechanical design, which includes the already mentioned optimization at the



▲ The Naim preamp even masters audio streaming. The power amp definitely requires banana plugs.

module and component level as well as matters concerning circuitboard mounting, socket wiring and component positioning: the engineers in Salisbury recognized sound-related connections early on and attempt to prevent microphony as a sound-hampering influence at all costs.

With about 100 / 160 Watt, the NAP (Naim Audio Power Amplifier) 250 DR is definitely not a weakling, even if it is some way off the peak of the company's power amp range. They say about extremely potent performance amps that, like some supercars, they have a hard time transferring all that power to the road,

but Naim has really focused on extreme stability, even with 2 Ohm loads.

Colorful musicality

In truth, the Naim combo sounds fast, colorful and agile, colorful: its timbre is surprisingly slightly dark, which may sound like a contradiction, but isn't. Openness and silkiness are combined, with particular benefits in the midband, which is where musicality is defined – and thus also the human voice.

No other amp combination in the test was able to portray the piano – which we used as a benchmark together with Diana Krall's superbly reproduced voice – and the guitar with the credibility, authenticity and effortlessness of the two Naim devices.



◀ The toroidal transformer fills half of the housing by itself; the highly developed amp electronics have entirely High End genes.

The English duo may not deliver the final iota of slam in the low bass-range for power-hungry speakers or the sharpest attack, but the sound was convincing for instance – and especially – on the new Sopra speakers from sister company Focal, due to their refined delicacy, structural clarity, and effortlessly rhythmic presentation for which the other test participants had to work hard to find an answer.

The slogan „No Naim, no Music“ would probably not be fair to its competitors but when you hear this pairing you can immediately understand completely what Naim fans love so much about its cult components.



▲ The Naim preamp embodies a contemporary switching center for modern systems in exemplary perfection.

The transistor and power supply technology derived from the Über-amp ‚State-ment‘ and the connected weightiness seems to pay off: in the end, the Naim combo is typically „idiosyncratic“ but tremendously consistent and pleasing due to its musicality and unrivalled digital provision. That this package includes a top amp, D/A converter, and network player means it simply screams “Take me!”

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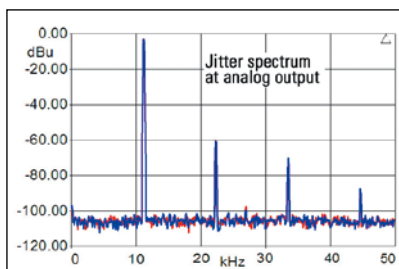
NAIM NAC-N 272



approx. € 5,000
Dimensions: 44 x 9 x 39 cm (WxHxD)
Warranty: 5 years

Top class preamp, DAC, and network player in one housing which put a new perspective on the price. A very musical, modern triple threat!

MEASUREMENT RESULTS



Maximum output voltage (1 kHz, 1% THD)	9.1 V
Distortion at 0.03 / 3k / 1 Volt	0.03 0.004 0.009 %
Intermodulation at 0.03 / 3k / 1 Volt	0.03 0.005 0.005 %
Signal-to-noise ratio CD (500 mV, 1 kOhm) at 0.03 / 0.3 Volt	68 89 dB
Channel separation at 10 kHz	74 dB
Upper cutoff frequency (-3 dB)	40 kHz
Load ratings	practice-oriented
Output impedance at 1 kHz cinch	47 Ohm
Crosstalk attenuation tuner/CD at 10 kHz	94 dB
Timing error volume control up to -60 dB	0.007 dB
Power consumption Off Standby Idle	0 / <2 / 20 Watt

LAB COMMENTS: Very good, partially excellent values, also for practical data output impedance and timing of volume control. The DAC part is also excellent with extremely low Jitter (5.2 ns), distortion, and hissing (107 dB) as well as converter accuracy (0.2 dB)!

EQUIPMENT

Remote control, 1 x DIN high-level input, 2 x cinch high-level input, 1 x DIN output pre, pre out / line out cinch, DAC (USB, Bluetooth, LAN, 3 x Toslink, 2 x coax, 1 x BNC, 1 x BNC Out), network player, internet radio, headphone amp, groundlift, extension options

STEREOD - TEST

KLANG-NIVEAU	86%
PREIS/LEISTUNG	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
EXZELLENT	

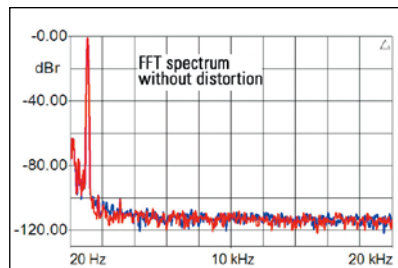
NAIM NAP 250 DR



approx. € 5,300
Dimensions: 44 x 9 x 37 cm (WxHxD)
Warranty: 5 years

Good equipment, but not a beast. The Naim convinces with flow, pep, and smooth-colorful musicality.

MEASUREMENT RESULTS



Continuous power at 8 4 Ohm	94 162 Watt
Pulse power at 4 Ohm	212 Watt
Distortion at 50 mW 5 W Pmax -1 dB	0.02 0.005 0.007 %
Intermodulation at 50 mW 5 W Pmax -1 dB	0.06 0.03 0.2 %
Signal-to-noise ratio at 50 mW 5 Watt	66 86 dB
Channel separation at 10 kHz	67 dB
Attenuation at 63/1k/14k Hz	15/15/13
Upper cutoff frequency (-3 dB, 4 Ω)	35 kHz
Load ratings	practice-oriented
Power consumption Off Standby Idle	0 / <2 / 17 Watt

LAB COMMENTS: Moderate to high power, sufficient for most applications, good transmission values. The strikingly low attenuation factor lets us expect low degenerative feedback. The strikingly low upper cutoff frequency, uncritical for both preamp and power amp, supposedly prevents HF-interference and instability.

Mains phase on test device



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EQUIPMENT

Special connection for the (Naim) preamp, connection for a pair of speakers, only suitable for banana jacks (not for loose ends / terminal lugs / prongs), hard power switch, power cable replaceable

STEREOD - TEST

KLANG-NIVEAU	93%
PREIS/LEISTUNG	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
EXZELLENT	