

Unison Unico CD

£1195



FOR

Dynamically, a very strong performer; expressive and emotive delivery

AGAINST

Bass can be heavy-handed; not subtle

VERDICT

The Unico CD gives you plenty of bang for your buck, but lacks the overall subtlety of the title contenders

CAST YOUR MIND back, way back, to the August 2003 edition. On its first outing, the Unison Unico CD player gained a solid, four-star rating. Now

boasting a few added extras, it's returned to take on the big boys.

It still retains its classy Italian design, with a beautifully crafted front panel. The combination of smooth-to-the-touch stainless steel and hardwood insignia makes for a mouth-watering proposition. At the back are balanced and unbalanced outputs, plus a digital input and output (both digital sockets used to be an optional extra).

Another change from the previous model is that the Unico's sampling

capability has been boosted from 24bit/96kHz to 24bit/192kHz. An optional, digital module (£60) delivers the choice of three different filters able to alter the player's tonal response.

After a quick comparison between the outputs, it's apparent this player has been optimised for balanced interconnects. Using the standard analogue outputs, the Unico's sonic delivery hits you like a jab from Prince Naseem Hamed. However, switch to the XLRs, and it's more like an uppercut from

'Iron' Mike Tyson. Musical delivery is direct and straight to the point, with expressive and emotive vocals and equally impressive dynamics. Low frequencies are forceful: Black Eyed Peas' *Shut Up* is delivered with power and scale that make you sit up and take notice. But with all this power on tap, beware partnering the Unico with a bass-heavy system. It also lacks the ability to draw out the finest subtleties.

The Unico CD's power will win it admirers – however, if you prefer a bit more finesse, there's better out there.

Punch and pace aplenty, but the Unico isn't the most subtle of machines

