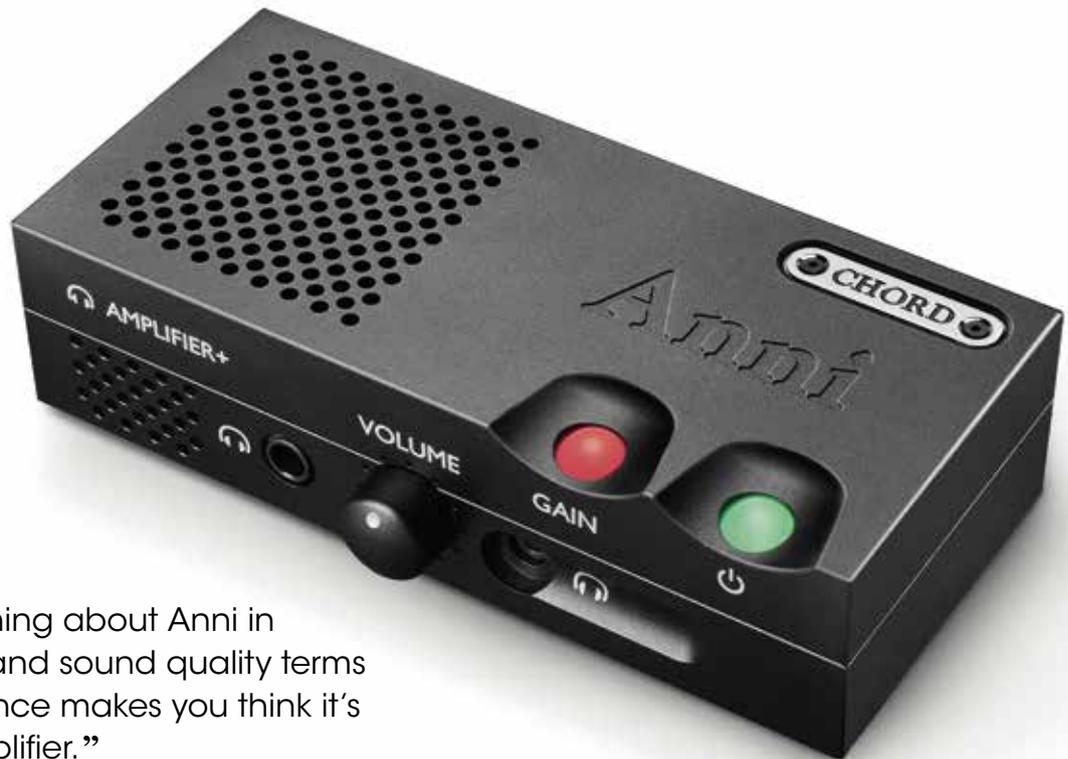




DESKTOP AMP/DAC OF THE YEAR Chord Electronics Anni



“The great thing about Anni in both build and sound quality terms is it never once makes you think it’s a small amplifier.”

Chord Electronics latest model in the now three-strong Qutest line is the Anni desktop integrated amplifier. Designed to match the aforementioned Qutest DAC and Huei MM/MC phono stage, the 10W amp is a clever design inside and out. Like most modern Chord Electronics products, the Anni uses colour coded buttons to denote operation and selection between its two inputs, while beneath its deceptively heavy, thick black exterior, the Anni uses a scaled down version of the same dual-feed-forward, error-correcting ULTIMA amplifier circuit currently used in the company’s top power amplifiers. Chord Electronics is at pains to point out that ULTIMA is not a new circuit topology, but that 1980s Bell Labs design was unable to be realised in practical terms with the technology of that era. Today, things are different!

In our test, Alan Sircom was impressed by the small-in-size-only Anni; “The great thing about Anni in both build and sound quality terms is it never once makes you think it’s a small amplifier. This is a big and clean sounding amplifier with an excellent soundstage and a keen sense of rhythm that no one had the heart to tell it quite how small it really was. So it sings its little heart out.” He was really taken by the imaging; “It helps that the soundstage is wide, too. There’s a little front-to-back shortening and not much height information, but the width and precision of that soundstage works really, really well in the context of amplifiers at this level.”

Bass, he felt, is ‘taut’ rather than ‘cavernous’ or ‘stentorian’, “but I like its snappy precision and it’s not without some heft. It’s more a ‘dry’ bass rather than the sort of big, overblown bottom end.” and added that “Most significantly, however, is Anni’s ability to portray musical detail with ease... You are hearing deep into the music with the Chord Electronics amplifier, extracting those nuggets of detail usually lost in the noise floor at this level.” Finally, he said, “Those who can never see past the 10W or the small box are missing a treat. This is a full-sized amplifier that lives in a desktop-shaped box!” +

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