



# lector audio

## CDP-06t tubed CD player

as reviewed by Danny Kaey



### Introduction...

For a number of years I have said that the days of stand alone *compact disc* players are numbered—guess what? I am saying it again, if perhaps with even more *sturm und drang*. My reasoning behind this escalation is simple: Sooloos has arrived at my doorstep last week. Soo... what? Sooloos, a superbly engineered "audiophile" music server, with 17" touch screen, terabytes of storage in RAID configuration, and a genuinely intuitive user interface. Of course you don't expect this sort of cutting edge design to come cheap—no sir, in the case of Sooloos you are to smack down 12k in US green bills or see a John Hancock on your fancy AMEX card receipt.

What this means for your *average* disc player (right, there are those "discs" again) is simple: realistically speaking, the CD player has reached what's commonly referred to as EOL, or end of life. There just simply isn't any more room for good old Redbook to go. Interface wise, computer based user interfaces are leaps and bounds beyond what physical format based players can do—perhaps the only stronghold, *Burg*, left is that we generally had close to 30 years of R&D in Redbook design vs. a fraction of that in music servers. Time will tell, but I am willing to bet that this handicap too will

#### DANNY KAEY'S SYSTEM

LOUDSPEAKERS  
Zu Audio Definition Pro  
Lautsprecher.

ELECTRONICS  
Nomad Audio Niagara amplifier,  
Yamamoto AS-08 amplifier, Quad  
II (original) amplifier, Brinkmann  
Vollverstärker, Brinkmann Fein  
phono, and a Rane PEQ55.

SOURCES  
Slimdevices Squeezebox,  
ZeroOne Ti48 HD Transport/CD  
player, ZeroOne Ar38 DAC,  
Technics 1210 M5G, Zu DL-103  
cartridge, Denon TU-460 tuner,

Lector CDP-6 CD player w/ RCA Blackplates, ReVox H-1 cassette tape deck, Technics RS-1700 reel to reel w/ custom Tim d.P. electronics, Dolby 330 professional Dolby B noise reduction - custom Tim d.P. modification, and an AEG/Telefunken M15A reel to reel.

#### CABLES

Full compliment of Kubala-Sosna Emotion and Fascination cables. Full compliment of Audio-Magic Sorcerer and Clairvoyant cables.

#### ACCESSORIES

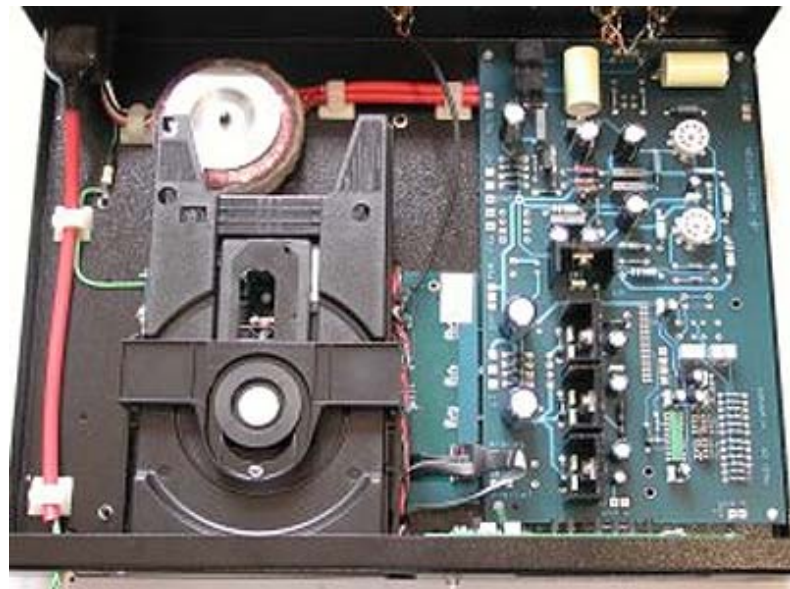
Townshend 5 tier seismic rack, Townshend seismic sinks (1x component sink, 2x Lautsprecher sink), Grand Prix Audio 5 tier Monaco Modular rack.

soon be overcome.

If this monumental downward push of technological force is having any effect on your average disc player it is that they will have to get better and better at ever shrinking retail price points. Whereas I stated in my last disc player review (the mighty fine AccousticArts) that *it* would be among the last disc players I would ever buy, the comparatively inexpensive Lector CDP-06t tube player costing a mere \$2190 must definitely be considered to be part of the Danny Kaey super list of *last* disc players (amazing to think I was around for an entire technological lifecycle).

#### \$2190 or how good the Lector truly is...

Compared to most of what's available, the Lector line of disc players looks like none other. In particular, with the last change of upgrades (and almost coinciding with Brian Ackerman's takeover of the line in the US) to the DACs and the addition of suave black acrylic side pods, the Lector models 06t and 7t look mighty sexy visually and on paper. For what is truly a bargain price, you get first class craftsmanship with gobs of attention to detail. Flanked by two 12AT7 output tubes, the output stage is in my humble opinion world class; at least I haven't heard anything close to this good anywhere near this price point—and that is with stock tubes mind you. In racing speak, the *package* is truly greater than the sum of its parts.



The sound of the Lector is all at once balanced, dynamic, and alive. Musicality, Italians know perhaps something more of than most others, is simply attention grabbing. Mind you, the typical "tube" sound of euphonic mids, and blubby bass is virtually nonexistent. Yes, the mids are luscious, but never overtly so. Strings, female vocals, and other such deciding deal breakers are portrayed with a liquidity and rightness that is simply not to be believed—especially at this price point. Take for example the track "Cong-Go" off Duke Ellington's superbly produced *Piano in the Foreground* album. Soundstage width, depth and height, are fundamentally correct, if perhaps not quite as extravagant as say the aforementioned reference AccousticArts player. The drums, the piano, and bass are however that smidge more constricted in space. I think that unless you had *that* player readily on hand to compare to, you would never know the difference. I did say *fundamentally* correct. Speaking of drums; oh those drums! From the thwack of the large one, to the high-hats and cymbals resolution, timing and timbre (RTT for short) are spot on. Perhaps some slight smearing here and there, but again, nothing that would detract from the overall experience. Did I mention how musical this player is? Man, feel the rhythm, feel the bass, and let's boogie! You definitely hear that when playing my status-quo stuff such as Yello, Boozoo Bajou, K&D, and Everything But The Girl. What a great CD player this is.

**History or how great it is to be Brian Ackermann...**

Last I checked, page spreading ads, and constant mentions by the audio press are all de facto non-existent with Lector. Heck, I probably would never have made notice of this fabulously joyful European brand had it not been for Harry v.d. P. or Harry Pearson 4-short. Some three years ago, he wrote an absolutely spectacular review of the CDP-06t's larger brother, the CDP-7t (ok, now there's something silly—what's up with the naming scheme?). Claiming to be among the finest disc players money could buy—save for some stratospheric and hyper exotic Burmester gear, Lector suddenly went from obscurity to fame and back to obscurity within months. The reason was simple: demand! Indeed, three years after that spotlight hitting review, Brian says that demand is still going strong and each shipment is pretty much sold out *prior* to its arrival. Boy, I guess if I were in the distribution business, *those* are problems I would love to have. With the factory producing what they can to cover demand, it is obvious that you will never find more than a handful of Lectors in stock anywhere.

### **RCA Black Plates, or am I going silly here?!**

Spectacular as the sound of the "little" Lector is; you are in for a true surprise. Sure, the stock tubes deliver and they deliver in spades. Alas, to quote Ted Turner, "only more *IS* more". Hence clever men invented turbo charging, or forced air induction. Same displacement, same engine, but with more air in the cylinder heads, that little engine suddenly puts out a whopping gazillion more elements of power, which really has nothing to do with horses anymore. No sir, think more like Flux capacitors. While forced air induction really has nothing in common with tube rolling, the effects are in some cases similar. In the case of the Lector CDP-06t it is mind numbing. Having been perfectly happy with the performance of the stock tube'd Lector, Brian called one day to say he had sent me a pair of RCA Black Plates—"give those a try and tell me what you think". Think? Imagine is more like it. As in ...imagine the transformation the CDP-06t went under! Holy crap. Strap on that 6 point racing harness and prepare to look like the guy in the famous Maxell commercial. Or like Kimi when he slams his carbon brakes on his 2007 F1, decelerating with 4+g's. All those minor quibbles such as slightly woolly bass and any smidgens of smear all vanished. Resolution gets kicked up a few notches as well, while the oh so golden musicality of the player remains unchanged. Disc after disc sounded that much more real, *there*, and right. I could hardly believe the results—not that I have rolled tubes all that much in my past life, but this was clearly unexpected: that a player can gain that much better performance from a simple tube roll was not in the playbook.



**The 06t with black acrylic sides**

### **Conclusion or how I almost bought the Lector...**

Given that my opening statement suggests that compact disc players to be nigh passé, I do have to confess that even as I am in the midst of Squeezebox, Sooloos,

ZeroOne, and other such music servers, this is the last disc player I must own, if for no other reason than to capture a piece of history. Of course, sometimes you also just want to do the "old fashioned" thing of opening a drawer, selecting a disc, pressing play, well, that sort of nostalgic thing anyway. At \$2190, the Lector is a steal. At \$2190 plus the cost of RCA Black Plates the Lector is almost as good as any disc player I have heard in recent times. It has the looks of say Sophia Lauren in her prime and a natural sound quality to match its sexy attire. Why did I not drop the cash for the Lector? The answer is simple: Lector. Having gushed over the performance of the CDP-06t with Brian, he recommended I leave my final decision until after I had the chance to spend some time with the 6's bigger brother, the 07t. The 07t I am told takes what the 06t offers to new heights (dare I say reference?!), whilst still remaining a bargain. Almost having pulled the trigger, I placed my Glock back in its place, albeit on high alert. Defcon 2 if you wish. Brian is shipping the player within a week or so, at which point I will know fairly quickly of exactly how much money will be spent. The separate power supply, overall upgraded circuitry, and more elaborate design yield an unprecedented raise in performance. Hard to imagine. Alas, one thing is for certain: a Lector it will be. **Danny Kaey**

Most highly recommended, A+++ and a definite Writer's Choice Award recipient!

#### **Lector Audio**

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