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**Thread: Review of SW1X Universal Music Server UMS1 Signature and Universal Power Supply**

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Today,   11:11                                                                                                              #1

**bumpy** ○                                                          Join Date: Apr 2016
Senior Member                                                      Location: Bishops Stortford
                                                                   Posts: 329
                                                                   I'm Chris.

📄 **Review of SW1X Universal Music Server UMS1 Signature and Universal Power Supply**

Over the last 50 years I have owned some pretty exotic and expensive audio gear spanning £7000 amplifiers and 6ft tall horn speakers. After each upgrade it was easy to persuade myself that things were better, but in hindsight things were just different.

Some ten years ago I moved across to computer based music, dispensing with my Linn Sondek, Ittok etc and Counterpoint CD12 player once I had a system that competed sonically. My computer software, from a limited choice back then was XXHighend by Phasure. Over the years that followed, the software showed glimpses of excellence but was upgraded with corresponding bugs and glitches probably 10 times every year. I felt like a (poor) computer programmer and lost my appetite for Hi Fi.

Enter SW1X and Slawa.

I visited with scepticism after others had looked at pictures of his gear and branded it as Chinese import – a slur that really upset Slawa. How wrong we all were. From that moment my Hi Fi life was rejuvenated. Even his starter system had all the attributes I had been seeking, sounding analogue like and in particular giving the resolution and transparency to hear a change of mains cable or a single capacitor in a DAC. In the past I had nodded along to salesmen that substituted interconnects, hearing just minute differences and believing this was all you got for your money at such a high level.

Cutting a long story short. I treated myself to much of Slawa's level 1 Signature stuff and moved over to vintage open baffle speakers. At the same time I had to resolve the computing side of it and bought a Raspberry Pi with Moode software and a pair of 45 Valve monoblocks to feed a lovely 2 watts to the new speakers. Having made so many changes I had no real reference sound to judge against but was well pleased that I now had a system encouraging me to listen late into the night, though I still felt Slawa's system had the edge.

It was becoming obvious that the Moode software people were making no significant strides to improve audio quality with their updates, preferring to concentrate on the user interface and multiple streaming applications which was not where I wanted to go. Sound quality was paramount. Also I had my reservations about the switching power supply on the RPI, which was soon replaced by a Longdog Audio linear power supply. For a relatively modest outlay it brought the improvements promised.

Here I stayed happily for many months visiting the Windsor Hi Fi show in the meantime to hear the 'competition' that in the majority were still battling to push nasty digital sounding systems. Slawa announced he was about to build a Universal Music Server and separate Power Supply Unit and I offered to bring over my PRI with power supply to benchmark how good his was. Well it was like a non league football team challenging Chelsea to a duel.

So I bought the UMS1 fitted with 1Tb of SSHD and UPS1 signature models.

If you want the technical stuff its here on Slawa's Web Site.

http://sw1xad.co.uk/products/

Its almost impossible to convey the sound of a component, but lets just say it ticks all the boxes with superlatives.

Enhanced bass
Full midrange
Sweet top end
Excellent imaging
Everything sounds so lifelike
Not a hint of digital nastiness
Good as it was, this combination leaves the PRI dead in the water
Wonderful boogey factor reminding me somewhat of early Naim gear in that area.
Timbre is spot on.
Its perfectly quiet - no fan noises and no spinning hard drives.

Some would argue that at the price it should leave the RPI for dead, but this lays waste to those that claim computers all sound the similar.

Now my system sounds just like Slawa's and for that I can pay no higher compliment.

*Last edited by bumpy; Today at 11:31.*

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Today, 16:04                                                                                                       #2

### SW1X
Trade: SW1X Audio Design
Se|

Join Date: Apr 2016
Location: Essex
Posts: 80
I'm Slawa.

**Thank you**

Thank you for the reflective review and your compliment.

Well designed linear power supplies with high quality audio material are crucial everywhere but switched mode power supply with cheap low quality parts in your computer are not important at all?

It may sound weird to some people however I cannot stress enough that the quality of the power supply is detrimental to the sound. Especially, the quality of the power supply of a music server (speak computer) is even more crucial than most people can imagine. That is because it is located right at the very beginning of the signal chain of an audio system. Why many people think that a computer and its power supply in particular are of negligible importance despite acknowledging its importance anywhere else remains a phenomenon.

However, if one thinks in line with following principle: If something is removed from the beginning - it can never be restored back at the later stage similar to the principle "Garbage in- garbage out", then it becomes evident that for example if the power supply of the computer does not have enough thickness or not enough bass in the mid bass area nothing (cables, DAC, amps and speakers) will be able to bring it back at the later stage. That is why a computer power supply is the most crucial and yet the most neglected aspect of a modern audio system. That is also one of the reasons as why many computer transport based systems sound so thin, synthetic and noisy relative to the older CD player transports (from late 80s and early 90s) now days. I mentioned it before here: http://sw1xad.co.uk/digital-transports/

The good news is that we addressed those issues by designing the SW1X PSU I power supply (http://sw1xad.co.uk/product /sw1x-psu-1/) with the finest materials and tuning it by using vintage Marantz and Philips CD players based on the CDM1 mechanism as our reference. We achieved a sound signature that is almost indistinguishable from those classic CD player master pieces plus having a more analogue liquidity in their sound. Those people who are fortunate to own a piece of those finest machines know very well what I am talking about. Those who do not should at least give a good listen to those players and to compare them to a computer (music server) based system to understand where we are coming from.

Slawa

*Last edited by SW1X; Today at 16:26.*

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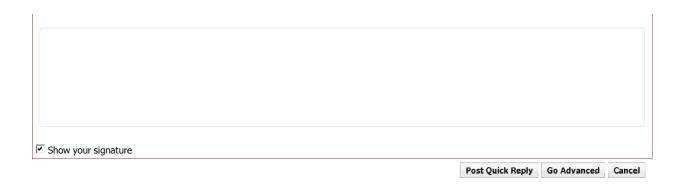www.SW1XAD.co.uk

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