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JANUARY 2014
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DISPLAY UNTIL JANUARY 15TH 2014

Music From **Elvis Costello, Ry Cooder, Fleetwood Mac,**
Dave Holland, Carla Bley, Elgar, & Strauss



Overall Product of the Year

dCS Vivaldi

\$108,496

Many of our choices for Products of the Year came down to difficult decisions between several worthy candidates. But this year the co-winners of our highest honor, the Overall Product of the Year, were easy to pick. In the Vivaldi's case, that's because this digital playback system from England's Data Conversion Systems (dCS) sets a new standard in technological sophistication, functionality, and, most importantly, in sound quality.

Although the complete Vivaldi system comprises four boxes, you can do quite well with just the DAC, or the DAC and transport. Whatever configuration you choose, know that the technology inside these products is unlike that of any other digital source. Every element is designed and built in-house. You won't find an off-the-shelf DAC chip, digital filter, or input receiver in a dCS product. What you will find are circuits, techniques, software, and engineering unlike that of any other product. The DAC, for example, is the latest (and upgraded) implementation of the company's innovative Ring DAC that leaves stock DAC chips in the dust. The list of technological innovations in the Vivaldi is long, but suffice to say that this digital source is the most sophisticated and capable product extant.

The Vivaldi isn't built like other digital products, and it doesn't sound like other digital products. All dCS DACs and disc players exhibit a density of information that's simply missing from other sources. This is manifested as a richness and depth of tone color, a vividness of timbre, and a spatial resolution that must be heard to be believed. Moreover, the Vivaldi's bass is simply sensational, combining weight and extension with pitch precision and articulation. But beyond these descriptions, the Vivaldi simply sounds more like music than any other digital source.

If you are in the fortunate position of being able to afford the stratospheric price, there's no better sounding, more capable, more technologically advanced, or more future-proof digital source than the dCS Vivaldi. It is truly, and by a wide margin, the *ne plus ultra* of digital playback. And that's plenty enough reason to award the dCS Vivaldi *The Absolute Sound's* Overall Product of the Year Award. (RH, 233) **tbs**