

# Gryphon Audio Designs Kalliope Digital-to-Analogue Converter

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## “Beautiful Voice”

### Bass

**With every recording used in these sessions, without exception, the bottom end offered surprising high resolution and stability.** There is no sense of sluggishness or imprecision. Bass is rendered with great spontaneity, vividness and skilful articulation. The subtlest low frequencies in recordings are reproduced down to the last detail without adding to or subtracting from a rendering that can be described as **“analogue” in the finest sense of the word.**

### Midrange

**Kalliope reproduces music in all its harmonic richness, giving free rein to voices and instruments, well differentiated with a fluidity that is exemplary, not to say enviable.** One cannot help but appreciate the beautiful tonal balance of the Gryphon in its handling of sonic detail, all the while maintaining overall coherence. This DAC is not lacking in authenticity and naturalness with regard to timbre and the layering of sonic planes. **This DAC works wonders with vocals (Kalliope is Greek for “beautiful voice.”), conveyed with remarkable stability and presence.**

### Highs

The Gryphon demonstrates the accuracy and correctness of timbres, with a lovely overall airiness, which is partly the domain of the high-performance converters. The finesse of the upper range highlights the differentiation of various performers, even at the extreme top, without ever tipping over into harshness or aggressiveness. **The tonal equilibrium marries sweetness and weight, resulting in a listening experience that for us evokes analogue playback.**

### Dynamics

**Our dynamic tests could find no fault with the Gryphon.** With great fidelity, it renders the sometimes quite considerable changes in level of certain compositions, such as Maurice Ravel’s orchestral version of Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition. Micro-details preserve their harmonic spectrum and definition, while at the same time enjoying the advantages of a higher level of digital processing. **This consistency in the rendering of dynamics demonstrates yet again that we are in the presence of an exceptional DAC.**

### Transient Response

There is no mystery here. The dual differential configuration of the converters is in large part responsible for the speed and, therefore, the realism of musical transients. **They are heard exactly as recorded, well served by the dynamic response of this DAC.** The alacrity of its transient response enhances not only timbral realism, but also facilitates localisation of voices and instruments, including complex orchestras.

### Soundstage

**Gryphon Kalliope lays out a three-dimensional soundstage, rendering natural, recorded acoustics or ambience created in the studio.** One instinctively perceives the dimensions of the concert hall, thanks to decaying

reverberations. Excellent layering of distances, for instance, in Alfred Schnittke's Gogol Suite is captivatingly real. The listener literally "sees" the symphony orchestra and the layout of the various instrumental sections. You almost believe you are there at the concert!

### Transparency

The absence of timbral colouration results in a design which has left nothing to chance. This purity is accompanied by scrupulous respect for ambience, for all the tiny sonic nuances that make it possible for a digital component to approach musical realism. The Gryphon faithfully interprets the slightest details with fine resolution, faultlessly and always very pleasant on the ear.

### Value for Money

Electronic components conceived by a master have their price, but the technological choices and the potential upgradeability of the Kalliope are arguments that must be considered. And even if the converter chips were not mounted on plug-in boards and this new Gryphon were frozen in its concept, it would still find favour in our eyes and especially our ears, with its highly regarded converter chips, analogue output stage and dual mono configuration.

### Verdict

Since we are well acquainted with the Danish brand and especially its pre- and power amplifiers, the specifications that attended the arrival on the market of the Kalliope DAC gave it something to live up to. And it does! The technical choices differ significantly from its competitors, as already described in this review. The quality of design is beyond criticism, especially as the Kalliope is equipped with numerous options, well suited to optimising its use. But especially, its extreme musicality is the finest asset of this DAC. **Gryphon masters to perfection digital audio technology to such an extent that we can call the Kalliope "Reference" for amazing realism and utterly analogue fluidity. A total success!**

Build Quality	CONSTRUCTION	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Components	COMPOSANTS	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Bass	GRAVE	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Midrange	MEDIUM	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Treble	AIGU	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Dynamics	DYNAMIQUE	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Transient Attack	ATTAQUE DE NOTE	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Soundstage	SCENE SONORE	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Transparency	TRANSPARENCE	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Value for Money	QUALITE/PRIX	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■