

# Lector CDP-707 + PSU-707 and Digicode S-192 + PSU-DC 192 – Part 1



Review samples supplied by [OhmAudio](https://www.ohmaudio.com)

Retail price in the Netherlands, including 21% VAT :

Digicode S-192: 3.990 euro (without power supply)

PSU-218: 600 euro

PSU-S-192 / PSU-DC 192: 2.640 euro

CDP-707: 2.990 euro (without power supply)

PSU-3T: 600 euro

PSU-7T / PSU-707 : 1.990 euro

The CDP-707 is an integrated Tube CD player but with no power supply and that's where the PSU-707 comes in. This 1.990-euro beast is the best power supply that the brand offers for this player but if you want to save costs then they also have a smaller and simpler 600-euro PSU-7T version.

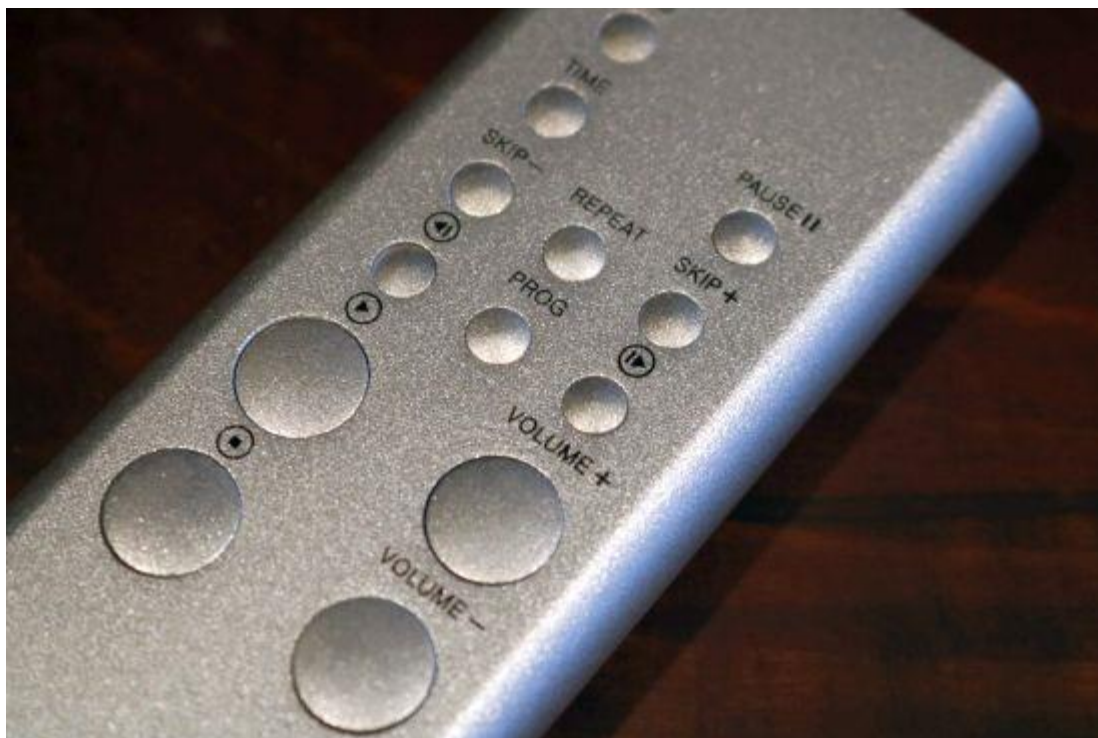
The Digicode S-192 is a Tube DAC, like the CD player with no on-board power supply and for this review accompanied by the company's best 2.640-euro PSU-DC 192 unit. As with the CD player, one can opt to save cost by going for the smaller and simpler 600-euro PSU-218 version.

As Lector makes an effort to point out, their tube designs are not simply a triode bolted onto a regular transistor- or OP-amp output stage. These are actual fully-tube designs. From personal experience, I know that there is indeed a large difference between the semi-tube output and a full-blown implementation. It's simple: as long as there is a transistor in the signal path, it will be audible and when the last semiconductor has been removed, the real tube magic is revealed.

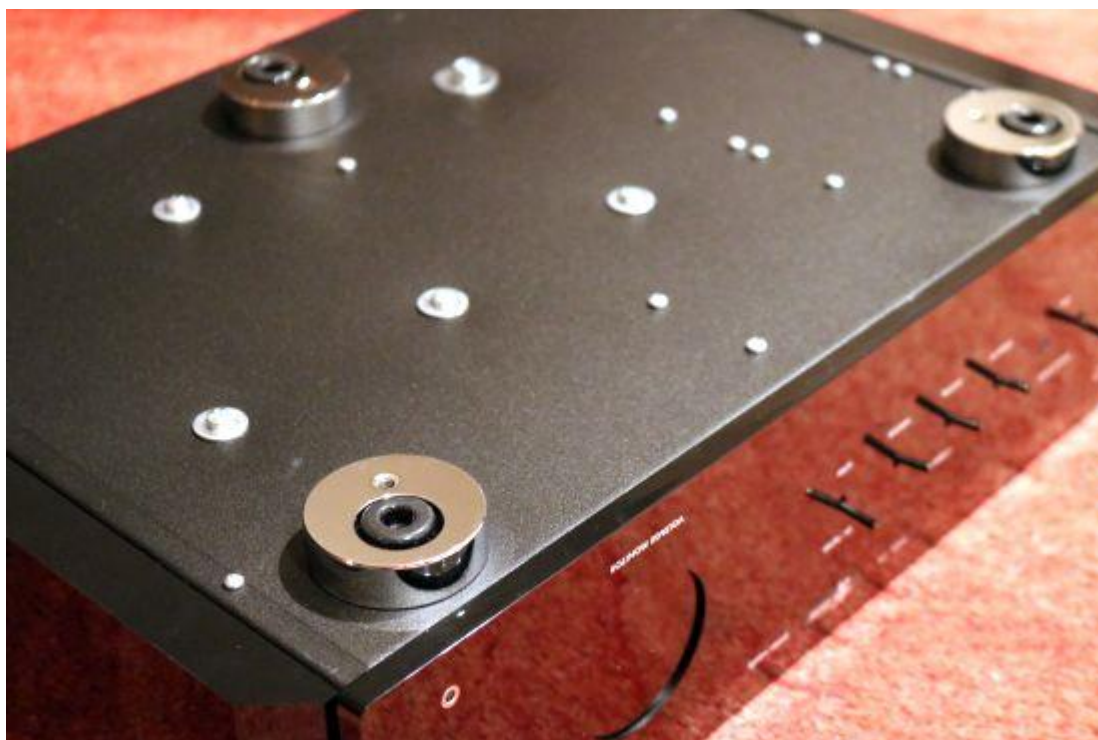
Based in Lombardy, Italy, Lector is a small company that builds audio equipment with the care and devotion that seems rare in these days of fully-automated circuit-board population in large factories. The products have some idiosyncracies worst of which are the illogically labeled remote control and the in part indecipherable manuals with silly translations and parts not even translated at all. But all this merely adds to the charm and is overshadowed entirely by the unit's fabulous sound.



*The remote control is un-ergonomic and weirdly-labeled but otherwise works just fine. Note that the <| and |> labeled buttons that look like frame back and advance symbols for a DVD or Blu-Ray player are the track skip buttons and the ones labeled "skip" are actually the search buttons, more commonly indicated as << and >>.*



The component feet consist of nicely polished full-metal with compliant rubber inserts. The feet also have pre-drilled threads to fit spikes to suit the user's taste. Optionally, one can add side panels in cherry wood or black acrylic and for the extra 120 euros, I would certainly do this as these further add to the component's unique appearance, which is entirely non-conformative and, in my opinion, absolutely beautiful.



The power supply units offer independent switches for analog, digital and tube sections, allowing to leave the units switched on and almost fully-warmed-up without shortening tube

life. Also, this allows the use of the CDP-707 as a pure transport without its analog parts being powered.



### *Digicore S-192 + PSU-S-192*

The CD player and DAC both use BurrBrown/Texas Instruments PCM1704-K R2R multibit converters, of which the CDP-707 uses two and the Digicore S-192 uses four. Both DAC sections use DSP oversampling and a proprietary current to voltage conversion process. In the CDP-707 this is followed by an output section based around two pre-selected JJ ECC-81 tubes, one for gain and one for the output and in the Digicore S-192 DAC, this circuit is doubled for true balanced operation.

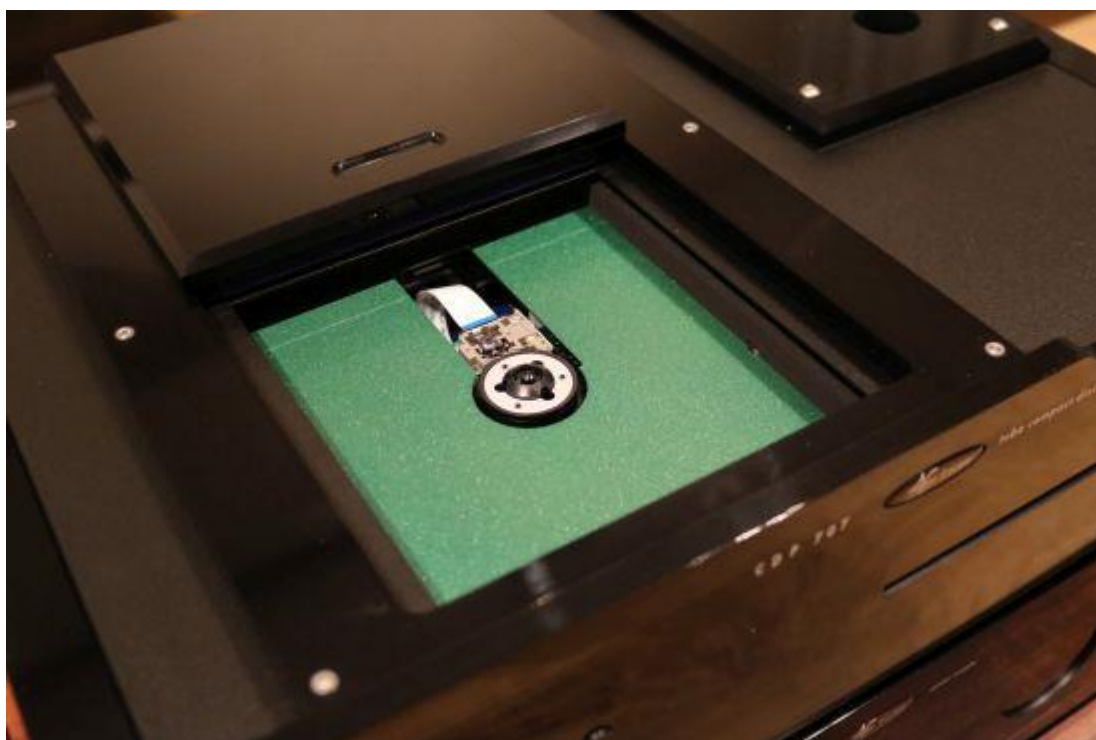


### *CDP-707 + PSU-7T*

The CDP-707 is a CD player with a digital output but it does not have any inputs. That's where the Digicode S-192 comes in with AES/EBU, Toslink, Coax, BNC and USB connections. Digital signals are accepted up to 192 kHz 24-bit on all inputs, including USB. The Digicode S-192 is also equipped with a word clock input and, uniquely, an SP/DIF output. The S-192 contains a proprietary SP/DIF circuit developed in the Lector Audio lab which the company refers to as "spdif circuit reconstruction", in short S.C.R., for which a patent is pending. In addition, the USB input is not converted by a standard solution but this is also done via the proprietary "U 2S-N" USB to SP/DIF board.



For the best sound quality, the CDP-707 and the Digicode S-192 use a high-quality, fully encased and damped mechanical relay for signal muting instead of the more common transistor. This results in soft mechanical clicks between tracks but it does not eat into the start of the tracks and is so soft as to not be disturbing.



Lector also pays special attention to mounting the optical mechanism inside the CDP-707. Based on a StreamUnlimited Blue Tiger mechanism that contains a Sanyo SF-HD65 optical system, Lector has gone the extra mile by using a complicated multi-layer mounting structure

that provides coupling as well as decoupling. Also added are special damping materials but only where they are beneficial such as under the transport mechanism. Clearly, Lector knows that overdamping is also not good. There are proprietary output sections not only for the analog part but even for the digital signal. Lastly, I know from personal experience that the power supply has an absolutely not to be underestimated effect on the sound of a CD transport. Here, the big PSU's certainly prove their worth. And these are only a handful of sections where Lector made unique choices that have resulted in a very special CD transport.



## Two systems

The Lector components will be assessed twice and in two different systems.

First up is the secondary system that consists of the [Ayon Spirit III](#) integrated tube amp and the [Kroma Audio Carmen](#) speakers, connected with [FoilFlex](#) speaker cables. All the power cables are Belden and the interlinks are all AudioQuest Water.



## First Listening

Starting with the Lector CDP-707 by itself, this player sounds more light-footed than the Ayon CD-10 MkII but also more transparent and more refined. It's not quite as solid or tonally full as the Ayon but even at this stage, I am already hearing what the Lector magic is about. Both players sound highly lyrical but they have a very different presentation, the Lector more audiophile and airy, the Ayon bolder and more earthy.



Adding the Digicode S-192 not only makes this a four-box CD player but brings the sound to an entirely new level. Gone is the thinness in the bass and the leanness in tonality, replaced by a big, lush, voluptuous and fully saturated sound. The Digicode S-192's bass is still not quite as solid as the Ayon's but definitely a lot fuller than the CDP-707. Fully retained is all of the player's fluidity, transparency and refinement, while the soundstage size is increased to beyond the room's actual dimensions. Man, I already found the CDP-707 to be magical but the sound of the four-box combo is nothing short of amazing.

As the CDP-707 by itself is leaner and tighter and its midrange is more forward, it does sound a little bit more coherent than the Digicode S-192. The latter is smoother and more laidback and less forceful in the midrange. Although both the CDP-707 and the Digicode S-192 have perfect pacing, neither too slow nor too fast, the player has slightly better PRaT. On the other hand, vocals are more realistic and much more captivating with the S-192 which, combined with its immense soundstaging abilities, makes for absolutely magical moments.

# Lector CDP-707 + PSU-707 and Digicode S-192 + PSU-DC 192 – Part 2





For this more up-close section of the review, I moved the Lector units to the main system where I used the [CH Precision C1](#) DAC, [Ayon Stealth](#) preamp and [CH Precision A1.5](#) power amp, connected via a [Cardas Clear](#) XLR cable. I started with the [Martin Logan ESL15A's](#) and swapped to the Magico S1 MkII's for the last bit of the review.



**CDP-707 as a transport**

The Lector CDP-707 as a transport to the C1 sounds effortless yet lively. It is immediately engaging and emotionally involving and although it has a smooth and slightly warm sound, this is not accompanied by thickness or rounded transients. In fact, the player sounds almost as open and articulate as the master in this field the 7.890-euro Aqua La Diva. The latter remains the king of tightness and transparency but the Lector has more romantic shimmer and harmonic richness.

I was curious to find out how the Lector would compare to the 2.495-euro Jay's Audio CDT2-Mk2 CD transport because it has a NOS Philips CDM-4 on board and the Lector uses a very modern linear mechanism. The Jay's has bigger bass with more slam and the free-flowing delivery that characterizes most swing-arm-mechanism players. It's also lyrical and very musical but it lags behind the Lector in terms of refinement, transparency and low-level detail.

In addition to separate power zones, the PSU-7T offers a DC filter selection to tailor the sound according to personal desire. The manual is not clear about what this does precisely but I'll just describe what I hear. With the switch in the down position pointing to the word "low" on the front panel, the sound is brighter and slightly more articulate but also sounds a little flatter and invokes less of a romantic feel. So far, I had been listening with the switch in the up position and as a few tests showed, I have grown a preference for this setting even if the "low" position is probably more accurate. As another comparison showed, the "low" position moves the Lector a little closer to the Aqua in terms of tightness and articulation but the overall Lector character remains intact.



### **Lector CDP-707 as an integrated player**

Compared to the Ayon CD-10 MkII, both using the AudioQuest Water interlink, the Lector 707's output level is a little lower but that's adjusted for easily on the C1. Even then, its sound is less robust and impactful but definitely more refined and transparent than that of the Ayon. Gentle hi-hat swooshes are subtler and show more differentiation whereas with the Ayon

they're more similar to each other, less precise and more *generic*. In terms of soundstaging, the two are quite similar. Overall, the difference between the two is similar to as it was in the other setup, the Ayon being more down to earth while the Lector is more ethereal. But also as an integrated player, I can again feel the Lector magic. It's a mix of gentle ease, timbral richness, resolution, precision and transparency.



## Music Server

So far, I have only used the CD player as a source but what can I say... the Lector player sounds so fantastically musical that I had no urge whatsoever to test anything else. Of course, I also have the Antipodes CX and EX server combo of which I lately use mostly the CX into the CH C1 DAC via direct ethernet. But since I heard the Aqua La Diva CD transport I also noticed that while the CX+EX combo sounds fuller and warmer and subjectively more spacious, the CX by itself sounds closer to the La Diva via USB than the CX + EX combo. That's when I decided to use mostly the CX by itself as that presents the most neutral reviewing proposition.

With the Antipodes CX as a source via USB, the Digicore S-192 has a super-refined sound that is precise as well as fluid and not at all dry or anything like that, it is an absolutely inoffensive sound. I've tried a range of USB cables and found that the Final Touch Audio Callisto provided the most free-flowing delivery and, with that, a sound closest to the CDP-707.

However, I feel that the true Lector magic really only happens when the DAC is fed via SP/DIF, in my case by a CD transport and then preferably the CDP-707. And, again, I must stress that this magic that I refer to is not a simple metaphor for warmth: the CD transport does not sound rounded, is very transparent and leaves no details behind. It actually sounds more exciting and lively than the music server while simultaneously being more organic. It's quite a rare encounter I can tell you. And to think the CDP-707 is not even the company's top-model then it's probably best not to find out what the Digidrive TL can do.



## Lector CDP-707 + Digicode S-192

One should brace him/her self when playing with the full Lector stack. This is a sound so involving and so emotionally captivating that there will be a voice in your head screaming the words “buy me”. The four-box Lector combo simply spells magic with a capital M.

Now, the sound *soars* and *soothes* at the same time. It’s very relaxing and sweet but not at all slow. Just as I heard in the other setup, the Digicode S-192 has bigger bass, luscious and organic mids and wall-to-wall soundstaging. Here, too, I hear that the punch or “attack” of the bass is reduced in comparison to listening to the CD player by itself but you get so much in return!

Meanwhile, the differentiation, refinement and resolution are world-class, as a cross-comparison with the Aqua La Diva and [Formula xHD](#) confirms. The Aqua combo remains the most linear, articulate and transparent pairing that I have had access to in these quarters but has to hand it to the Lector combo in the fields where tubes inherently excel. Indeed, the Lector combo has an overwhelming amount of charm, making the Aqua combo sound less enchanting in comparison. Of course, the Aqua combo can absolutely also sound utterly engaging but its precision makes that this only happens when this is actually in the recording. The Lector components tend to make everything just a little nicer. Each has its respective camp and you probably know which one you side with.

## Power Cables

As I learned, the Lector units are not finicky at all and work sublimely even with freebie power cables. Especially as a transport, there is no need to use anything but a standard cable unless you intend on coloring the sound one way or another. My default Belden with Bals and Oyaide C-004 connectors works fabulously as well but even when the CDP-707 is used as an integrated CD player and also with the Digicode S-192 DAC, the sound is all-Lector even with standard cables.



## Conclusion

These components have a sound that is effortless yet lively. It is smooth and warm yet transparent and agile sound that is immediately emotionally involving and always engaging. The CDP-707 offers tremendously good value and actually already operates on an audiophile level while remaining sweet and fluid. The four-box Lector combo adds immense wall-to-wall-soundstaging, bigger bass, richer and even more organic mids and even more magic. Starting right now, the brand has gained a huge fan!