



The Lindemann Musicbook: 15 is a DAC preamp with a built-in CD player and excellent sound. It costs 3,780€



Review By: [Holger Biermann](#) March 2017

### **Lindemann Musicbook:15 DSD – Brilliant DAC preamp with CD Player**

For many years Lindemann Audio had the nimbus of the classic high-end: the components met the highest requirements and all had the 19 inch gauge (or larger). But three years ago Mastermind Norbert Lindemann made a radical cut and since then has been manufacturing components that are much more oriented to the present time: smaller, finer and smarter. "Musicbook" is the name of this line of components, including the Lindemann Musicbook: 15 DSD.

You could say Lindemann builds lifestyle devices. This may sound a bit disgusting in the ears of an Audiophile, but it is not. Lindemann-style lifestyle still meets the highest demands, looks just a lot better. Four units include the Lindemann Musicbook series (models 10, 15, 20 and 25), all of them use the same DAC or streamer and pre-stages, with their elegant dimensions of 280 x 65 x 220 mm (W x H x T), its comprehensive and state-of-the-art equipment as well as its perfectly processed aluminum housing instantly an irresistible "will-I-feel-feeling". They are audiophile jewels, which you simply like to stand in the living room.



The Musicbook: 15 in its all magnificence. With its decent dimensions of just 28 x 6.5 x 22 cm (W x H x D) it fits wonderfully into every living situation

Lindemann proved the right nose. While the numbers of the classic 19-inch high-end are increasingly declining, its Musicbook components have already gained an excellent reputation within a short time. And it will be even better. In the middle of 2016 came the newest generation Musicbook with the addition DSD on the market. With this new generation, Lindemann has completely renewed the range with a new **Bluetooth interface**, a new USB and D / A converter, a reworked preamp and a new Class-A headphone amplifier. Norbert Lindemann spent a few hours at LowBeats and was enthusiastic about the DSD generation. "It's amazing what's going to happen."



The on / off switch of the Musicbook: 15 is subtly embedded in the top panel-lid

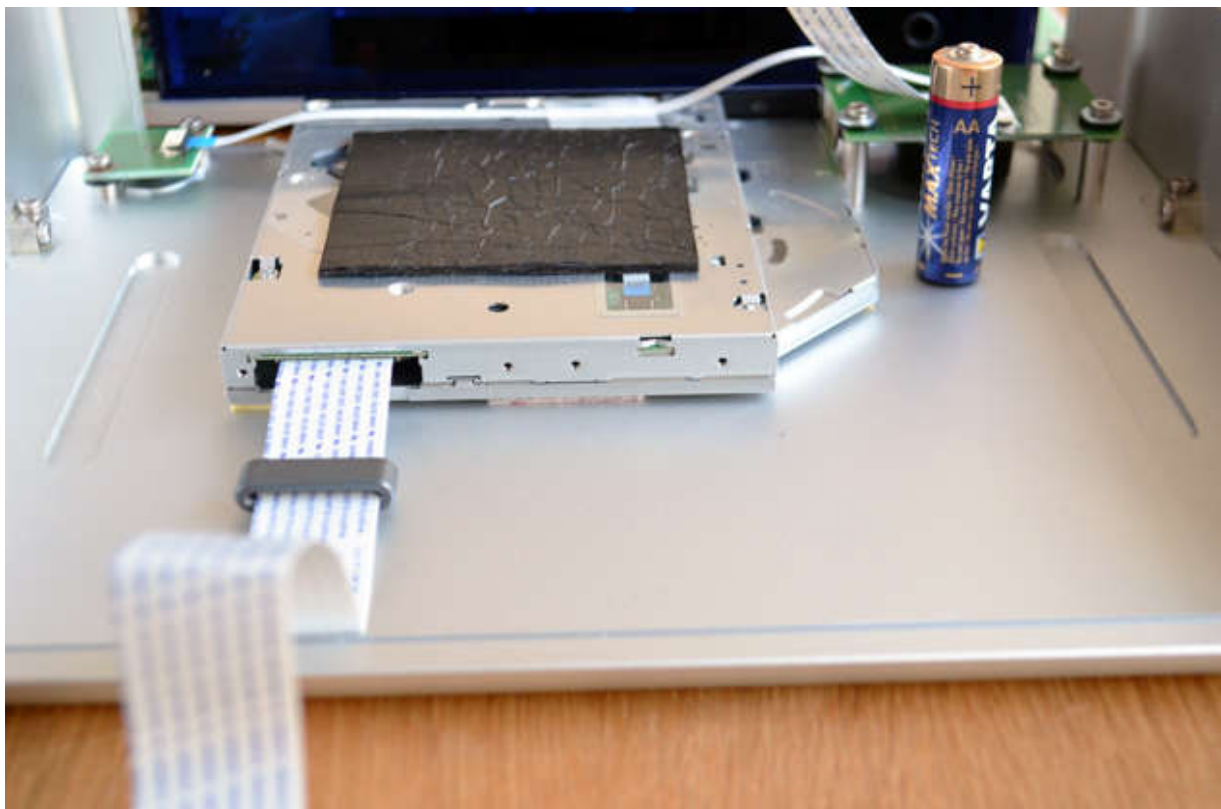
The Lindemann Musicbook: 15 is a preamp with a USB DAC and an integrated CD drive. Unlike its two larger siblings, Musicbook: 20 and 25, it does not have a LAN/WiFi streamer installed. With two analog (RCA) and five digital (2 x SPDIF, 2 x optical, 1 x USB) inputs plus Bluetooth capability, the Musicbook: 15 is more than well equipped for modernity. If you absolutely want to stream, access the next model or streams via its connected computer. Above all, however, the Lindemann Musicbook: 15, which has long been out of focus with many other high-end companies, is a Hi-End CD player.



The Musicbook: 15 DSD from behind. A total of eight inputs (including Bluetooth, see antenna) and two outputs - one of them as XLR - provides a veritable offer

The built-in CD drive is from Teac and originally comes from the car hi-fi range. What does not sound particularly audiophilic yet has clear advantages.

On the one hand, there are hardly any CD drives. On the other hand, especially the read-out processes of a car hi-fi model are particularly suitable for high-end playback due to the robustness of the design and the large buffer memory. However, anyone who suspects a SACD drive because of the addition of DSD is disappointed: the Musicbook: 15 DSD cannot read more than CDs or CD-Rs.



The CD drive of the Musicbook: 15 sits just under the cover of the beautiful millennium. The comparison with the battery (AA) shows the small size

That does not matter. Because every incoming digital signal - from whichever input, thus also CD - is first processed internally on DSD 256. After this step the signals go to the converter, the AKM AK4490 the 32-bit / 768 kHz DAC, which Norbert Lindemann uses two of them, one per channel. One of the advantages of the DSD stream is that the converter does not really have much to do: it only has to filter the signal. Each further signal processing is analogous, as is the pre-amplification of the signals as well as the volume control.



The internal structure of the Musicbook: 15 DSD is characterized by SMD technology and uses the shortest board layout. On the left see the encapsulated power supply

The menu of the Lindemann Musicbook: 15 DSD offers three possible action sequences under menu item DAC-Settings:

- 1.) **The Native Mode:** This keeps everything as it comes in: DSD remains DSD, CD (PCM 16 / 44.1) remains CD.
- 2.) **The Quasi-Factory Setting (> DSDx2x4 <):** This is all internally calculated on DSD128 or DSD256
- 3.) **The DXD Highest-RES Variant (> PCMx2x4x8 <):** This internally calculates everything - depending on the input signal - to 352.8 kHz or 384 kHz.

I have listened to the different modes with CD and USB for a long time and come to the same conclusion as Norbert Lindemann: The factory setting is the best sound. It provides more resolution than native and slightly more printing than the DXD setting. So I left it at > DSDx2x4 <.





The Musicbook: 15 DSD can also be operated directly on the device. With the multifunctional wheel (which is also a volume control) you can reach all important points by means of a combination of pressing and turning. Here you can also see what the musicbook: 15 DSD commonly makes from the data of the CD: from PCM 44.1 becomes DSD 128



The Musicbook: 15 remote replaces the app. It is comparatively large, but - what one wants to make - there are also many functions on it. And after a short study of the manual, it proved to be really clever – with chargeable battery via provided USB cable

## The Lindemann Musicbook: 15 uses synchronous USB

Keyword USB Audio: In contrast to most of its competitors, Norbert Lindemann does not use an asynchronous, but a synchronous sample rate converter like most high-end USB DACs. Lindemann: "it is better than the asynchronous. The asynchrone offers more possibilities in the playback, but produces jitter in the picosecond range. "Of course, in the test phase, we mostly played music in the highest possible resolution and the



Norbert Lindemann at the LowBeats office: a source of knowledge about hi-fi technology

Musicbook: 15 thanked us with an incredibly ne, bell-like sound. On his visit to LowBeats, Lindemann had once again sparked a discussion with us: "The sound of USB is also on the cable used" - laughs and laid me smilingly a USB connection in the obvious prototype stage on the table. A few hours later, I knew why: The cable stunned with substantial and detailed sound, in any case, it sounded clearly better than any other USB cable in the editorial staff and confirmed the thesis: The differences between USB cables can be larger than digital cables commonly . If the topic of top USB cable is interested, should simply ask Lindemann crew. According to the last stand, this cable is to cost less than 250 euros - which is loosely worth it.



A USB cable from Lindemann, currently still in the prototype stage. In the listening test, it outclassed many, very popular USB connections

## This sounds like the Lindemann Musicbook: 15 DSD

In everyday life, I had great pleasure with the Lindemann Musicbook: 15 DSD - not just because it sounds so good. The operation via the multifunctional wheel ran smoothly and conclusively after a few finger exercises. And that I have such a large number of headphones in the editorial department did not irritate the smart Bavaria in any way: The output voltage can be adjusted in the headphone amplifier as well as the sensitivity of the inputs. Musicbook: 15 can also be used as a "pure" source for CD, USB or other digital sources. The volume control function can simply be bypassed with the Fix level function in the menu.

But the pre-stage function is dispensed only with who has the very large covers at home. The preamplifiers are consistently audiophile. Norbert Lindemann: "We only take what is good, too." An attitude that is reflected in the sound of Musicbook: 15, of course.

First, I checked the quality of the internal CD drive. The Marantz HD CD1, unquestionably one of the best CD players under 1000 Euro, played (connected via SPDIF) somewhat less detailed and somewhat less dynamic. Not bad at all. Even better it was of course with Hi-Res music from the computer via Lindemann.

At High-Res-Audio there is the new Sting 57th & 9th - perhaps not his best work, but still a bit as before. And the album sounds good. "Inshallah" has everything that pleases the audiophiles: the sonorous voice, guitar, tablas - all very realistic, plastic and with strong, warm sound colors.

And a shot of warmth does not hurt the musicbook: 15. Compared to other DAC predecessors of the LowBeats reference rack, such as the SPL Director, the Lindemann sounds finer, but also brighter. This is not bad, one should only know it and avoid the combination with further rather light-sounding components.



With 57th & 9th Sting attaches to his great solo albums of the 1980s. At hiresaudio, the album is also available at [www.highresaudio.com/](http://www.highresaudio.com/)



This starts with the power amplifier or the connected active speakers. After various attempts with Audiolab, Cambridge Audio or SPL I landed at the end of the 80 watt tube amp called AMC 2100. This at least matched the B & W 805 D3 with which I heard at home. With the outstanding Dynaudio Contour 20, the Cambridge 851 mono amplifiers on the Musicbook: 15 DSD also played breathtakingly open and realistic.

By the way: With Lindemann Audio, there are also two notably compatible amplifiers in the Musicbook series: Musicbook: 50 and 55 with 80 and 240 watts respectively. Both sound very fine, almost tube-like. Annoyingly, I had forgotten to order the power amplifiers at Lindemann. The combination impression I got with a friend (Bauer Audio) and I can only state: this fits really well.

## **Conclusion: The Lindemann Musicbook: 15 DSD replaces large high-end systems**

How do you classify such a device? High-End! I was particularly impressed with the functionality. The Lindemann Musicbook: 15 DSD provides ample connections for just about any purpose. A number of competitors should also cut off a slice of the thought-through operation, the versatility of this device and its processing.

Above all, the Musicbook: 15 DSD sounds exceptionally fine, airy, unpretentious and detailed; Even if you want to quickly wirelessly stream music from your mobile phone via Bluetooth to the system, you get from Musicbook: 15 excellent sound served.

This small DAC pre-amplifier strikes the bridge to a high end of tomorrow: it not only excels, but is also quite smart from the outside. Ultimately, components like the Lindemann Musicbook: 15 DSD replace the huge and heavy equipment of the classic High End such as Accuphase components. And only the LAN/WiFi streaming client is missing, one cannot blame the Musicbook: 15 DSD - there are the larger, Ethernet Enabled musicbooks 20 and 25 with functional ios/Android Apps for better control and internet access.