

## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Attention

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Above: Micromega AirStream WM-10 and Apple iPad

## MICROMEGA LAUNCHES HIGH-PERFORMANCE AUDIO STREAMING DEVICE

*AirStream WM-10 'wireless DAC' is the ideal solution for streaming digital music to a high-quality audio system*

**Surrey, England** -- Absolute Sounds, the UK's leading importer and distributor of high-performance hi-fi and home cinema equipment, is delighted to announce the UK launch of the AirStream WM-10 from Micromega, the legendary French audio brand. Described as a 'wireless DAC', the AirStream WM-10 is designed to make it simple to transfer audio files from a computer to a hi-fi system, whilst delivering the best possible sound quality.

The AirStream WM-10 combines a high-quality DAC (Digital-to-Analogue Converter) and a built-in Wi-Fi receiver, to deliver the best possible sound quality. The unit is designed for placement within a hi-fi or AV separates system, just like any other source component. Audio data may be streamed wirelessly from a PC or Apple Mac to the AirStream WM-10, whereby the signal is converted to analogue and fed to the user's amplifier via the unit's audiophile-quality output stage and high-grade cable connectors.

Micromega has drawn upon over quarter of a century of digital audio expertise to deliver the best possible wireless streaming solution for audiophiles. The AirStream WM-10 uses the Wi-Fi 802.11n standard, specially optimised for music reproduction; Micromega has coined the term WHiFI® in order to differentiate it from other Wi-Fi specifications, which are designed for multiple forms of data as opposed to purely audio.

Apple's AirPort Express technology forms the basis of WHiFI®. The most advanced wireless technology currently available, the Wi-Fi 802.11n standard allows extremely fast data transfer rates to ensure faithful reproduction of the entire musical message. It also delivers an unsurpassed 100m wireless listening perimeter, ensuring seamless streaming from anywhere in the home.

Some wireless audio products use Bluetooth to stream music, but Wi-Fi is inherently better suited to this application. This is because Bluetooth is a 'handshake' protocol, designed to allow electronic devices to 'talk' to each other, rather than stream large amounts of data over significant distances. Wi-Fi, on the other hand, is specifically intended for this purpose, and is therefore better suited to a wireless home network.

To further raise performance, Micromega has applied a sophisticated linear power supply incorporating a low-bandwidth R-CORE transformer, which acts as a natural line filter, together with a low-noise, fast-response linear regulator. This improves sound quality significantly compared to the low-cost, electrically noisy switch-mode power supply that is common to standard AirPort Express modules.

Micromega has also paid significant attention the 'master clock', which synchronises the digital data that is streamed to the device. Standard AirPort Express modules contain a simple 'gate type' oscillator, internal to the IC itself. This results in significant 'jitter' (digital distortion), which has an adverse effect on sound quality. To combat this, Micromega has designed a 25.000MHz clock with a dedicated low-noise power supply. This power supply has its own winding on the secondary side of the R-CORE transformer, combined with sophisticated regulation. This solution ensures the main and clock power supplies are entirely separated, reducing jitter and eliminating the harsh time domain errors associated with low-quality digital decoding.

The AirStream WM-10 is designed to operate seamlessly with Apple iTunes® – the most commonly used music management application. It can also be used with other software such as Rogue Amoeba's Airfoil – an inexpensive application that facilitates the use of almost any media player, including Windows Media, VLC and so on. In addition, music can be streamed directly to the WM-10 from music streaming websites.

The AirStream WM-10 is intended to maximise the sound quality of all types of audio files when played through a hi-fi system. Of course, the resulting sound quality is partly dependent upon the type of file, the use of compression and so on. However, bit-for-bit, a file played from computer via the AirStream WM-10 can sound better than CD; in other words, if you play a track from a CD, then rip the same track without compression (at 16-bit/44.1kHz – CD 'Red Book' standard) and stream it from a computer to the AirStream WM-10, the latter has a sonic advantage. The reasons are as follows:

- When listening to music on a computer, all of the content of the recording is saved in the core of the computer's memory. However, when a CD player reads a disc, substantial portions of the digital word stream can be missed owing to mechanical vibrations and laser read errors. Sensing these errors, the CD player's correction circuitry substitutes artificially created 'guesses' to compensate.

This estimated data is blended with the rest, minimising the risk of interruption to the sound but also resulting in a loss of absolute fidelity. In contrast, computer-based audio 'records' a bit-for-bit duplicate of the original music to the hard disk, thus eliminating the error correction steps that are sometimes necessary in CD playback. By the very nature of the computer recording process, greater sonic fidelity may be obtained.

- A downside of recording music on computers is that they generate AC noise that can easily be picked up by hi-fi systems and intermodulate with the musical signals. This interference degrades sound quality and needs to be filtered out in order to maintain a high level of sound quality. Transferring musical data from a computer to an audio system via Wi-Fi enables the two to be kept apart, thereby eliminating the detrimental effect of AC noise on the audio signal.

In addition, the AirStream WM-10 is 24-bit/192kHz-capable, meaning it is fully equipped to receive and play high-definition, better-than-CD-quality digital audio formats at their native resolution. (At present, iTunes playback is capped at CD-equivalent 16-bit/44.1kHz, but Apple is expected to raise the bar to 24-bit/192kHz in the future; the AirStream WM-10 is already configured to take advantage, enabling users to benefit from this and other iTunes upgrades immediately.)

By storing music on a PC or Mac – be it downloaded from online music stores or 'ripped' from other media – and streaming it to a high-quality hi-fi system via the AirStream WM-10, it is possible to obtain the best of both worlds: the convenience of computer-based hard disk music storage and management, coupled to high-level signal purity and audiophile-quality playback. Furthermore, the AirStream WM-10 may negate the need for a separate radio tuner, allowing the many thousands of radio stations available via the internet to be played through a hi-fi system with the best possible sound quality.

Ricardo Franassovici, Founder and Managing Director of Absolute Sounds, says:

"It's amazing how capable the AirStream WM-10 is – not simply in relation to other wireless music streaming devices, but also when compared to high-end digital sources that are usually assumed to be superior. We compared the WM-10 to several highly regarded and considerably more costly CD players, and with good source material it is undeniably their equal. This Micromega component signals a whole new era in musical fidelity, content access and ease of use in the field of high-performance audio."

The AirStream WM-10's sturdy aluminium case is the same size as a conventional hi-fi component, allowing it to slot neatly into a typical separates system. As with Micromega's CD players and amplifiers, it is made in France and available in either black or silver.

The Micromega AirStream WM-10 is priced at £999.00. All Micromega components are distributed in the UK by Absolute Sounds.

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## KEY FEATURES – Micromega AirStream WM-10

- First audiophile-grade solution for wireless streaming
  - Simple to install and use
  - Capable of better-than-CD sound quality
  - Super-fast Wi-Fi 802.11n, optimised for music
  - Upgraded power supply reduces ‘noise’
  - Improved master clock minimises jitter
  - 24-bit/192kHz capable
  - Supports AAC, AIFF, Apple Lossless, MP3, WMA, WAV
  - 100m wireless listening perimeter
  - Expandable – add additional WM10s for multi-room
  - Sturdy, full-width aluminium case
  - Analogue output: Gold-plated stereo RCA phono
  - Digital output: Gold-plated coaxial S/PDIF
  - Dimensions (WxHxD): 430x70x250mm
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Based in Paris, Micromega is a brand of high-performance audio components crafted for discerning music lovers. Since its formation in the 1980s, Micromega has been synonymous with innovative design, elegant functionality and breathtaking musicality, producing a succession of pioneering products and earning a plethora of prestigious awards in the process. Today, under the enthusiastic ownership of Didier Hamdi, a former motorcycle racing world champion, Micromega offers a highly competitive range of high-performance audio components, 100 per cent designed and built in France. The prefix ‘HD Audio’ has been added to Micromega’s logo, to signify the company’s revitalisation under its new ownership and emphasise the company’s ‘High-Definition’ audio design philosophy.

[www.micromega-hifi.com](http://www.micromega-hifi.com)



Absolute Sounds is the UK’s leading importer and distributor of high-quality hi-fi and home cinema equipment. The company was formed in 1978 by Ricardo Franassovici, who left a successful career in the music industry to become one of the world’s leading hi-fi entrepreneurs. Ricardo’s burning desire has always been to give UK-based music fans the opportunity to experience audio at the highest level, cherry-picking the very best components from around the globe to create a ‘hi-fi boutique’ overflowing with highly covetable, high-performance products. Like the finest watches and most prestigious motorcars, these brands deliver finely tuned, supremely engineered products that simply ooze desirability. If you are seeking the world’s best hi-fi and home cinema equipment, Absolute Sounds is your first port of call.

Absolute Sounds is responsible for distributing the following brands in the UK: Audio Research, Continuum Audio Labs, Copland, Crystal Cable, darTZeel, Devialet, DreamVision, EAT, Jadis, Koetsu, Krell, Magico, MartinLogan, Metronome Technologie, Micromega, Mimetism, Mystère, PrimaLuna, Qsonix, Sonus Faber, Theta Digital, Transparent Cable, Wilson Audio, Yter.

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