818V3 REFERENCE AUDIO CORE

1. Does the 818V3 have an “analogue bypass” mode?

No. All analogue signals are converted to the digital domain on the input card. This is done using high-quality A/D conversion running at 96kHz sampling rate and 24 bit precision.

2. What is the maximum sampling rate of the digital coaxial inputs?

They can receive up to 192kHz.

3. What is the maximum sampling rate of the USB audio input?

It can receive up to 192kHz.

4. Is the 818V3 a pre-amplifier?

The 818V3 can perform the role of a pre-amplifier superbly. It can provide source selection and volume control when used between sources and power amplification. Its incredible sound quality means that it is suitable for use with products of even the highest performance.

5. Is the 818V3 a DAC?

The 818V3 can act as a very high performance DAC, accepting digital signals on its inputs, converting them to the analogue domain and passing the audio on to the next component in the audio chain. However, as the 818V3 can perform the duties of source selection and volume control, if the next component is a pre-amplifier product, such a set-up would add unnecessary duplication with associated and unavoidable sonic degradation. A purer path would be provided by connecting the 818V3 directly to the amplification and allowing it to perform the role of control unit as well as DAC.

6. What is the difference between the 818V3 and the Meridian Ultra DAC?

The 818V3 is a fully-fledged control unit with a range of input and output connections for both digital and analogue forms of audio. This allows it to be used as the “hub” in many system types. The Ultra DAC has no analogue inputs and no digital outputs and it is designed to fully exploit this limited functionality to exceed in the roles it can play. As a result, it can provide superior performance to the 818V3 in applicable situations. However, the additional functionality of the 818V3 makes it the only choice in other situations where such functionality is essential.

7. What is the network socket on the 818V3 used for?

This socket allows the 818v3 to be connected to an Ethernet network so it can be used as an audio end-point in a Roon or Sooloos streaming system.

8. How does the 818V3 rate as a Roon or Sooloos audio “end-point”?

The 818V3 is fitted with the ID41 network audio card. This has the capability of providing exceptional sound quality from Roon or Sooloos. Within the Meridian range of products, it is second only to the Ultra DAC in performance in this regard.

9. I'm using the 818V3 directly into a power-amplifier, but I am not happy with the volume level when I bring the system out of Standby. Can this be adjusted?

Yes. When using variable output, the start-up volume of the 818V3 can be set as described on page 36 of the user-guide.

10. I'm using Meridian DSP speakers with the 818V3. Can I use the analogue outputs of the unit to feed a headphone amplifier?

Yes, the 818V3 can be configured specifically for this application. Details on this can be found on page 31 of the user-guide.

11. Do I need to use a computer to set-up the 818V3?

Not necessarily. All the key features of the 818V3 are available through the front-panel set-up. The Meridian set-up program, MConfig, allows the settings of the 818V3 to be further personalised, and for a back-up of the settings to be created.

12. Can I customise the source legends on the 818V3?

Yes, but this requires the use of the Meridian set-up program, MConfig. The legends are limited to a maximum of five characters.

13. Can I connect the 818V3 to my home network and start playing audio using Roon software?

The 818V3 includes the ID41 which can act as an audio end-point within a Roon system. However, another device is required on the network to run the Roon software. Within Roon terminology, this device is known as the "Core" of the system.

14. Can the 818V3 be controlled using RS232?

Yes. The full command set is available on Meridian TechNote TN049.

15. How can I check whether the 818V3 is responding correctly to RS232 commands?

The Meridian program "Control Window" can be used to check whether the 818V3 is receiving and transmitting data over RS232. This program runs on a PC and acts as a pre-configured terminal to check communications to and from the 818V3. The program can be downloaded from the section "Firmware, Utilities and Automation Interface" on the Meridian website.

16. Why doesn't the "Emphasis" indicator light show up when I play an emphasised track via Roon or Sooloos?

Emphasis is a feature of SPDIF rather than file formats such as FLAC. The presence or otherwise of Emphasis is not actually flagged in a ripped file so there is no mechanism for the product to detect it. In order to guarantee correct playback quality of Emphasized discs the De-Emphasis process should be carried out before or during the process of importing the file into Sooloos or Roon. The indicator for Emphasis on the 818 relates to the playback of digital audio from a SPDIF source.

17. When I feed the digital output of the 818V3 to my non-Meridian DAC, the audio produced sounds like white noise. Why is this, and can I get normal sound from my DAC?

The 818V3 supports "MHR" (also known as True Link) on its digital outputs. This provides improved performance compared to standard SPDIF digital audio. However, MHR is a proprietary interface available only on Meridian products. When MHR is decoded by a non-Meridian product, it results in the noise described in the question. MHR can be toggled on and off by holding down the fast-forward (►►) key under

the front flap of the product for a few seconds while the unit is in Standby. With MHR deactivated, normal audio should be produced from the DAC.

18. Is there a way of setting the digital outputs to send out audio in industry-standard SPDIF form rather than in Meridian's lower-jitter form of MHR (also known as True Link) without resorting to the PC set-up program?

Yes. MHR can be toggled on and off by holding down the fast-forward (►►) key under the front flap of the product for a few seconds while the unit is in Standby. With MHR deactivated, standard audio will be produced from the digital outputs.

19. What sort of plugs are needed for the trigger outputs on the 818V3?

The trigger outputs accept plugs of the "DC Power Connector" type, with 2.1mm diameter and a barrel length of 9.5mm. Plugs are supplied in the accessory pack with the product and can be sourced on the open market from various mainstream suppliers.

20. Do all three trigger outputs behave in the same way?

Almost, but Trigger 3 has one important difference in its functionality.

When an 800 series controller product (861, 818, Ultra DAC, 800) is put into Standby, Trigger 1 and Trigger 2 will always switch to "Low" (0 Volts). This is ideal for switching off power amps when not required and so on. However, Trigger 3 remains as it is when the unit is put into Standby. If it's currently "Low", it stays low. If it's set to "High", it stays high. Why does it do that? Here's an example of a use-case where it is a benefit...

Imagine a 800 series system which triggers the room lights on and off according to which source is in use. When "Blu-Ray" is selected, a trigger goes low to switch off the lights. When the movie ends, the user switches over to "Roon" to listen to music. The trigger goes high and the lights come back on. When they have finished listening, the user switches the system to Standby. What happens? If Trigger 1 or Trigger 2 is controlling the lights, it goes low and the lights go off. The user is sitting in the dark until they stumble over to the wall switch or whatever! Having Trigger 3 staying in its current state gives the option to have the lights remain on.