



THE OUTER LIMITS

*Join us as we explore true audio exotica—the uncommon, uncompromising
Goldmund Mimesis 30 Universal Preamplifier.*

As I manipulate the controls of the new audio processor I am testing, I am disappointed. Not in the audio processor, mind you, but in the Girard-Perregaux Vintage 1945 watch on my wrist. Normally, the craftsmanship of the electronics I review pales in comparison with the G-P's. But as I spin the knobs on the Goldmund Mimesis 30, and run my fingers over its precision-machined chassis, my watch seems unrefined in comparison. I expected excellence from the Mimesis 30, because like the watch it is built in Switzerland. When a mere audio product delivers more tactile pleasure than a Swiss watch, though, you know you are in the presence of something special.

As a technological statement, the Mimesis 30 is even more impressive. While other electronics manufacturers refer to such products as surround-sound processors, Goldmund insists that the Mimesis 30 be referred to as a universal preampli-

Because the Mimesis 30 has so few controls and no setup menus, your dealer uses a Windows application and a computer connection to configure the processor.

fier. Why? Mostly because it outputs 16 channels of audio, in comparison with the eight (or technically 7.1) channels most other surround-sound processors deliver.

What does one do with the extra eight channels? Whatever one wants. Through the computer software that accompanies the Mimesis 30, your installer can assign each of the 16 channels to any of the 7.1 channels of a surround-sound system. He or she can also go beyond 7.1—adding, for example, an extra surround speaker in your ceiling with a blend of 50 percent left rear surround and 50 percent right rear surround, and the level adjusted to 20 percent of the left and right surround speakers' levels.

However, extending beyond 7.1 channels is perhaps the least imaginative use of the Mimesis 30's capabilities. Your installer can use the extra channels to route stereo sound to as many as four other rooms. You can manipulate the sound in these zones through any RS-232-compatible control system, such as a Crestron or AMX, or one of Goldmund's own touchscreens.

The latest software for the Mimesis 30 expands

BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH PHOTOGRAPHY BY CORDERO STUDIOS

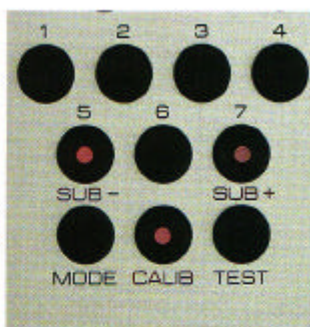
its capabilities even further, allowing your installer to add up to four filters for every channel. The filters can cut treble or bass, or filter out specific frequency bands. Their most obvious use is to correct room resonances, such as the booming bass you hear in square rooms. The filters can also work with the Mimesis 30's 16-channel capability to create complex crossovers—for example, feeding low bass to a large subwoofer, higher bass frequencies to a smaller woofer, and mid-range and treble to a conventional speaker.

Because the Mimesis 30 embodies Goldmund's uncompromising approach to engineering, it is more complicated to install than

an ordinary surround-sound processor. It offers only digital outputs, so it must be used with separate digital-to-analog converters, or with speakers or amplifiers with digital inputs (Goldmund makes many such speakers and amps). Goldmund prefers to keep video circuitry separate from audio, so the Mimesis 30 does not include video capabilities; it requires the use of a video processor or monitor that can perform video switching. Also, its front panel and remote control offer only the most basic of functions and are not intuitive to use; adding a touchscreen controller is almost required.

With so many standard features of surround-sound processors absent, what is left? Just fantastic sound. The Mimesis routes audio through coaxial digital audio cables, so there is no degradation of the signal as it travels to its destination. In my listening room, we use several of Goldmund's Digin digital-to-analog converters; each is positioned near one of my Genelec powered speakers or a Velodyne DD-15 subwoofer. Having a separate

The Mimesis 30's aluminum remote is simple and elegant. It controls source selection, volume, and the levels of the various surround-sound channels. Soft red lights appear when you activate the calibration mode.



D/A converter for each pair of channels generally sounds better than building all the D/As into a surround-sound processor.

The result is probably the cleanest sound I have heard from a surround-sound processor—or, excuse me, universal preamplifier. As I play my favorite stereo CDs, I expect to be impressed by the dimensionality and depth of the sound—and I am. But what surprises me is the tonality of the sound, which is almost indescribable because it is so void of flaws and idiosyncrasies.

Most remarkable is the midrange. The midrange is the part of the audio band that we are the most critical of because it's the range in which the human voice lies. We hear human voices every day, so we all know what they sound like. The engineers at Goldmund certainly do. Almost every

audio component offers its own take on the human voice—some soften it, some make it sound harsh, some exaggerate the resonance from the chest, some bloat it, etc. The Mimesis 30 commits none of these errors. Voices sound completely natural ... as do the treble and bass. The treble is crystal-clear, without a trace of harshness. The bass sounds perfectly precise, with no notes emphasized or diminished.

The sound is ... what the sound is. I wish I was able to describe it better, but there is so little to describe. Which is just as it should be.

Goldmund's Mimesis 30 demands a devoted owner and installer—but for the true audio perfectionist, it delivers capabilities and sound quality that will be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain elsewhere. **RE**

DESCRIPTION

Digital universal preamplifier. Combines surround-sound processing, multiroom audio routing, and preamp functions. Requires the use of separate digital-to-analog converters or speakers/amplifiers with digital inputs

SURROUND-SOUND MODES

Dolby Digital EX, DTS ES-Discrete, Dolby Pro Logic II

CONNECTIONS

Six-channel RCA-type analog audio input for SACD/DVD-Audio (first pair doubles as stereo audio input), 2 RCA-type analog stereo audio inputs, 4 coaxial digital audio inputs, 2 Toslink optical digital audio inputs (linked to coax inputs 1 and 3), AES/EBU balanced digital audio input (linked to coax input 2), 8 coaxial digital audio outputs, coaxial digital audio outputs for tape and direct, RS-232 connector for touchscreen remote control system, binding post for ground connection

DIMENSIONS

3.6 x 17.6 x 15.2 inches (hwd)

PRICE/CONTACT

PRICE: Mimesis 30 \$19,900; Digin converter \$1,650

CONTACT: 818.719.6559, goldmund.com

The Mimesis 30's back panel incorporates RCA jacks of excellent quality. Because it has no video switching capability, there are far fewer jacks than on most surround-sound processors.

