

Antelope Zen Go Synergy Core €416

Jon Musgrave checks out this new affordable USB powered and DSP equipped audio interface

CONTACT WHO: Antelope Audio **WEB:** antelopeaudio.com **KEY FEATURES** I/O: 2 x mic/line/instrument, 1/4" TRS and RCA mirrored, 2 x 1/4" jacks, 1 x S/PDIF **Mic preamp max gain:** 65dB **A/D Converter Dynamic Range:** 120dB **D/A Converter Dynamic Range:** 127dB (A-weighted) **DIMENSIONS:** 198 x 117 x 57.5mm **WEIGHT:** 0.7kg



Zen Go is the latest, most affordable interface from Antelope's Synergy Core range and again includes internal DSP to power their minimal latency onboard processing and support mic modelling for their Verge and Edge modelling mics. The 4-in, 8-out USB-powered design has great specs including discrete mic preamps with up to 65dB gain, high quality 64-bit AFC clocking, 24-bit operation at up to 192kHz, two separate headphone outputs, mirrored main outputs on both TRS and RCA connectors, and minimum latency monitoring via the Control Panel app.

The stylish compact desktop design has a robust metal case and the top panel includes a large rotary encoder and three buttons (Gain, HP/MON, Antelope) alongside an eye-catching multipart display for monitoring input and output levels, sample rate and clock source. On the back you'll find two XLR/TRS combo inputs for mic/line/instrument connection, the monitor outputs and S/PDIF in/out. On the front edge are the two headphone outs.

USB connectivity is via type C connector and though I powered it from both USB 2.0 and USB 3.0 connections, USB 2.0 doesn't really provide enough power. However, there's also a second type-C connector so you can power Zen Go from a hub or charger, widening your hardware options to include iPads and iPhones. Although at the moment there's no iOS control app for Zen Go.

Zen Go, like other Zen devices, is a tech-driven interface and the streamlined top panel controls can access multiple functions including input gain, 48V phantom, output level, headphone levels and output muting. Though not as immediate as dedicated controls, this worked well. Still, for more extensive controls you'll need the Control Panel app. This includes mixer panels for setting up not only headphone cues but also general routing including internal loopback. It's also where you can add Synergy Core processing via the Synergy Core FX Rack (AFX) available on the first four faders either as four mono or two linked stereo streams with up to eight inserts on each.

Of course, this is one of the Zen Go's USPs and it ships with 37



Audiophile front end and impressive onboard processing

effects, including mic preamps, EQs, compressors, guitar amps and cabinets, and their Auraverb reverb. You can also purchase further Synergy Core effects as required, tantalisingly listed in the plugin list. Among the included 37 are plenty of analogue emulations based on trusty favourites such as FET-A76 (Urei) and VEQ-1A (Pultec) and some more esoteric examples such as BA-31 preamp (RCA). There are also some rather good guitar amp and cabinet effects.

Unlike Antelope's Thunderbolt interfaces, Zen Go can't use their AFXDAW plugin, which lets you access Synergy Core plugins from your DAW. However, if your DAW supports hardware inserts you can actually use the flexible routing in the Control Panel mixer to route signals via the plugins.

Overall Zen Go Synergy Core is a fantastic portable interface that provides not only an audiophile front end but also impressive onboard processing – and all at a very competitive price. **FM**

FM VERDICT

8.5

Zen Go brings Antelope's impressive Synergy Core system to a much wider audience in a more affordable and impressively

THE PROS & CONS



Compact slick desktop design

Well conceived monitoring and routing app

Bundled Synergy Core effects



The Control Panel app is required to access many of the features