
Sony WM-D6C

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The fantastic 'Super-D6C', by Doctor Walkman

I want to share a very interesting experience I've had with 'Dottore Walkman', probably the best walkman technician in the world, if not the best one. I knew about him in Stereo2Go forums more than a year ago and I contacted him for doing some adjustments on my best units: SONY D6C and DD9.

The SONY D6C is widely known for being the most precise and high performance walkman ever made. Its playing and -specially- recording quality is simply outstanding, and not similar to other walkmans, but to HIFI equipment. In fact, some magazines state after reviewing it that its performance is much better than many HIFI decks.

I wanted to send him my D6C for doing a complete test, maintenance and calibration for my tapes (Maxell XLII-S), so I wanted to do good quality recordings. I knew that I can buy a top-quality tape deck (like a Nakamichi) but I prefer to have a small unit like a D6C, knowing that it offers a quality that rivals with the best decks.

My SONY D6C, one year ago.

Dottore told me that very high quality can be obtained from the D6C by adjusting bias for calibrating for my tapes. I had to decide whether I choose to calibrate to metal or chrome tapes. I choosed chrome ones, because Metal are so rare to find and expensive, and chrome ones are more widely available, and the prices are better. Dr Walkman told me that the quality achieved with a good chrome tape can be very close to metal tapes, so I prefer to keep with chrome.

I read about the quality of the Maxell XLII-S and Dr. Walkman told that there were another tapes that have similar quality and bias, like the TDK SA or the SONY UX-Pro. Finally we decided that he will calibrate it to the best one: the SONY UX-Pro, knowing that it will work perfectly also on the other ones.

Firstly, a Maxell XL-II Very nice. Utter clarity at the top end. Nil perceptible wow and flutter... Then, a basic tape a TDK D90

Maxell XLII-S, avery good chrome tape.

But a bit later he told me he can do a much better job: he can perform a special upgrade and build a 'super D6C' by selecting parts that he can pick up from other D6C units, do change some components for better ones and calibrate for my tapes. He explained that I have to buy another unit with a serial number carefully selected so he can extract some parts. And I did. In fact, I bought two units more, so I finally sent him my three D6C, so he could pick up the best parts of everyone to build a super-D6C.

When I bought the first one and tested it I was surprised about how good it sounds for me, much better than any other unit I have in my collection. In fact, I was really impressed by its quality, much better than any other I ever listened to (I have to confess that I never had a top-quality tape deck at home, except my ONKYO hifi system which has Dolby B-C-HX Pro, but lacks manual record level or bias. When I was younger I use to record tapes with my boombox, my loved AIWA CSD-SR6, which has a good head, feather-touch buttons, CD and Dolby B. But the quality of the recordings were not so good, and I already knew since many years...

My loved AIWA CSD-SR6, that accompanied me for so many years. It sounds great, but the recording quality was not so good.

so it's time to discover what a good tape inside and excellent deck can offer.

What did Dr. Walkman perform?

So what he did was:

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to disassemble all three units

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to select the best parts of all them unit until the traction of the tape has reached a perfect stability and a greater tensile force than the specific (Sony 25-43 g/cm), and excellent wow and flutter, etc..

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to select the best electronic components both for mechanical performance (speed, wow and flutter), for both recording and playback, specifically for my tapes (Output Levels, Bias, dolby output)

With all that he built a top-level unit, indeed, but he needed to take a lot of time for that (because of some personal reasons). This artisan of the walkmans has really done and impressive work. I can not recommend enough him for repairing walkmans. He is a truly precise artisan of walkmans!

Here there are my three D6C units being disassembled.

Finally, after a long wait, I received on march 2012 my 'Super D6C' and started to record and do listening tests. Be in

mind that I didn't listened to an excellent recording or a top-level tape deck before, so I don't know which level of quality and fidelity can be achieved with tape.

But I have some excellent headphones (Sennheiser HD280 Pro reference studio, Grado SR325i, SONY CD3000) and I normally listen to (high quality digital) music in my computer, using an excellent sound card, the Creative X-Fi Elite Pro, (which features an 'advanced multi-bit Delta-sigma DAC' and has about 120dB of dynamic range and -110dB total distortion+noise, so it's a very high quality circuitry). Thanks to it I have to say that I know how does it sound a high quality music, but I don't know how a good tape compares to it.

My Grado SR325 headphones, that I bought following recommendations by Dr. Walkman.

And I'm not disappointed at all; they sound like being in heaven. However, this cans are very sensitive and every small imperfection in the sound is clearly perceived. So they are better suited for digital sound.

But my 'Super-D6C' can handle them pretty well. I don't believe there so many decks that can do this actually.

The first thing I noticed was that the speed stability (wow&flutter) is absolutely excellent, and there are inexistent small duration problems while playing tapes. I mean: normally when I played tapes on good walkmans, I always found that randomly appear small (very short duration) problems that seems like it there were a small dust on the tape or on the head when recording (I know that this is probably not true, but it's my way to explain it). Probably has more related to non uniform tape transport or small irregularities on the capstan and roller.

With the super D6C they are simply inexistent. But they were present in it before I sent the unit to Dottore Walkman.

My latest jewel: the 'super D6C' by Doctor Walkman.

I asked him to send me his signature on a paper and I managed to scan it and stamp in the image, with his permission ;-)

The second thing I noticed is the excellent response to the whole spectrum. For doing that, I recorded (without dolby at all) in a clean Maxell XLII-S 'Come rain or come shine' from 'riding with the king' album, by Eric Clapton and BB King, which has a powerful bass, good voice and precise guitars. I was simply blowed out when I listened to it. the most impressive thing was the clear and powerful bass and the open sound (remember that the D6C hasn't any eq adjust or preset). It's clearly way ahead the response that it had before I sent him. I'm pretty sure that sounds clearly ahead than an iPod, in terms of equalization. The sound is open, very well balanced, stable and clean.

Another thing I noticed and surprised me a lot is that if you play with Dolby C a record that wasn't recorded with it, the sound is horrible: strongly cut highs and very poor performance.

But (here comes the magic) if I record WITH Dolby C ON and then play with it ON, the result is simply AWESOME! The sound clarity is almost identical (or even better) than playing without dolby and the highs aren't cut at all. More on, the background noise is really low (I measured 14dB of difference).

Then I played this record made with Dolby C on other units of my collection, and I realized that on the AIWA PX410 (which has Dolby C too and is known for being a high quality C circuitry) the result was awesome too. I switched ON the DSL to position 1 and I was blowed out!

But I was really surprised to discover that playing this tape on my AIWA PX505 (which has a 'standard' dolby C and normally cut the highs) does NOT cut them as I normally expected. So this superb D6C really has a Dolby C circuitry that outperforms all that I ever tested and allows to play a record on small players equipped with dolby C, even those that normally cuts the highs a lot.

With the help of Doctor Walkman and my computer equipment I could start to do some measurements and learn a lot about the real quality difference between recording and playing on many walkmans. This also can show me which quality can be achieved with a good tape and deck, so I can have a good reference point to compare with many units.

My intention is to use it to make reference recordings, so I can test the playing and recording quality with my walkmans

and compare with this extraordinary unit. This will help me incorporate better measures of the sound quality of them when revieweing a model.

Sergi-recorderWalkmans06 Febrero 2016

La verdad es que no lo buscaba ya que los precios de este walkman no son aptos para mi bolsillo, pero quiso Dios que en mis viajes diarios por las webs de compra-venta me topara con el señor Saldaña que tenía uno de estos a la venta por 50 euros. Al principio estuve reticente porque esas diferencias de precio suelen traducirse en una gran desilusión y monumental cabreo, pero algo en ese señor me decía que era una persona honesta.

Desde el principio me dijo que el aparato estaba impecable técnicamente y estéticamente. Que estaba nuevo. Y Vive Dios que es verdad. También me advirtió que ese precio era debido a que el aparato tenía rota la ruedecita del "Rec level" situada en uno de los laterales, pero que aun así era practicable. Su intención era, si no se vendía, intentar conseguir la pieza y cambiarla para poder vender el aparato a precio de mercado.

No le discutí el precio y después de varias semanas intentando determinar la mejor manera de envío y que coincidiera con el ingreso de mi nómina optamos en tirar de Nacex esta semana y en 24 horas estaba en casa.

El precio final puesto en casa ha sido de unos 60-62 euros. Y esto es lo que me he encontrado dentro del paquete.

Efectivamente el grado de conservación del aparato y su funda es extraordinario.

Aquí podemos ver que falta el mando del "Rec level" y que ha podido ser por ese golpe que se aprecia en la esquina inferior izquierda.

¡Cómo me gusta eso del "Made in Japan"!

A diferencia de lo que estamos acostumbrados la parte superior donde están los mandos de reproducción es bastante es más bien escasa.

En el "culo" también tenemos cositas que ver aunque una está claro de que se trata de la entrada para una fuente de alimentación externa.

Pero vamos a ver bien el walkman "profesional" de Sony.

A mi que me gustan los trastos contundentes me ha encantado. Es uno de los más grandes de los que tengo.

Al principio no entendí porque está todo rotulado lo que parece ser al revés, pero estos japoneses están en todo.

No se salva de tener su lado bobo.

Esta es la razón por la que está rotulado al revés. Su posición lógica es como un aparato de base, de ahí esas “patas” en la parte trasera.

La etiqueta de la licencia del sistema Dolby.

Este lado si que tiene sustancia. Desde que lo vi pensé que esa flecha roja la pusieron para señalar la ruedecita que le falta.

Tenemos aquí todos los mandos que necesitamos para la grabación profesional de cintas con el walkman.

En la parte superior encontramos los mandos de reproducción.

Y en la inferior (o trasera si tomamos la base como el lado que tiene las “patas”) tenemos el “pitch control” y las líneas de entrada i salida. El jack de la fuente de alimentación ya se lo vimos antes con la funda puesta.

Su plaquita de identificación de modelo.

Para ponerle o cambiarle las pilas tenemos que abrir la tapa del cassette y encontraremos una pestañita que debemos deslizar hacia el control de volumen y podremos retirar el porta pilas.

Una vez retirado el porta pilas encontraremos el número de serie de nuestro aparato.

Si le damos la vuelta al porta pilas encontraremos la ubicación de dos de las 4 pilas AA que necesita el aparato para funcionar.

Si deslizamos el porta pilas hacia la parte contraria de donde encontramos el punto naranja de referencia tendremos acceso a la ubicación de las otras dos pilas.

Dos arriba y otras dos abajo.

Volvemos a montar el porta pilas y lo insertamos en el aparato. Ya está listo para funcionar.

El walkman rezuma calidad por todos los sitios donde miremos. No es de extrañar el astronómico precio que tiene en el mercado de segunda mano por muy obsoleto que nos parezca que está.

Ahora toca estar al loro a ver si sale uno para desguace y poder sustituir esa ruedecita que le falta. Tiempo al tiempo.

Sony Walkman Testlauf bei youtube ? hier klicken ?

