



# theBit Opus #1

**P**ortable electronic devices are most assuredly the darlings of our current age. They've freed us from the confines of offices and homes by allowing us to take nearly all the processing power we've become accustomed to having from a dedicated system on the road.

One of my favourites is my portable music player. As you would assume, it's an iPod and when I bought it, I youthfully presumed that nothing could ever replace it.

In the last few years, however, a handful of companies have been changing my mind on that. A Korea-based outfit called "theBit" is the most recent to grab my attention.

theBit (The Best Internet Technology) recently launched its challenger to the iPod throne: the Opus #1. I say that loosely because the fact is that the Opus #1 is not a true challenger.

You see, while the iPod is most certainly a great portable music player, it's also a video player, camera and games engine, which means it does a lot of things well... but none of them brilliantly. The Opus #1 is different – it chooses to do one thing and one thing brilliantly: play music!

The size and shape of the Opus #1 are reminiscent of today's smartphones. The player is constructed using a combination of tempered glass on the front and back with a tough ABS plastic shell to keep the weight down as much as it can.

The slightly angular and bevelled design has a rather serious feel about it, which is reinforced by the weight for an all-round clean and professional aesthetic. Given that it is purely a music player, the whole package leaves you with a sense of confidence and rather high expectations.

The layout of the Opus #1 is both familiar and well organised. It uses a mixture of touch-screen and actual buttons for navigation and operation.

On the right side you'll find playback control buttons, which have a good quality feel and are easy on the fingers. On the left side are similarly sized volume

controls and, at the top, there is a simple on/off button.

Everything else is handled by the touch screen, while the OS is a stripped-down version of Android, which adds to the already familiar character of the unit.

Truthfully, I barely needed the user manual to figure everything out. The micro USB slot on the bottom is also an obvious sum easily worked out, assuming you've used a smart device in the last few years. From here you can both charge the device and transfer your music files.

The 32 GB on-board memory is only average, but this is supplemented by two MicroSD slots on the side, allowing for a total possible 400 GB of storage, which is more than plenty. The headphone jack also doubles as an optical output, giving you the option of plugging it into a larger system. Finally there is a balanced out port for headphones that support that connection, completing the Opus #1's promise of high-definition options.

The sound signature varies in character based on what kind of headphones you use. Overall though, I found the performance both powerful and fairly neutral.

There is no noticeable bias anywhere in the sound spectrum – instead, the delivery is clear and detailed with the emphasis on precision. Typically, this kind of sonic approach can be unforgiving of bad compressions and older recordings, but remarkably the Opus #1 offers up an almost reference-quality sound without pointing out all of these flaws.

Bass notes and hits are controlled without any feeling of over-extension. Midrange is next to flawless with oodles of detail, making vocal-heavy tracks rich and full of nuance. Treble is marvellously accurate and seems ever so slightly rolled off for a sound that's smooth and without severity.

It really is a sweet-sounding high-fidelity device that brings out all the best in lossless music files without sounding like it's judging them too harshly.

As I said earlier, this is not replacement for your iPod. It's a step up! Well...for audiophiles at least.

Justin Beachcroft-Shaw



## VITAL STATS

Display.....	4-inch TFT touch display
CPU.....	ARM Cortex-A9 1.4GHz, quad-core
Supported audio formats ...	WAV, FLAC, WMA, MP3, OGG, APE (Normal, high, fast)
Sample rate .....	32 kHz – 192 kHz (8/16/24-bit)
Outputs.....	3,5 mm stereo minijack, 3,5 mm optical digital, 3,5 mm balanced, four-pole support
Inputs.....	USB Micro-B (charging and data transfer)
Storage (internal) .....	16/32 GB
Storage (external).....	MicroSD: 2x 128 GB max
Dimensions (WxHxD)	72 x 112 x 18 mm
Weight.....	185 g

### Verdict

Powerful, capable, user-friendly. The Opus #1 sets a high standard in the portable music player arena.

Price ..... R11 990

Supplied by ..... C-Plan Audio

Website ..... [www.cplanaudio.co.za](http://www.cplanaudio.co.za)

OUR RATING: 89/100

