

Cyrus X200 Signature Mono Amplifiers

03. July 2013 · 1 comment · Categories: Amplifiers, Hifi Reviews · Tags: amplifiers hi fi, hifi reviews



Following the launch of the Anniversary Series System, Cyrus Audio has launched the Signature Series, an exclusive range of fine-tuned hifi components.

Initially comprising a four-strong range, the components share many of the performance-enhancing modifications seen in the limited-edition Anniversary Series System and have been fine-tuned by Technical Director, Peter Bartlett.



The Signature Series will represent Cyrus's flagship product line up and comprises upgraded versions of the X Series components: [DAC X Signature \(DAC\)](#); DAC XP Signature (DAC/preamp) and the Mono X 200 and X300 Signature (mono power amps). Further models are expected to join the range later in the year. The Signature Series include performance-enhancing modifications and the very latest-generation components that Cyrus say bring improvements in detail and resolution.

Each component comes in the standard Cyrus bead-blasted cast chassis, in either black or quartz finish, and feature the 'Signature' badge on the fascia.

The Mono X amplifiers offer 200 watts via their 'zero-feedback' design. The Signature Series updates include a replacement input buffer op-amp with a higher slew rate and higher gain bandwidth.

Packaged in the '30 Years' branded cartons, the monos arrived on a beautiful sunny day down here in the South West of England (long may it last!).

Sporting their traditional styling and representing visually all the appeal and size of the previous X range with the added extra of a Signature badge to the top right corner of the fascia I began to carefully unpack them, remarking to myself 'I still don't know how these guys manage to cram all those electronics in such a small enclosure'.

On the front of the units is a simple power button and input selector.

To the rear are connections for RCA unbalanced inputs, RCA outputs to chain multiple

amp/driver combinations and XLR balanced connections for a fully balanced setup (utilised by the complimenting range of Signature components). There are two sets of BFA speaker terminal outputs (which don't have the ability to be used with spade type connectors) and a single IEC power socket.

Setup in my system, they were fed from my Fidelity Audio modded Squeezebox Touch with modified Teddy Pardo PSU linked to a PS Audio Reference Dac/Pre using a Nordost Valhalla Digital Coaxial Cable. From the PS I ran a set of Audioquest Sky RCA Interconnects. My Audioquest K2 speaker cables plugged were into the monos and delivered the signal to a pair of Ayon Seagull Ceramic loudspeakers.

The Sound

'Blanket' by Urban Species was sublime, Imogen Heaps vocals belted out – smooth and controlled from a deep dark soundstage, with every part of the deep heavy bass well managed, with all the extension of the recording and with fantastic texture. The pauses and quieter baseless passages on the track were completely silent and Imogens voice had a wonderful airiness about it. Gentle background piano notes were clear and precise and reinforced the layered soundstage admirably.

Jennifer Warnes 'Somewhere' really emphasised how well the Signatures could deal with vocals. Once again vocals were projected from a deep layered silent background, which had good height and with excellent central focus, accompanied with great width to the soundstage.

The Civil Wars 'I've got this friend' sounded beautiful! There's so much accuracy in what the X200's do, the treble had fantastic sparkle and vocals were just gorgeous. The track is in a higher key and there was absolutely no forwardness at all in the presentation of the midrange which was liquid and full. Bass notes were fluid and fully extended.

Pauses and silences really add emotion to the music and the monos portrayed these contrasts by the bucket load.

Annie Lennox 'Why' can really grate on me, the track can be quite bright and edgy sounding. The Signatures really handled the song with smoothness and precision, especially the chorus which displayed controlled detail and refinement. The centre focus with these amps is so solid and pronounced, yet never detracts from soundstage width or masks small dynamics and inner details.

Damien Rice's 'Older Chests' played through the X200 monos was lovely and natural, there was fabulous texture and tone to Damien's voice and his female companions added a gorgeous a compliment to the guitars timbre.

I've never really got on with any solid state amps I have tried with my ceramic drivered Ayon loudspeakers. They have either been unable to display a solid smooth vocal or have just ringed the hell out of the tweeters and my ears.

The Cyrus X200 Signature monos have a great refinement to a wide resolution and a lovely smoothness to the midrange. I like my vocals projected and a little lively rather than recessed and too warm sounding and the Signatures really gave me a presentation which I was happy to hear with my ceramics. They are fantastically musical and cohesive.



My valve based Emille integrated (Emilly), as gorgeous as she is, cannot develop the absolute lowest note extension and if there was ever a compromise, or if I wanted to be picky about her sexy tones, it would be this fact. The Cyrus Signatures allowed the drivers to breath and bellow the notes right down to their lowest capability. Maybe once I reluctantly return the Cyrus I may have to get a little subwoofer to drop that last note.

Eric Bibb has a wonderful almost soul/gospel voice on ‘A Ship called love’ and with the X200s he could be heard opening and closing his lips. It’s an easy listening track and doesn’t display great dynamics or flurries of instruments, but I was impressed with the small details that were easily recognisable.

A similar time when I’ve heard the lips and mouth of a singer open and close is on the ‘Soul Seasons’ album by Joss Stone. The first track ‘The Chokin’ Kind’, first verse really just emphasises her vocal which here was beautifully conveyed. This track also has very fine micro details and I generally use it to test new equipment and see if it can reproduce them- which is not always the case. The X200 monos managed to pick out these details impressively well, proving to my mind the quality of the internal components to be very high.

Listening to a range of tracks from Flo rida and David Guetta the Signature X200 Monos really showed off their capability to produce a three dimensional image and show fantastic control throughout the upper frequencies when coupled with punchy, deep, hard hitting bass beats. They drove my Ayons with such a wallop I felt like I was being punched in the chest! Speed and accuracy was spot on, I noticed no blurring of the soundstage. Dynamics were explosive and effortless.

Poison and ‘Every Rose Has It’s Thorn’ has a great natural quality to the guitar on one of the (not so great recordings) I have and busier passages were well handled, leaving the vocals to stay the star. I found similar appeal with Joe Cockers ‘With A Little Help From My Friends’ which isn’t the best of recordings either. It did show a little bit of brightness with the background singers but was still very listenable, with the monos character making them both really quite enjoyable and musical.

‘Duo For Violin & Cello’ – Allegro Seriosa showed wonderful dynamic flurries and expression with naturalness and spatial awareness. The top end of the violin was smooth yet sharp and there was clear definition between use of the bow and a plucked string. Cello had body and grace whilst decay was airy and dissipating.

‘The Red Pony’ Happy Ending was excitingly vibrant, excellently detailed and had great dynamic slam within a wide spread well depicted soundstage. The track was conveyed with all its drama and delicacy and really painted an excellent picture of the performance showing how well the Cyrus’ can handle a busy orchestral performance.

Overall

In conclusion I have to stress that these amps are extremely musical, with a hugely addictive personality! They retain Cyrus’ overall house sound and character, with a more refined, precise and controlled signature to their character. They offer a wonderful insight into the music and present it in a slightly smoother way, with the ability to retain all the speed of an associated performance. With the added detail and fantastic dynamics the X200 monos really are a force to be reckoned with.

The Signature X Monos can be likened to a petite Olympic gymnast, graceful yet with explosive agility.

Soundstaging is wide and deep, not to mention impressively high, which is no mean feat. They convey great ambiance to the sound and project vocals in a clear and natural manner.

There are clearly extended realms of resolution in the music and extension at both upper and lower frequencies which make these amps sound just so balanced and involving.

The amps are extremely powerful and will have no problems driving speakers with difficult loads and still leaving room for dynamic slam.

The identical approach to styling in the Signature series against other Cyrus products is key for anyone who has components from a previous range. Upgrade-ability can be done in stages and will never detract from the systems overall look.

The monos are definitely a step up in performance and sound quality and definitely worthy of being branded with the ‘Signature’ badge.

Price is £3900 for the pair.

Author – Dan

[Review of the Cyrus Audio DAC X Signature](#)

[Want to read more hifi reviews?](#)



Related posts:

1. [Cyrus Signature Series Launched](#) Following the successful launch of the Anniversary Series System, British hi-fi manufacturer, Cyrus Audio, has launched the Signature Series, an exclusive range of

components that...

2. [Cyrus To Unveil Anniversary Series](#) To celebrate 30 years of audio innovation, UK manufacturer Cyrus has announced details of their Anniversary Series – “an exclusive system of fine-tuned flagship products”....
3. [Cyrus Anniversary – Update and a Sneaky Peak](#) Earlier today Hifi Pig ran a breaking news item about the new Cyrus 30th Anniversary Edition system and we have now managed to snoofle out...
4. [Cyrus CD8x](#) ...
5. [Behind the Brands with Peter Bartlett of Cyrus Audio](#) ‘You must go back to the live music and know how it sounds, the touch of a cymbal, the draw on a violin string.’ There...

1 Comment

HifiPig

July 8, 2013 at 2:33 pm

As a follow up to the two recent reviews of the X200 Monos and XDAC from Cyrus’ flagship product line up, I wanted to do a small joint system review in order to give some perspective on system synergy etc.

The system composed of a modded Squeezebox Touch – XDAC – X200 Monos – Ayon Seagull Ceramic Speakers and my regular Audioquest interconnects and Speaker Cables.

The Sound

First up was some Daft Punk and immediately the sound was thicker and more lucid, retaining all the musicality of the previous system configurations and reviews. However there was more of a dominant bass note, not over shadowing more bore – impressively robust and full. Mids had more bottom end slam and texture with added warmth, solid and crisp with gained authority.

Next up I played ‘Mikado’ Passenger 10. Holy shhhikes! The tightness of the bass was incredible, it slammed with such elasticity and bouncyness which was completely unexpected after Daft Punk – seemed fuller than normal yet still controlled. Soundstage was enormous and the speakers became a non-entity. I had a friend pop over quickly to drop something off and quickly sat him in front of the system, his jaw dropped then turned into a smile and he said, ‘so you’ve got surround sound again then have you? Where’s the speakers?’. We were completely enveloped in out of phase, behind your head dynamics, tones and nuances. Centre focus was absolutely rigid and three dimensional and lower bass extensions simply washed through the room. Fantastic and very unexpected indeed!

Well solid state, some well recorded and mixed tunes of the dancey type and I was serious pleased. Yet still a valve man at heart and not for comparison purposes but intrigued none the less, I’ve gotta put on some great vocals now and see how beautiful the midrange can be.

So.....ummm.....ahh! Lets really test the control of a serious female vocalist. Rachelle Ferrell, the only woman on the planet who can hit a range of four octaves. From the album "Intentionally" the last track 'Can I Explain' is an absolute must listen for any vocal enthusiast. It really shows off Rachelles dynamic range, I always turn the system volume up for this track but sometimes too much as the column of her voice changes so dramatically thought the song that sometimes I think I'm gunna blow a driver or two! Wow! I love the liquid vocals on my valve amp and have spent many hours and £'s getting the valves, just right. The Signature setup sounded absolutely fantastic and effortless, I can't say as gorgeously liquid as the valves, but the presence and dynamics were golden. There was just so much ease to the overall presentation – bass notes were solid and the piano and cymbals just rang throughout the soundstage. I noticed no forwardness in the upper mids, just a well projected controlled stellar performance.

Micheal Bubles 'Cry Me A River' is hugely dynamic with the accompanying big band as is 'All Of Me'. His vocals were rich and textured and were never over shadowed by the huge dynamic slam and flurries of the instruments. Soundstage was enveloping and engaging.

For some delicacy and to one of my favourites... as you guys have probably learned by now... Norah Jones. I listened to a range (23 or so) of tracks from many of her albums. One thing I've noticed with Norah is even though her vocals project well, on a good system her voice is heard always from a deeper background than most recording artists', there's always plenty of depth to the centre of the soundstage and with the Signatures it was just as it should be.

Once again, as with the Daft Punk at the beginning of this review, there was more perception of lower mid warmth and texture, bags of rhythm and deep extended notes. Many of the tracks display instances such as gentle rubbing of strings, finger nail tapping on a guitars chamber and other small inner details. The insightful-ness of the Cyrus' reproduced these well also.

Overall

The system produces a wide, high, spacious sound with a black background that displays huge dynamics control and resolution effortlessly. The synergy between front end X Signature and amplifier is seamless and just so damn musical, it just makes you want to turn up the wick and think 'right, what shall I play next?'

Am I becoming a Cyrus fanboy, well I've always appreciated them for their tonal balance and musicality but this Signature range is an absolute triumph and I take my hat off to Peter and the team.