



Cyrus 6a £699

Classic Cyrus good looks allied to a wide range of facilities make this a promising package...

DETAILS

- ORIGIN:**
UK
- SIZE:**
73x215x360mm
- WEIGHT:**
4kg
- FEATURES:**
- twin toroidal transformers
 - upgradeable with DAC and power amp options
- DISTRIBUTOR:**
Cyrus
- TELEPHONE:**
01480 410900
- WEBSITE:**
cyrusaudio.co.uk

Here's another amplifier that's evolved from an early eighties antecedent.

The original Mission Cyrus amplifiers introduced the winning formula of fine sound in a small box, and the mid-nineties Cyrus 3 refined the package with the lovely alloy casework you see here. Now several generations further on, the 6a is a swish package indeed.

Let's be honest here, it is defined by its size. That means that inside, the amp is more crammed than a tube to the Olympic park on Men's 100m final day. Cooling is done courtesy of the side-mounted heatsinks, and even the Cyrus' modest 40W get them very hot. At normal listening levels this amp runs warm, but at party volumes you'll need to keep it well ventilated.

The upsides are of course its lovely looks, spouse-friendliness and the fact that it makes your listening room look rather larger than if you had the Yamaha sitting in the same place! Certainly there's no trade-off in terms of facilities, with six user-configurable analogue inputs and bi-wirable speaker outlets; those enclosed speaker sockets are a pain though; most users will have to re-terminate their speaker cables with Cyrus-specific plugs. As per company tradition, the amp can be returned to base for various DAC and power amp upgrades.

Sound quality

This was an interesting performer, obviously a capable one but which didn't resoundingly impress at first. Whereas the NAD started to win friends and influence people the moment it was switched on, the Cyrus proved a more subtle pleasure.

Starting with the Vivaldi piece, and the panelists all felt it an enjoyable listen. The music sauntered along at a fair gait, with lots happening and the general sense that it had a beginning, a middle and an end. Tonal quality was very good, being decently strong in the bass – albeit rather lighter than the NAD and Yamaha, for example – and nicely smooth in the midband without sounding recessed. There was a slight emphasis on the upper midband, if we're being really picky, but generally it proved far more even than most here.

Moving to Sade's *Smooth Operator*, and Ms Adu's vocals sounded delicate and sensitive, whereas it had been anaemic with many others here. The backing band flowed along very nicely, without serving up anything remarkable. "Lots of detail, and a nice listen", opined one panelist. There was a slight feeling of the high treble being curtailed somewhat – the 6a didn't have the incision in the recorded acoustic of some. But still most thought it had a very natural tonal balance.

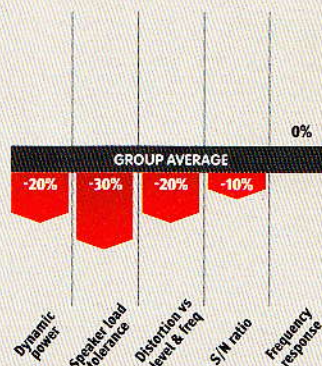
Indeed, it made the rather hard VCMG piece very listenable, capturing the urgency of the music without assaulting the listener. It didn't rock the house as the NAD had, but still the Cyrus really got into the musical swing of things. It proved detailed on the Jim White track, signposting the rain sound effect very well and serving up a contemplative mood to his lyrics, whereas others made him sound processed. With just a bit more delicacy than the NAD and less bombast, it proved a real star.

ON TEST

While the Cyrus 'brick' form factor is instantly recognisable, its amplifiers have limited heatsinking for sustained, high power use. The rear of the 6A, for example, exceeds 55 degrees C after just 15mins at 10W/8ohm, so adequate ventilation is a must. Duly considered, the 6A is capable of 2x50W/8ohm and 2x68W/4ohm with sufficient dynamic headroom to accommodate peaks of 89W, 162W and 270W into 8, 4 and 2ohm loads (output is limited to 255W/1ohm). Clearly, this is a very capable '40W' amp.

The 6A has also been engineered with a hugely extended bass response that's essentially flat to just 1Hz. High treble is subtly tailored at -0.2dB/20kHz and while the A-wtd S/N ratio of 88.3dB (re. 0dBW) may not be in the Cambridge/Yamaha league, it's still wide enough. Distortion is very low at ~0.0005% through bass and midrange, increasing to 0.03% at 20kHz. **PM**

RESULTS AT A GLANCE



Hifi Choice

OUR VERDICT

- SOUND QUALITY**
★★★★★
- VALUE FOR MONEY**
★★★★★
- BUILD QUALITY**
★★★★★
- FEATURES**
★★★★★
- LIKE:** Very friendly, accessible, natural sound; upgrade path; styling and packaging
- DISLIKE:** Can run hot; lack of absolute power
- WE SAY:** A very fine buying proposition, with great sonics, lovely looks and flexibility, too

OVERALL

