



Cyrus Lyric 09

All-In-One Systems

Deon Schoeman

How things have changed! A tall stack of boxy audio gear isn't necessarily cool anymore. Instead, sleekly styled, deftly designed single-box systems are starting to steal the stereo show — or, at the very least, making a strong sonic and musical case for these do-it-all.

The Cyrus Lyric 09 is an excellent case in point. The British marque enjoys a reputation for stylish, function-driven industrial design, but even so, the radical Lyric 09 will have taken its supporters by surprise — pleasantly so, I'd suspect.

There is something extra-terrestrial about the Lyric 09's smart but brooding presence. Crafted metal meets smooth, illuminated glass, with only soft-touch controls in evidence. CD playback is via an illuminated slot, and the blue-and-white display is not only dimmable, but also features a proximity display for auto-activation as you approach.

The whole thing looks and feels sexy, together with that ingot-solid robustness that has always been a Cyrus hallmark. The rear panel is more conventional, with loads of connectivity options, although analogue fans may feel that a single stereo RCA input set isn't enough.

The upside is wide compatibility across the digital and wireless spectrum, including aptX-supported Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, Ethernet, SPDIF coaxial and optical, and USB. On-board facilities include CD playback, Internet radio via integrated Tuneln, and a conventional FM tuner.

Set-up was quick and hassle free. Although fully Wi-Fi compliant, I linked the

Lyric to my home network via Ethernet, and it instantly saw my NAS server and the Naim server software running it.

USB hard drives and my iPod Classic were as easily linked up, while the Bluetooth pairing process with my iPhone 4S was seamless, too. Even coupling my MacBook Pro to the USB Type B port was rapidly accomplished.

The Lyric comes with a slim system remote, but the Cadence app was a more intuitive (and prettier) way to control the Cyrus.

Sonically, the Lyric rocks! For starters, there's plenty of muscle — enough, I'd suggest, to drive even more fastidious loudspeakers, and to fill large spaces with plenty of musically measured, authoritatively delivered sound. The Vivid Audio V1.5s in my listening room were very content, indeed.

Bernard Haitink and the London Symphony Orchestra's spirited reading of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* was rich in emotion and expansive in scale, but also delivered with pace and precision. The string sections showed real substance and timbre, supported by a controlled but unrestricted bottom end, while the trebles were open and revealing, steering a perfect course between sweetness and bite.

The luscious swing and pace of Robbie Williams' *Swings Both Ways* was further proof of the Lyric's talent for scale and occasion, with pin-point imaging and close focus allowing a perfectly presented, all-embracing soundstage filled to the brim with musical, believable sound.

The Lyric's sonic trends were consistently accessible and musically credible across all sources, but the sheer convenience of running uncompressed WAV files off a huge NAS-based library meant I rarely reverted to the CD transport during the review period. Bluetooth-transferred music from

my iPhone was surprisingly pleasing and clear, too.

Is this the way of the future? Much depends on the end-user's requirements, but the Lyric 09 seamlessly navigates the turbulent seas of digital formats, NAS storage-based streaming, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and more, while delivering real music with verve and authority. Brilliant!

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VITAL STATS

Power output2x 175 watts (8 ohms)
Signal-to-noise ratio -70 dB (1 watt, 8 ohms)
Connectivity	..... Ethernet, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
Analogue inputs	..... 1x line-level stereo RCA
Analogue outputs	..... 1x 3.5 mm headphone jack (front panel), 1x line-level stereo RCA
Digital inputs	..... 2x coaxial SPDIF, 2x Toslink optical
USB inputs	..... 2x USB Type A, 1x USB Type B
Integrated sources	..... FM/AM tuner, Internet radio, CD transport
Formats supported	..... WAV, FLAC, ALAC, AAC, MP3, WMA and AIFF
Dimensions (WxDxH)	..... 420 x 320 x 105 mm
Weight	..... 9 kg
Price	..... R59 999

Verdict
One-box convenience, multi-input versatility — and loads of muscle, too. Lifestyle appeal meets serious audio talent!

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OUR RATING: 87 / 100

