

PRE/POWER AMPLIFIERS

Cyrus DAC XP/X Power



£2200/£1000

SO, PRE/POWER AMPLIFICATION with a twist, and it's a pretty strange one: you see, there isn't actually a preamplifier – well not a conventional one, anyway – in this combination. And the power amp isn't really a – no, only kidding!

What we have as the control centre of this package is the Cyrus DAC XP, a digital-to-analogue converter, otherwise identical to the company's DAC X, with a preamp built-in. The addition of a Cyrus XPower amp means all you need to add is a CD player with a digital out, or a CD transport, plus some speakers, and you're in business. Well, it's certainly unusual...

First impressions aren't positive, in that apart from a stack of digital inputs

AT A GLANCE...

	POWER OUTPUT 70W
	PHONOSTAGE NO
	LINE LEVEL INPUTS 2
	HEADPHONES NO

↑ FOR

A terrific sound that brims with speed, dynamics and agility

↓ AGAINST

DACXP has limited analogue inputs and no tape loops

⚡ VERDICT

Cyrus has taken an odd approach that works fabulously. Only the lack of analogue inputs disappoints

– six in total – there are just two line-level inputs and no tape loops. If Cyrus intends the DAC XP to replace an existing preamp these shortcomings are serious. Neither is the X Power's 70w per channel output in any great danger of scaring the competition.

“There isn't a preamplifier – well not a conventional one, anyway – in this combo”

It all seems a bit bleak, doesn't it? Fortunately for Cyrus this pairing sounds fabulous for the money. The traditional Cyrus character is still there: the presentation is a touch lean and emphasises the leading edge of notes over harmonic richness.

As a conventional analogue combination, fed in the usual way from the line-outs of a CD player, this duo uncovers a vast amount of detail and presents it as a musically convincing whole. Dynamics are breathtaking, while speed and agility are superb.

Use the Cyrus DAC XP for the number-crunching and things

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION



get even better. When it comes to insight and resolution we're sure this DAC will improve the sound of most sub-£3000 players. The addition of a PSX-R outboard power supply (£400) – both components accept one – takes performance to an even higher level, adding to dynamics, transparency and low-frequency authority.

Provided the limited input/output capability is acceptable, we can't think of a good reason not to give this combination an audition.

