

REVIEW
CYRUS ONE HD INTEGRATED AMP
AND DAC

HIGHLY
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RECOMMENDED



The Cyrus OneHD is an integrated amp and DAC with a whole host of connectivity for what looks to be a very reasonable £999. Alan McIntosh takes a listen.

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CYRUS ONE HD INTEGRATED AMP AND DAC



Having never been introduced to Cyrus before, when the OneHD integrated amplifier arrived I was looking forward to a test with completely fresh ears. Add to that the Cyrus OneHD adds even further inputs and versatility (including the new AptX HD Bluetooth technology deriving its moniker) to the previously reviewed Cyrus One - all for under a grand - I was very, very much looking forward to seeing if it could deliver.

CONSTRUCTION

Picture the bridge of the Death Star in the film Empire Strikes Back. Picture Darth and his crew, in their 70's version of high concept sci-fi - all gloss black and red, dotted around with blinking console lights and you have my first impressions of the OneHD - and I loved it! Arriving very well packaged in a double skin box, packed out well and with a simple "get started" leaflet and CD of full colour info and instructions, it feels Cyrus see quality as important. Unveiling the well-known "shoebox" form factored black amplifier your immediately struck by 3 things - Firstly its diminutive well machined metal body (a dense 5.6kg), its positively bristling input panel to the rear and to put the icing on the aesthetic cake a gloss black, with only 2 oversized "frog eye" rotary wheel controls (subtle power button under one of these) with just ONEHD in small white and red writing and a headphone socket - as I sat it out my wife entered the room and for the first time I heard the words "that's a sexy amp!" - off to a good start then - on the design front at least!

It may be a niggle for some that not included, is a remote - that however is covered via the very slick and intuitive ONE Remote app available for both iOS and Android.

On power-up, you get a rather snazzy light display (LEDs are dimmable) round the dials and a brief hint of a "fizz" through the speakers which Cyrus assure is normal for the OneHD and is such a low volume that it's nothing to be concerned about.

Turning first to that forest of connections at the back we have a plate packed with every conceivable input with bi-wire capable outputs either side offered up via sturdy binding posts and a pre-out for feeding a power amplifier if desired. The only thing lacking here I think is better labelling of sources.

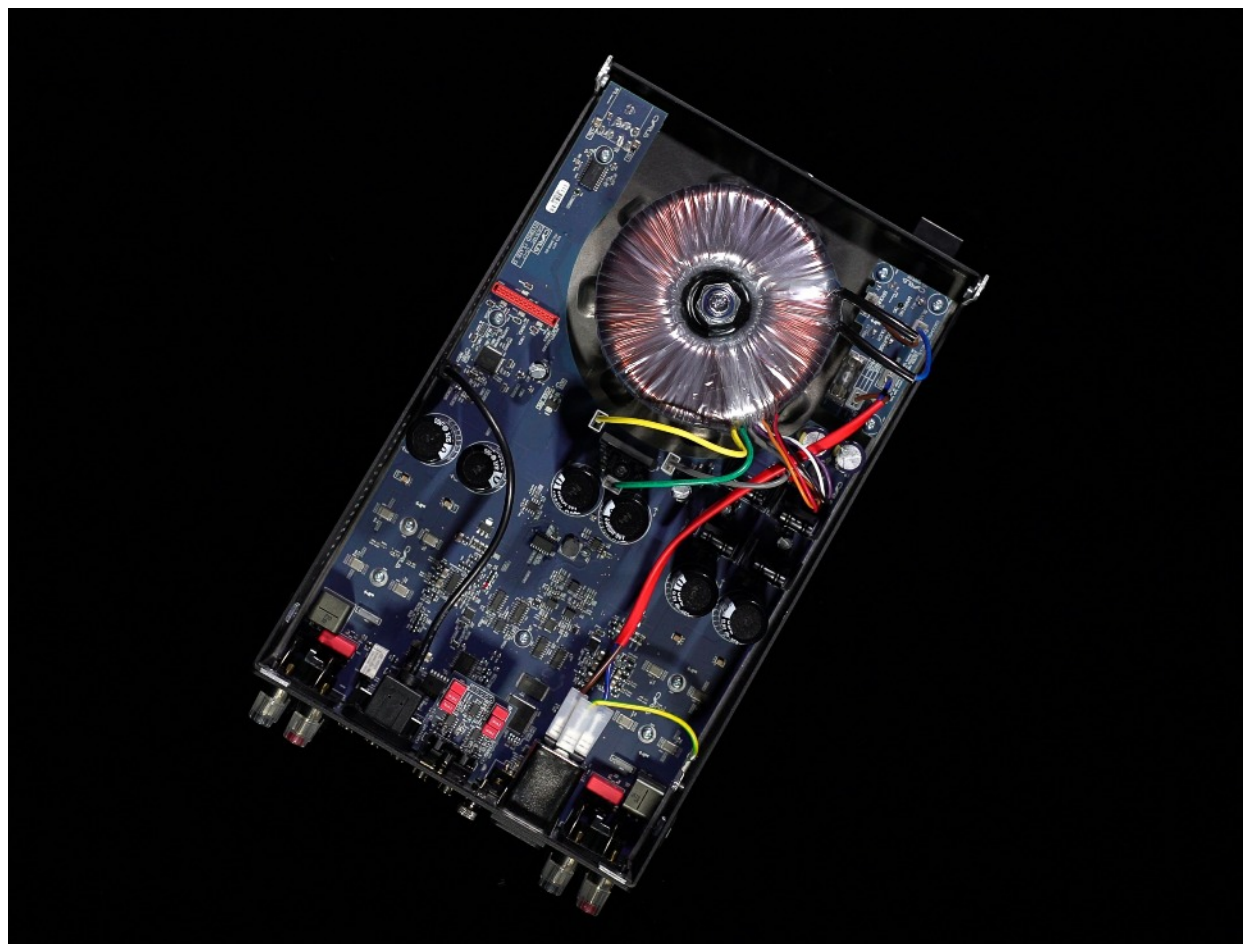
Included is a passive RIAA MM phono stage which Cyrus has now separated from the main circuit, aiming to lower the noise floor and making it very turntable ready. Streaming options are via Digital Coaxial/SPDIF input, USB 2.0 for laptop streaming and Toslink, all being fed into an ESS 32bit DAC helping to earn the Cyrus that "high definition" tag. The Asynchronous USB handles up to 32/192 and DSD 64 and 128. The Coax and Toslink options both managing 24/192. Three line-level inputs include an AV integration option for running a simple 2 channel home cinema rig or use the OneHD as a preamp to drive a bigger system. Add to all of this the latest aptX HD Bluetooth which the makers (Qualcomm) suggest is "better than CD quality" if fed a good source (Tidal HiFi for example) and you can start to see the possibilities this integrated amp could offer. In fact, we may need to invent a new class - HyperIntegrated! (I'm trademarking that).

Cyrus 4th Gen Class D in nature, with a large toroidal linear power supply, it outputs at 100w to 6ohms. Distortion is listed at 0.1%, but we have to consider that in the context of the mighty power combined with the versatility it offers at a very reasonable price point. The output is already regulated via Cyrus' Speaker Impedance Detection (SID) system. The Headphone stage when activated has all power driven to it creating a Class AB delivery with the power to drive even power-hungry headphones.

SOUND QUALITY

Before I begin I think it's worthwhile discussing who I believe the target user for the ONEHD is. It's not going to be the heart of a pure audiophile setup, instead I think this amplifier will appeal massively to someone who needs a small footprint and extended versatility,

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perhaps listens to vinyl or CD on occasion, but often as not streams their music or wants to run an AV or games console – basically a do it all, and do it well enough to enjoy and not have to faff with different components – rather than “do some” at a higher delivery point – Cyrus has plenty in their other range for this. In that vein, I’ve tested with components I feel would be a good balance.

Vinyl first– using the integrated MM stage I set up some usual reference tracks with my reference Fyne 500 standmounts, which despite their size are both revealing and have good tight bass and so give me a good feel for any source or amp. Using an Ortofon 2M Red the sound achieved isn’t perhaps as refined as that achievable using a dedicated Class A amp and MC capable phono and cart, but it sure is musical and easy to listen to and given the versatility on hand this little guy really does impress me, especially with some volume behind it. Onto the Arcam CDS27 CD/SACD (pretty uncoloured signature) and again I’m finding I’m just enjoying the music, almost forgetting to “listen” for sound which I guess is what’s it’s all about – strong staging and drive. The hint of warmth in the bass, perhaps wanting a smidge more resolution and brightness in the mids compared to more pricey Class A amps, so you may want to choose to pair with a little care if you prefer a clinical sound. Staging is open and dynamic - the 100W driving the Fynes with ease.

Streaming from my Pioneer N50 via the Coax input and same story, fun to listen to, no obvious detractors and already I start to realise the flexibility of one box, controlled with one remote is very much growing on me! Laptop via the USB2.0 delivered similar results. I didn’t have DSD files to test but at FLAC quality it performs well.

Next, I move the OneHD to my new LG HDR TV and take the Toslink route to set up a simple 2.0 set up. I also switched to Dali Zensor 3’s. Musicality again is pleasurable, warming a little more (the Dali’s have that signature) but I can also hear a slight loss of refinement in mids and highs, staging a little further back, to be expected that this price point and via Toslink. Feeding it with the Arcam and the effect is consistent, suggesting you might want to audition with different speakers for your preferred pairing.

Lastly Bluetooth via that aptX HD technology. It should be noted you need an aptX HD compatible handset to take full advantage of this (I had to borrow one - Android has well embraced it but Apple not so...). I have to say colour me impressed! “Better than CD” I can’t confirm or deny, but it’s not lacking in detail or musicality. In fact, I’ve found myself spending more time on streaming via Bluetooth on this amp than ever before – again a nod to simply how extensively versatile it is.

CONCLUSION

If you have a budget of a grand and are seeking a true all in one amp that offers the latest quality Bluetooth is turntable ready and with good power output, a very respectable headphone amp and decent DAC to stream from laptop or phone and seek a small footprint or want to use your AV or games console and don’t need the latest word in high resolution and refinement, then you simply need to audition the Cyrus ONEHD. I kind of fell in love with it for its simplicity and can see it spurring a lot of other manufacturers to consider this level of integration as a new generation of listeners return to vinyl and CD as well as streaming. I may just find a spot for this and keep it!

AT A GLANCE

Build Quality: Designed well, solid unit, high quality materials and strong aesthetics – if a little busy at the back

Sound Quality: Fun! That’s overall my impression. It’s not going to beat some of the better quality and purely integrated amps where you seek resolution and refinements. The Cyrus has some warmth overall but its power drives speakers with ease and listening is a pleasurable experience – and remember the sheer number of inputs that very few, if any can rival means far less components to faff with

Value For Money: At an RRP of just under a grand I think Cyrus has worked wonders here – I’m genuinely feeling sad to see it go, It’s just so easy to set up and listen and jump from one source to the next.

Pros: Sheer versatility, the inclusion of latest aptX Bluetooth, great looks and ease of use as well as good fun musicality, linear power, and great power delivery and high-quality headphone stage

Cons: If I’m being hypercritical labelling of the many inputs could be easier as looking from above its hard to see L+R, the number on the input etc

Price: £999

