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# FIRST TESTS

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**EXCLUSIVE**

## New streaming wonder is a Cyrus, but not as we know it

**Cyrus Lyric 09 | Streaming system | £3000**

**Controversy isn't** a word you'd normally associate with Cyrus. The British company with a penchant for half-width hi-fi separates has stuck with its tried and tested design formula since 1984...

Which is why the first press images of the Lyric 09 came as quite a shock. And, going by some of the reactions on *whathifi.com*, the change in form factor for this new all-in-one system was as controversial as the idea of horsemeat lasagne.

### A modern slant for Cyrus

In the flesh, Cyrus's latest addition does take a little getting used to, especially if you're familiar with the brand. Give it a few days, though, and the Lyric should blend into your surroundings well enough. The minimalist and button-less black front



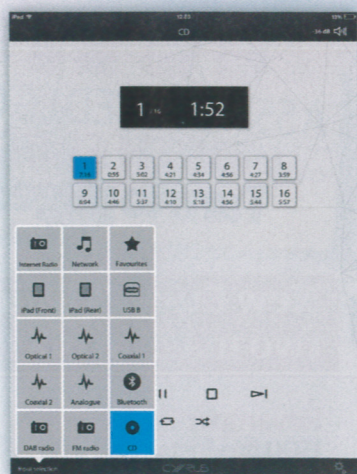
panel helps out here, and an assortment of brightly lit touch-sensitive controls gives the unit a modern slant.

Gathered on the left-hand side you've got the controls for navigating through the menus on the central display, and over on the right are the controls for playback and volume. The Cyrus logo on the left doubles as the power button.

reminiscent of a combine harvester chewing up wheat. We'd prefer a smoother, quieter action.

If the backlight is a tad bright for you, you can turn off the display for the controls - Cyrus has added a proximity sensor so the

### Cyrus Lyric 09: App



**The Cadence app** for iOS devices (Android is on the way) offers a good breadth of control over the system, from switching inputs to accessing tracks stored on a network. It's not the most modern-looking app out there but you shouldn't find it a struggle to use. It isn't without the odd flourish such as a virtual volume knob and the ability to post what you're listening to on Twitter and Facebook.

**The Lyric supports a whole host of file formats and bitrates, including WAV, FLAC and AIFF, as well as 24-bit/192kHz high-res files. There's wi-fi, ethernet and high-quality aptX Bluetooth**

The system responds really quickly and smoothly to manual inputs, but thankfully doesn't act as a major magnet for your fingerprints.

A slot-loading CD mechanism sits below the front panel, highlighted by a welcoming white glow around the opening. The noise as the mechanism draws a CD into its mouth is a little agricultural though - rather

front bursts into life as you approach. It's a useful and clever feature.

There's also a light sensor which checks on the ambient light and supposedly adjusts the brightness of the screen to compensate, although our review sample didn't seem to want to react.

Despite the new aesthetic, it's good to see this hasn't distracted Cyrus from

The screen is one of the best we've seen on a smartphone

Google Nexus 5, p16

The Lyric will play just about anything you care to chuck at it, from CD to high-res



delivering the kind of functionality and features an all-in-one system needs to cover, especially at this price.

### Loads of file formats supported

Two USB Type A sockets (one front and one back) allow you to connect external hard drives, MP3 players and Apple iPhones, iPods and iPads, while the solitary USB Type B input on the rear is your go-to connection for hooking up a computer, so you can stream music files and use the Cryus's built-in DAC.

The Lyric supports a whole host of file formats and bitrates, including WAV, FLAC and AIFF as well as 24-bit/192kHz high-res files should you own any. They are becoming more available by the month.

Streaming over a home network can happen wirelessly (a wi-fi aerial is included in the box) but for stability's sake we'd recommend using a wired connection straight into the Lyric's ethernet socket.

Bluetooth streaming is catered for, including the higher quality aptX codec, available through some of the latest smartphones and tablets.

Finally there's DAB, FM and internet radio to choose from. The internet service is provided through TuneIn which gives you more than 70,000 channels - some good, some terrible - to choose from.

### WHAT IT HAS TO BEAT...



**Naim Uniti 2 | £2795 | ★★★★★**

If you're in the market for a premium sounding hi-fi system but don't have the space for separates, this is the main rival.

## Cyrus Lyric 09: round the back

### 1 Power supply

If you think 170W per channel is underpowered you can always add an additional power amplifier using the Lyric 09's configurable analogue output.

### 2 Wireless aerials

Don't forget to screw in the DAB and wi-fi aerials. They're included in the box.

### 3 Digital inputs

There's no shortage of digital inputs on the Cyrus, with two coaxial, two optical and three USB sockets to choose from.



To control the system you've got two options: the supplied remote or Cyrus's own Cadence app for iOS devices (see panel).

The remote's on the long side, but the smooth, chunky buttons are smartly laid out. Some of the key controls are different shapes, which makes it easier to get your thumb in the right place. There's a motion sensor inside too, which should mean it lights up every time it's moved; ours needed more of a deliberate jolt to bring it to life.

The Lyric 09 unearths a fabulous amount of detail and laps up information from every tune you play, whether it's an uncompressed WAV file from a NAS or a compressed Spotify stream over Bluetooth. Even with the latter, the Cyrus manages to pick out more edges of notes and subtleties than you'd think possible.

Listening to *Time* from the *Inception* soundtrack and the Cyrus hits some serious dynamic highs. The sense of scale as the

#### USE IT WITH

### PMC Twenty 23

These floorstanders sound exciting and beautifully balanced - a good match for the Cyrus system



sound, it certainly seems to help the Cyrus. This system leaves a lasting impression.

We play Haim's *Falling* over Bluetooth, and the Cyrus hits hard in the low frequencies. The drum kicks and bass notes arrive with a serious amount of weight behind them. The Cyrus does trade a touch of agility for this added muscle, but it's a trade many will be willing to make.

#### A bold move that pays off

All-in-one systems can sometimes be a recipe for compromise, but the Lyric 09 has no such trouble. It's a bold move for Cyrus, but one that's paid off handsomely, so to speak...

#### Rating ★★★★★

**FOR** Detailed sound; open presentation; powerful delivery; control app; functionality

**AGAINST** Noisy CD loading mechanism; bass can sound musclebound at times; odd looks

**VERDICT** A really strong sonic performance makes the Lyric 09 a must-audition. It's superb

**On paper, all the ingredients seem to be there. And you soon realise that Cyrus has mixed them to perfection. There's all the musicality, enthusiasm and agility we've come to expect**

Cyrus has a strong line-up of hi-fi separates and the company has hand-picked technologies and components across its whole range to use in the Lyric 09. The streaming engine, for example, comes out of the Award-winning, £2300 Stream XP2 QX, while the CD section uses the same mechanism found in the company's £700 CDt transport.

#### An intoxicating mix of ingredients

On paper, all the ingredients seem to be there. Play a couple of CDs and you soon realise Cyrus has mixed them to perfection. There's all the musicality, enthusiasm, and agility we've come to expect from Cyrus products, and more.

string and wind instruments rise in volume is captivating, as is the sudden shift from a loud crescendo to delicate piano play.

#### An impressive sense of power

Switch to Eminem's *Bad Guy* streamed as a WAV file from our networked storage, and there's a fine sense of precision and timing to the track. All the individual elements of the song hang neatly in a clear, open soundstage.

There's an impressive sense of power and drive on tap too. The Lyric 09's specifications include a new hybrid amplifier design capable of a claimed 170W per channel. And although more power doesn't always equate to a more powerful

## REVIEWER'S NOTES... 5 THINGS ABOUT THE CYRUS LYRIC 09

**1** Debate over the styling of this new Cyrus machine continues. Our photographer has nothing but love for the controversial design - turns out it makes for quite a nice photo...

**2** Cyrus's Cadence app could do with a more polished appearance, perhaps, but the simplicity has the benefit of making it a very effective controller - and that, after all, is what's most important.

**3** We've got used to the looks after day three, and now it's the sound we're adjusting too. In a good way: in our experience, Cyrus components don't usually sound this powerful or weighty.

**4** We put the Cyrus system through its paces with some high-resolution 24-bit/192kHz tunes and we're delighted to report that the Lyric 09 just loves to lavish you with the extra resolution.

**5** We're really impressed by how sympathetically the Lyric 09 handles compressed files streamed over Bluetooth. Our new 2014 Spotify playlist sounds positively superb over aptX.