

# SHAPE-SHIFTER



It's been a while since Cyrus last brought out a phono amp. Now Peter Bartlett, Thinker-in-Chief of the English company, has developed a clever successor with the 'Signature'.

A lot of time has passed since 1998, which was when Cyrus first offered up a separate and serious phono preamp with its aEQ7. But even in Huntingdon, England, where the devices have been developed and produced for more than 30 years, time has not stood still; and the continuing vinyl boom again creates an opportunity to sell unit numbers which make a new development worthwhile.

Merely offering a "me too" product wasn't on the table: if there was going to be something new, it would have to be extraordinary without sacrificing the classic Cyrus design. The result is an amp for vinyl able to fascinate analog-enthusiast dealers as much as it will reward experimenting private customers – the "Signature" offers connections and individual

settings for a total of (count them!) four record players.

Each input has a choice of MM or MC, with gain, impedance and capacitance each adjustable in several steps – and all 'on the fly' and via remote control!



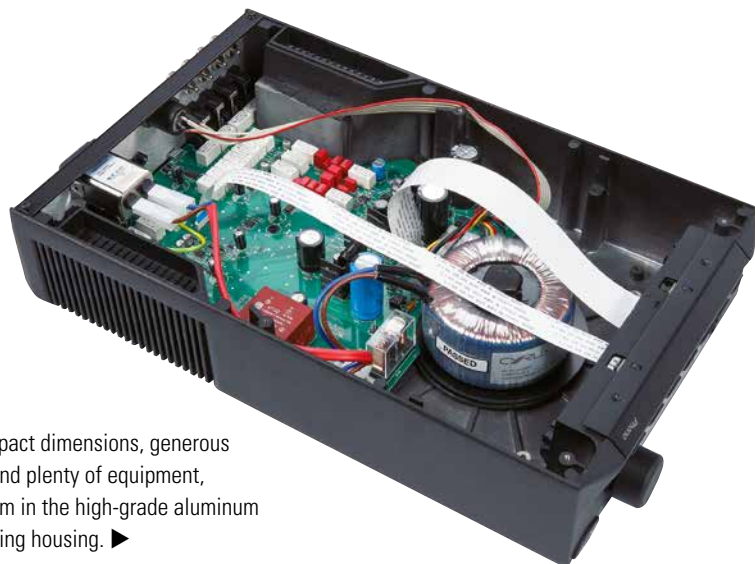
◀ Remote for the Phono Signature lights up when touched

Cyrus speaks of some 160 possible combinations available from the little 8cm-tall unit: that should keep the analogue fanatics busy for a while.

And there's more: single-ended and balanced outputs allow it to connect to any system configuration. But then after all, the declared goal of the Signature is to



▲ Four phono inputs, outputs on RCA and XLR, connection for additional power supply and ground - this baby is quite flexible.



Despite its compact dimensions, generous power supply, and plenty of equipment, there is still room in the high-grade aluminum continuous casting housing. ►

stroll in the neighbors' yards - i.e. to convince owners of other electronic brands to such an extent as to make a purchase a foregone conclusion.

And Cyrus brings everything to the table for this purpose: in order to circumvent ground loops there is a ground-lift switch and if you want to move up later on you can also buy an additional PSX-R power supply.

### Thinking their way to the top

Technically, Bartlett and his crew have paid attention to keep signal paths as short as possible, and included a bunch of other details from the developer's treasure box. Special relays right at the start of the signal input keep noise away from the extremely weak signals of the pickups, while the power supply is as far as possible from the input, its toroidal transformer produced by Cyrus specially for this purpose. If the optional external power supply is connected, the built-in transformer only drives the display and the relays.

The Signature has other bonuses: a built-in level meter makes it possible to adjust the input level precisely in order not to risk dynamic losses, while a low-cut filter, here called "warp", which cuts off frequencies below 15 Hertz.

### Cyrus house sound

Using the Signature is fun, and you can 'get your head around it' without recourse to the manual - well, maybe with the exception of the level display, without which you could definitely live. In order to figure out its sound character and qualities precisely, we selected the

finest equipment: the Transrotor Rondino equipped with Figaro MC pickup on an SME 3500 arm, pre/power amp combo by Accustic Arts, and Octave's great V80 power amp, as well as top cables by Inakustik, Chord, and Audioquest.

Connected with 100 and sometimes 150 Ohm, the phono preamp shone with a taut, precise, and wonderfully transparent bass range: Robert Lucas's interpretation of "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl" was gripping, outstanding in bass and broad over the rest of the range, without letting any doubt arise about the position of the musicians, while dynamically, we had to go to a top caliber rival in the form of Brinkmann's Edison reference phono amp to surpass the true qualities of the Cyrus.

It reproduced guitar music, such as that on Opus 3's "Duodecima", with corporeal presence and verve. Details were integrated into the music and always felt like a natural part of the performance, not artificial additions. The attack and fidelity with which the Signature reproduced the string instruments made us tingle. Even complex guitar sounds, including Ry Cooder's, are proffered to our ears in chiseled detail without ever losing sight of the whole.

Yes. It may only be 'half portion' in terms of its size, but the Cyrus even shone with old heroes like the Rolling Stones on their Sticky Fingers album. When Mick Jagger becomes delirious in "Sister Morphine", and the room atmosphere changes with the emotion of the singer, the Cyrus does not hesitate to let the hearer in on the secret.

No question, the Cyrus Signature offers a lot more than just features!

*Michael Lang*

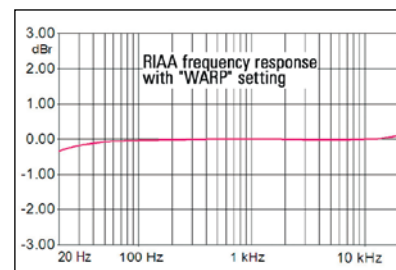
## CYRUS PHONO SIGNATURE



approx. € 1,800  
 Dimensions: 22 x 8 x 42 cm (WxHxD)  
 Warranty: 5 years with registration,  
 Contact: Cyrus Audio  
 Phone.: +44 1480/410900  
 www.cyrusaudio.com

An „I've got it all, I can do it all" phono preamp. Sensational equipment and just as sensational sound, it will definitely find its fans!

### MEASUREMENT RESULTS



<b>Distortion</b> at 5 mV/1 kHz/1 kOhm (MM)	0.015 %
<b>Intermodulation</b> at 0.8 mV/8 kHz/60 Hz	0.04%
<b>Signal-to-noise ratio:</b>	
Phono MM for 5 mV/1 kHz/47 kOhm	83 dB
Phono MC for 0.5 mV/1 kHz/100 Ohm	69 dB
<b>Channel separation</b> at 1 kHz	59 dB
<b>Overload stability</b> MM/MC	112/3.2 mV
<b>Load ratings</b>	practice-oriented
<b>Output impedance</b> at 1 kHz cinch	45 Ohm
<b>Power consumption</b>	
On   Standby   Idle	0/2/8 Watt

**LAB COMMENTS:** We found excellent to very good values in the lab. The frequency response is linear, there's hardly any hiss, distortion is vanishingly small, and the overload stability is aimed at practicality. Low output impedance, low power consumption.

### EQUIPMENT

Four phono inputs, each with separate MM and MC system switch, all settings storable; XLR and RCA phono output; ground terminal; impedance and capacitance as well as gain adjustable in steps; low-cut filter; display, remote control; ground-lift switch; additional power supply available; manual



### STEREO-TEST

SOUND QUALITY **91%**

PRICE/PERFORMANCE

