

Cyrus CD 8x and PSX-R

Cyrus CD 8x CD Player, \$3295. PSX-R power supply, \$1295.

December 2005

UK hi-fi company Cyrus has a reputation for producing quality gear at a reasonable price. Cyrus equipment is in a league above some of the "budget" items reviewed in *AudioEnz* but is well below the price of true "high-end" equipment. But it still claims to have much of the top end sound.

Gilding the lily

The CD 8x is a revised version of the original 8. The revisions aim to improve resolution and particularly its stability as a disc transport to go with the matching DAC -X.

Cyrus have also taken this opportunity to upgrade the base plate in the player. The silver/copper alloy outer skin of the base closes off the chassis to protect the sensitive electronics within, to address the increasingly noisy electronic environment that we live in.

Looking good

The "singing shoebox" is one nickname for Cyrus equipment, in reference to their small size and cute dimensions. More than one visitor has remarked on the compactness and tidiness of being able to have two components side by side on the same shelf. We must start then by scoring the Cyrus highly on the domestic acceptance factor.

The other advantage of placing two bits of equipment on one shelf is that there is plenty of room for the upgrade process that Cyrus so easily encourages.

The product is available in an attractive aluminium silver or black finish. I preferred the black as it visually disappears more easily.

Getting to know you

The equipment arrived well packaged and with a very helpful service from Auckland Cyrus retailer Smiths Sound.

In operation, the CD drawer has



a solid feel and the display is clear to read without being obtrusive. I found the remote easy to operate and it will work from almost any angle and over a fair distance. It is good to rely on the remote as the CD player's buttons are directly under the tray, making it difficult to start the player with the tray door open.

An honest player

The other reason for the Cyrus's reputation as a "singing shoebox" is not just its compactness. This is a good all-round musical performer that is tonally very natural, if very slightly on the sweet side of neutral. It is difficult to take offence with this sound as it does not intrude or draw attention artificially to itself.

This is a sound that, without becoming euphonic, will take on almost any kind of music. I particularly appreciated the player's ability to decipher kindly an elderly and demanding Maria Callas recording. The intricate guitar work of Antonio Forcione on *Dedicato* was laid out in a detailed, fast and insightful way that welcomes us deeply into his technique without being coldly analytical.

A similar balance of exposure and musicality was well held with Josh Ritter's *Golden Age of Radio*. This talented young man could be followed musically and fully as he was brought so effectively into the room while still gently exposing his relative innocence as a performer. I used a 1987 new age recording called *Ambience* to evaluate the sense of size that was created of the Australian

outback. This is indeed a CD player that can be both delicate while providing a large picture when needed.

On conventional hi-fi measures, the bassline on Patricia Barber's *Companion* was covered with control, tonal accuracy and depth while still being agile. In the demanding reproduction of string sound with the Jerusalem Quartet playing Haydn, the tone walked the fine line between raw and sugary. The brushwork on Oscar Peterson's *We Get Requests* had a well-resolved and natural air without undue emphasis. The music was all portrayed with an adequate sense of depth and width against a dark background of silence.

But wait – there's more

Adding the PSX-R power supply keeps the overall sound similar. Is the extra expense warranted? You bet. The sound is tightened on all levels, better controlled, more detailed, faster and more powerful.

This is indeed equipment that "punches well above its weight" – particularly with the addition of the PSX-R – and is a capable introduction to high-end sound.

If you can push the finances beyond the worthy budget items reviewed at *AudioEnz*, then the extra cost is well worthwhile. Be warned, however, that Cyrus make the upgrade path all too easy and there is a seductive charm to the sound. The Cyrus CD 8x and PSX-R are a couple of pieces of equipment that are not being returned—*John Groom*

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