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Cyrus Lyric 09 review

Best music system £1500+, Awards 2014. A strong style statement from Cyrus and an even stronger sonic performance makes the Lyric 09 a must-audition. It's a superb system **Tested at £3,000**

Our Rating

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Our Verdict

Best music system £1500+, Awards 2014. A strong style statement from Cyrus and an even stronger sonic performance makes the Lyric 09 a must-audition. It's a superb system

For

Unbelievably detailed sound
Wonderfully open and spacious presentation
Powerful delivery
Decent control app
Packed with useful functionality

Against

Looks may divide opinion
Noisy CD loading mechanism
Bass can sound musclebound at times

Reviewed on **22nd January 2014**

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 this 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](http://www.whathifi.com), the change in form factor for this new all-in-one system was as controversial as the idea of horsemeat lasagne.

MORE: [Awards 2014 - Best systems \(http://www.whathifi.com/awards/2014/systems\)](http://www.whathifi.com/awards/2014/systems)





Cyrus Lyric 09

Build and features

In the metal, Cyrus’s latest addition does take a little getting used to, especially if you’re familiar with the brand. But give it a few days and the Lyric should blend into your surroundings. The minimalist and button-free 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; on the right, controls for playback and volume. The Cyrus logo doubles as the power button. The system responds really quickly and smoothly to your finger presses but thankfully doesn’t act as a major magnet for your fingerprints.



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Cyrus Lyric 09

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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 - we’d prefer a smoother, quieter action. If the backlight’s a tad bright, you can turn off the display for the controls - Cyrus has added a proximity sensor so the front bursts into life as you approach. Clever. There’s also a light sensor that monitors the ambient light and supposedly adjusts the brightness of the screen to compensate – though our review sample seemed reluctant to react to any such changes. Despite the new aesthetic it’s good to see this hasn’t distracted Cyrus from delivering the kind of functionality and features an all-in-one system needs to cover, especially at this price.

Inputs and formats





Cyrus Lyric 09

Two USB Type A sockets (one front and back) allow you to connect external hard drives, MP3 players and Apple iPhones, iPods and iPads.

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 Cyrus'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.



Cyrus Lyric 09

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

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

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

More after the break



System control



Cyrus Lyric 09

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

The remote's on the long side, but the smooth chunky buttons are smartly laid out. Some of the key buttons are different

shapes, which helps 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 – although ours tended to need more of a deliberate jolt to bring it to life.

The Cadence app for iOS devices (an Android version 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 control system out there but you shouldn't find it a struggle to use. And, it isn't without the odd flourish such as a virtual volume knob and the ability to post quickly what you're listening to on Twitter and Facebook.

Sound



Cyrus Lyric 09

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](http://www.whathifi.com/review/cyrus-stream-xp2-qx) (<http://www.whathifi.com/review/cyrus-stream-xp2-qx>), while the CD mechanism uses the same system found in the company's £700 [CD t](http://www.whathifi.com/review/cyrus-cd-xt-se-plus-dac-x-plus-psx-r) (<http://www.whathifi.com/review/cyrus-cd-xt-se-plus-dac-x-plus-psx-r>) transport.

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.

The Lyric 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.



Cyrus Lyric 09

Even with the latter, the Cyrus manages to pick out more edges of notes and subtleties than you'd think possible.

Listening to [Time](http://open.spotify.com/track/6ZFbXIJuk1dVNWvzJzown) (<http://open.spotify.com/track/6ZFbXIJuk1dVNWvzJzown>) from the Inception soundtrack and the Cyrus hits some serious dynamic highs. The sense of scale as the string and wind instruments rise in volume is captivating, as is the sudden shift from a loud crescendo to delicate piano play.

Switch to Eminem's [Bad Guy](http://open.spotify.com/track/47GQYeOE3db9cUYsZiWVb) (<http://open.spotify.com/track/47GQYeOE3db9cUYsZiWVb>) 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 are hang neatly in a clear, open soundstage.



There's an impressive sense of power and drive on tap too. The Lyric's specifications include a new hybrid amp design capable of a claimed 170W per channel.

And, although more power doesn't always equate to a more powerful sound, it certainly seems to help the Cyrus. This system leaves a lasting impression.

Play Haim's [Falling](http://open.spotify.com/track/1vSEwZtoQA0sJxkOgF7MtG) (<http://open.spotify.com/track/1vSEwZtoQA0sJxkOgF7MtG>) 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.

Verdict

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...

MORE: [Streaming system reviews \(.../reviews/home-digital-media-devices/music-serversclients\)](#)

WATCH: [Cyrus Lyric 09 unboxing](http://www.whathifi.com/video/cyrus-lyric-09-unboxing) (<http://www.whathifi.com/video/cyrus-lyric-09-unboxing>)

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