



LONG-TERM TEST

# Lyngdorf MP-50

**TIME ON TEST:** 2 years, 4 months **REVIEWER:** Martin Dew

**SO REVERED IS** Denmark-based Lyngdorf Audio that it has shared a corporate identity with US piano makers Steinway & Sons since 2007. The Steinway Lyngdorf (SL) joint venture was cemented when the musical instrument maestro apparently deemed Lyngdorf's electronics and loudspeakers could reproduce the sound of one of its pianos as indistinguishable from the real thing. Given the unearthly price tags of the Steinway & Sons-branded audio systems, it's reassuring that the 'cheaper' Lyngdorf brand still exists as a separate entity.

Back in February 2017, Lyngdorf Audio (not under the Steinway Lyngdorf initiative) launched its first surround processor, the MP-50. This gun-metal grey box cost £12k and could decode 12 channels of multichannel audio. Lyngdorf included a further four XLR outputs to expand to 16 speaker enclosures if you decided to add, say, more subwoofers or surrounds.

I got my hands on an MP-50 in the summer of 2021, by which time it had actually been replaced by the 12-channel MP-40 (£9,995) and 16-channel flagship MP-60 (£13,995), two processors which now sit alongside a sprinkling of hi-fi separates, power amplifiers and loudspeakers in the company's catalogue. Is it time I replaced it?

**What's good about it?**

To start with, let's deal with the elephant in the room. Lyngdorf's MP-50 came off the production line in 2017 with, not surprisingly for the time, the 2.0a spec for its HDMI inputs and outputs. It can therefore pass HDR10 but not

Dolby Vision, while its video resolution maxes out at 4K/60. But this shouldn't be a deal-breaker if, like me, you hardly ever watch content in your cinema room shot at more than 24 frames per second, and use a projector rather than a flatscreen TV as your display.

Last year Lyngdorf launched an HDMI upgrade path for the MP-50, which involves shipping the unit to Denmark where its board is replaced with one containing the latest HDMI 2.1 chipset. While there, the native processing channel

*'The vast and cohesive canvas the MP-50 paints is smooth and utterly intoxicating every time'*

is also upped to 16 channels, effectively turning the MP-50 into an MP-60. Yet this upgrade costs a cool £4,500.

The MP-50 can process much of the ever-growing alphabet soup of surround and immersive audio formats, handling Dolby Atmos, DTS:X and Auro-3D, but not DTS:X Pro (for that you'll need the MP-60). There are also the usual post-processing suspects in the form of Dolby Surround, DTS Neural:X and AURO-MATIC.

Lyngdorf includes a generous bank of eight HDMI inputs (the MP-40 only has three) and two outputs. An AES/EBU input connector caters for those wishing to integrate the processor with a DCI-compliant pro cinema server. The MP-50 can register on your home network via Ethernet, so it's possible to direct all setup and control functions remotely from a rather excellent app.



A raft of firmware updates over the years has improved the MP-50's streaming chops, keeping it right in line with the MP-40 and MP-60. The most recent 5.0.1 release provided Dolby Atmos Music via Tidal Connect. Another much needed tweak was implemented for the Sub Adjust bass level finder in the setup menu, which could sometimes produce erratic results.

Much of the MP-50's technology is pulled from the Steinway & Sons P100/P200 processor platform, including RoomPerfect (RP) room correction. This works with a supplied calibrated microphone, which you connect via a dedicated XLR input on the unit's rear. RoomPerfect uses test tones to measure each speaker/sub from a primary focal position before telling you to move the mic and measure again; you keep taking measurements from random positions in the room, at various heights and with the mic pointing in different directions, until RoomPerfect has built up its 'room knowledge'. It's an approach that differs from other room correction systems that tend to concentrate on measurements around the listening position. 'Backup' RoomPerfect measured layouts can be saved to a USB stick or SD card.

All the Lyngdorf MP- processors also include a 'voicing' tool, to alter the tonal sound quality for different genres or sources. A number of them come preloaded, such as 'Neutral', 'Music' or 'Action Movie', and there is also a facility to create and store up to 32 of your own.

The MP-50 produces a lush musical soundstage with two-channel sources, be they hi-res or MP3. Listening to it is like taking a warm bath; instrument isolation, imaging and depth of field are pristinely executed. Meanwhile, the sheer weight of the audio exposition on movies, combined with precise effects steering, makes for an utterly immersive home cinema experience. Even approaching



**SPECIFICATIONS**

**DOLBY ATMOS:** Yes **DTS:X:** Yes **IMAX ENHANCED:** No **MULTICHANNEL INPUT:** No **MULTICHANNEL PRE-OUT:** Yes. 160-channel XLR **MULTIROOM:** Yes. Zone 2 audio **AV INPUTS:** 1 x AES/EBU; 3 x coaxial; 4 x optical **HDMI:** 8 x inputs and 2 x outputs **VIDEO UPSCALING:** Yes. To 4K **DIMENSIONS:** 450(w) x 147(d) x 370(h)mm **WEIGHT:** 9kg

**FEATURES:** RoomPerfect room correction; calibrated microphone; 32 x adjustable voicings; USB-B audio input; 3 x USB; SD card slot (backup storage); web interface; remote app (iOS/Android); vTuner internet radio; Spotify Connect; Tidal Connect; UPnP; Apple AirPlay; Roon Ready; HDBaseT output; Ethernet; Auro-3D; Dolby Surround, DTS Neural:X and Auro-Matic processing; RS232, IR in/out and trigger in/out for system integration

reference level, the MP-50's sound is never aggressive or fatiguing. Rather, the vast and cohesive canvas it paints is smooth and utterly intoxicating every time.

**What's not good about it?**

The lack of HDMI 2.1 is hardly a markdown, given the MP-50's age. And, as mentioned, there is an upgrade path. More of an issue is that the processor only has XLR balanced outputs and no RCA connections. This means that if you have antiquated power amplifiers – in my case from Parasound – you must use XLR to RCA connectors, specifically with pin 3 'floating'. Whether you choose to buy such cables off the shelf or perform the snipping of the negative cable inside the jacket yourself, it's a potentially awkward solution. There are also no RCA line-level analogue inputs on the MP-50 either, and its 12-channel native form is arguably limited at this price.

**Should I buy it?**

Little could convince me to part with the MP-50, until I succumb to the desire for more than 12 native channels (my 7.3.6 array features two matrixed middle height speakers). If sound quality for a reference system is paramount, then this processor delivers. Movies and music sound extraordinarily natural, while RoomPerfect proves that bass output can be powerful, and integrated without being invasive. If you're shopping for a high-end processor, this model (or its siblings) have to be auditioned ■

**HCC VERDICT** ★★★★★

**Lyngdorf MP-50**  
→ £9,995 (if you can find one new) → [www.lyngdorf.com](http://www.lyngdorf.com)  
**WE SAY:** The MP-50 might have an outdated HDMI interface and max out at 12 channels, but if audio quality trumps all other considerations, it doesn't get much better than this.

1. The processor is billed as a 'scaled down version of the Model P200 from Steinway Lyngdorf'

2. The MP-50's web-based interface covers all elements of installation, including RoomPerfect tuning

3. Connections include XLR outputs, 8-in/2-out HDMI and coaxial, optical and USB-B digital audio