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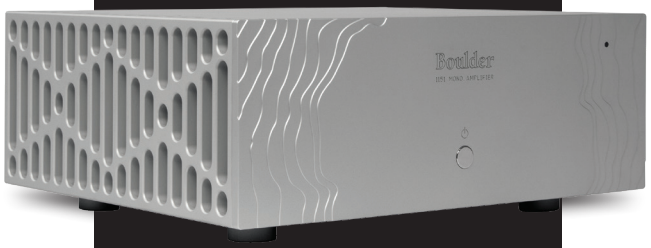

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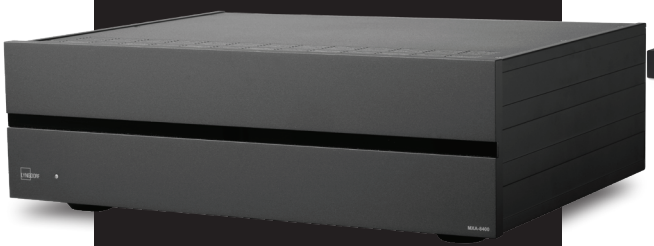

LYNGDORF AUDIO MXA-8400

JUNE 2025

$8.99 US

$10.99 CANADA

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KALMAN RUBINSON

Lyngdorf Audio MXA-8400

8-CHANNEL POWER AMPLIFIER

Woot, woot! I was thrilled when I saw the announcement for this amplifier. I was tempted to order one sight unseen and sound unheard. Why? First off, it employs the newest (as of March 2025) class-D amplification technology. Second, it can accommodate all sorts of audio systems, from an eight-channel surround setup to a megalomaniacal two-channel stereo system. Third, the specs, even in the context of its technology, are impressive. And fourth, I can lift it by myself—eas ily! How can I pass this amplifier up?

Peter Lyngdorf has played a major role in the development of modern class-D amplification, starting at NAD (pulse-code modulation to pulse-width modulation,[1] 1998), continuing with TacT (whose technology became Equibit, the patented PCM-to-PWM conversion algorithm from Texas Instruments) and, most recently, with Purifi and its Eigentakt technology. Considering that history, it is a bit surprising that the MXA-8400 is Lyngdorf Audio's first Purifi-based product. What is *not* surprising is that Lyngdorf's implementation is not just hooking up OEM-sourced modules and a power supply in a box. The MXA-8400 includes some innovative, logical features.

Played at a level no higher than at a good, close seat in a recital hall, I was overwhelmed by the immersive experience.

It is not uncommon for amplifier manufacturers to license the technology and produce the modules themselves for reasons of efficiency and cost. Lyngdorf (meaning, from now on, the company, not the man) goes a step farther with the MXA-8400, producing a single large circuit board for all eight channels. The individual amplifiers on the board *do* resemble familiar Eigentakt modules, but there is "more space around the components, a four-layer PCB with thick copper traces and good grounding, ideal voltage and current supply under all conditions, and select components where it has an advantage." The quote is from an email exchange with Lyngdorf Director of Product Marketing Roland Hoffmann.

Optimizing the power supply is important because the performance of all amplifiers is crucially related to the quality of the power. This applies to Eigentakt amps as well; their output is almost directly voltage-dependent, and the eight channels in the MXA-8400 increase power demands. Lyngdorf employs a single PowerPerfect power supply for all the channels, although channels 1–4 and 5–8 are supplied with opposite polarities for optimal

1 See stereophile.com/news/10077/index.html.

SPECIFICATIONS

Description 8-channel power amplifier based on Purifi Eigentakt class-D technology. Inputs per channel: 1 XLR (balanced). 12V trigger in/out, Auto-Sense on/off. Error indication via front power LED. Input impedance: 10k ohms. Input sensitivity for rated output (High, Low): 2V, 6V. Gain (unbridged): 26.1dB (High), 16.6dB (Low). Gain (bridged): 31.7dB (High), 22.2dB (Low). Frequency response, 20Hz–20kHz, ±0.1dB. Rated output power: 400Wpc into 4 ohms, 200Wpc into 8 ohms (both equivalent to 23dBW). Rated output power (bridged): 800Wpc into 8 ohms (29dBW). THD in low-sensitivity mode: 0.001% at 200W into an 8 ohm load or 340W into a 4 ohm load, 20Hz–20kHz; 0.0006% at 10W into a 4 ohm load, 20Hz–20kHz. THD in high-sensitivity mode: 0.0007% at 10W into 4 ohms, 20Hz–20kHz. Signal/noise ratio (A-weighted, full-rated power, Low Sensitivity mode): 128dB. Damping factor (8 ohm load, 20Hz–1kHz): >1200. Maximum output current: 25Apc. Maximum output voltage: 58V peak-to-peak (unbridged), 116V peak-to-peak (bridged). Power consumption: 29W at idle, <0.5W at standby.
Dimensions 17.7" (450mm) W × 5.7" (145mm) H × 13.7" (348mm) D. Weight: 22lb (10kg).
Finish Matte Black.
Serial number of unit reviewed 0620350. Manufactured in Denmark.
Price $8999. Approximate number of US dealers: 130. Warranty: 2 years.
Manufacturer
S/L Audio A/S, Raevevej 3, 7800 Skive, Denmark.
Email: contact@lyngdorf.com.
Web: steinwaylyngdorf.com.

efficiency.[2] The rated capacity of the power supply is 3.2kW, but more significant is that it supports a maximum output current of 25A for every one of those eight channels and a maximum peak-to-peak output voltage of 58V per channel. The bridged voltage output peaks at 116V!

This, then, is a high-powered (200Wpc into 8 ohms, 400Wpc into 4 ohms) eight-channel amplifier. In addition, the MXA-8400 allows pairs of outputs to be bridged to provide four channels of even higher output (800Wpc into 8 ohms). Most multichannel power amplifiers come with channel counts of five or seven in recognition of traditional 5.1 or 7.1 setups with powered subwoofers. For such applications, adding another channel makes no sense.

On the other hand, adding that extra channel might grab the interest of audiophiles who use electronic crossovers and active amplification. They would appreciate having six channels to biamp three speakers or triamp a stereo pair. The extra channel provides yet another option for multichannel: How about bridging three pairs of outputs for a really powerful Left–Center–Right speaker trio? That was my first thought when I heard about the MXA-8400: I could do that and still have amplification for two height channels, all in one box!

Delivery and unpacking

I knew the weight and dimensions of the MXA-8400 in advance, so I was surprised when the box arrived: It was huge and weighed 42lb! The discrepancy between the amplifier's weight and the shipping weight was due partly to generous and secure packaging. A substantial rack-mount adapter, which was also included, contributed to the gross weight. A second, inner box contained an AC power cord, eight Neutrik speakON NL4 connectors, and an Owner's Manual.

The MXA's chassis, in Matte Black, is sturdy, clean, and modest. It was however stylish—a sweet spot between the many module-based class-D amps that come in formed sheet metal containers and the unnecessarily lavish amps of all classes. A deep horizontal groove in the front panel relieves the amp's aesthetic blankness. At the bottom left is a small Lyngdorf logo and an LED. The LED illuminates when the amp is turned on, blinks slowly in Standby, and blinks rapidly when a fault is detected. A small "MXA-8400" label is at bottom right.

The back panel makes it obvious that this is not just another power amplifier: There are no speaker binding posts! In their place, the MXA-8400 employs Neutrik speakON connectors, which offer several advantages over traditional loudspeaker connections and are being used with ever-greater frequency for critical pro-audio applications. SpeakON electrical connections have extremely low resistance, lock in place securely, and are not susceptible to

2 The polarity difference is of course corrected internally.

MEASUREMENTS

I used my Audio Precision SYS2722 system[1] to measure the Lyngdorf Audio MXA-8400. Although the MXA-8400 is an eight-channel amplifier, I performed a complete set of tests with one channel driven in 2-Channel mode,[2] repeated some of the tests with two channels driven in this mode, then performed more tests with two channels operated in Bridge mono mode.

Because class-D amplifiers emit relatively high levels of ultrasonic noise, I inserted an Audio Precision AUX-0025 passive low-pass filter between the test load and the analyzer. This filter mitigates noise above 80kHz and eliminates noise above 200kHz that would otherwise drive the SYS2722's input circuitry into slew-rate limiting. I used the Audio Precision filter for all the tests other than frequency response. Without the filter, there was 202mV of ultrasonic noise with a center frequency of 540kHz in the amplifier's output. As the Lyngdorf is a class-D design, there was no need to precondition it before the testing. Nevertheless, I operated it for 30 minutes at moderate power into 8 ohms before starting the testing.

The Lyngdorf preserved absolute polarity, the balanced input wired with pin 2 hot, the AES standard. The voltage gain at 1kHz into 8 ohms in 2-Channel mode was very close to the specified figures, at 26.2dB High (2V) setting and 16.8dB Low (6V). In Bridge mode, the gains were, respectively, 31.8dB and 22.4dB. The input impedance was 12.2k ohms at 20Hz and 1kHz, dropping inconsequentially to 11.8k ohms at 20kHz.

The output impedance in 2-Channel mode, including the series resistance of the 6' speakON–4mm plugs cable I used

1 See stereophile.com/content/measurements-maps-precision.

2 Although the MXA-8400 is an eight-channel amplifier, Lyngdorf refers to this mode as 2-Channel, as it applies to the mode switch setting for each pair of channels.

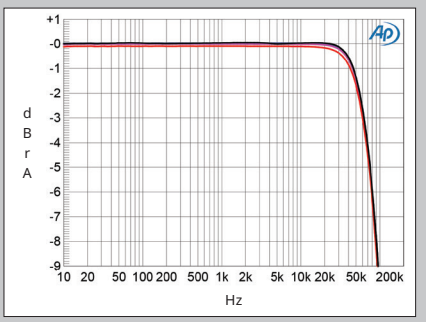


Fig.1 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, 2-Channel mode, frequency response at 2.83V into: simulated loudspeaker load (gray), 8 ohms (blue), 4 ohms (magenta), and 2 ohms (red) (1dB/vertical div.).

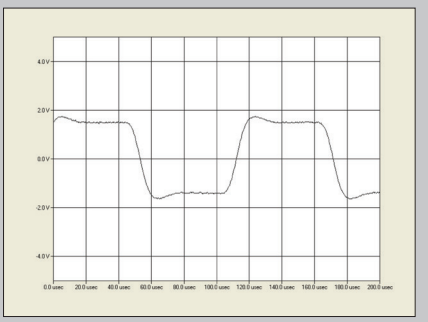
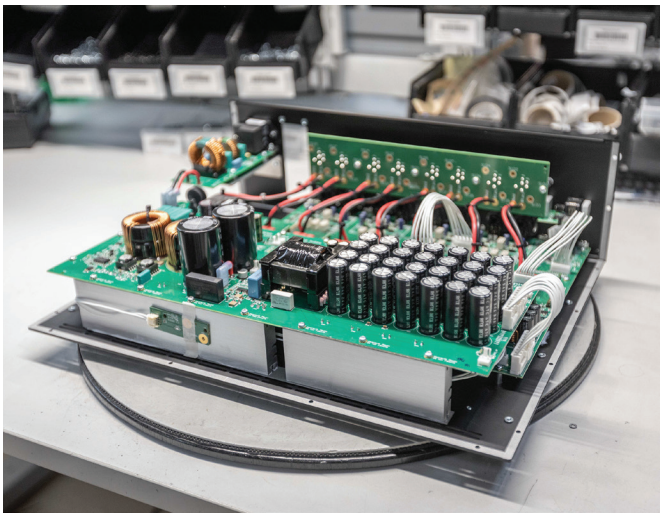


Fig.2 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, 2-Channel mode, small-signal 10kHz squarewave into 8 ohms.

accidental shorting or disconnection. They are quite easy to attach and detach without the use of tools: To attach, just insert and twist, and it's locked. To detach, press the tab (just like the one on an XLR cable), twist, and pull. I have been using speakON connectors in my system for some years; they're used with the Benchmark Media AHB2, my reference amplifier. I'm annoyed whenever a review forces me to revert to banana plugs (lockable or not), spades (even with my AudioQuest wrench) or, Heaven forbid, bare wires.



Most of the rear surface of the MXA-8400 is occupied by two rows of eight round jacks. The upper ones, labeled 1–8, are Neutrik speakON NL4 connectors; the lower ones, also labeled 1–8, are female XLR connectors. These are arranged into four groups, each containing two input XLRs and two output NL4s; the odd-numbered pairs are more brightly outlined. Small print says that the odd channels are different from the even ones. So what's up with that?

Fastidious readers will notice that this amplifier is advertised as offering bridged-channel output, an option that's uncommon in class-D amps.[3] Those amplifiers that do offer it require the use of a switch (as with the MXA-8400); they also demand care to connect the speaker cables in a unique way to achieve the desired output, in order to avoid damage to the amps. This is not a concern since the MXA-8400 utilizes separate and dedicated speakON cables for normal and bridged operation.

To use the MXA-8400 unbridged for up to eight channels, just connect your speakers to any output using a cable terminated with an NL2 speakON (or with an NL4 speakON wired only to its +1/–1 terminals). For bridged output, up to four channels, connect your speakers to any odd-numbered MXA-8400 output with a cable terminated with an NL4 speakON wired only to its +2/–2 terminals. If you wish, you can bridge some channel pairs and leave others unbridged, though you will need to compensate for the difference in gain, as the single High/Low sensitivity switch applies to all channels.

On the left and right sides of the central I/O panel, you'll see some familiar features. To the left is an RJ45 network jack designated for service only. Below it is the Sensitivity switch (High, Low) and Power State switch (ON/Trigger In, Low Power). Between the switches are 3.5mm Trigger In and Out jacks. If the Power State

3 Standard bridging strategies are verboten with many Purifi amp modules since neither output terminal is at ground potential and should not be connected to an external ground. Also, both output terminals are internally connected to feedback circuits in their own channel and should not be directly linked to those of the other channel.

measurements, continued

for the testing, was low, at 0.035 ohms at 20Hz and 1kHz, rising very slightly to 0.046 ohms at 20kHz.The output impedance in Bridge mode was higher but still low, at 0.06 ohms in the bass and midrange and 0.075 ohms at the top of the audioband. The variation in the amplifier's frequency response with our standard simulated loudspeaker[3] (fig.1, gray trace) was negligible in both modes. The response into resistive loads was flat in the audioband but rolled off sharply above 30kHz, reaching –3dB at 60kHz. The Lyngdorf's reproduction of a 10kHz squarewave into 8 ohms featured short risetimes (fig.2) and a small, critically damped overshoot.

The separation between adjacent channels was excellent, at >110dB in both directions below 3kHz and still 96dB at 20kHz. The amplifier's unweighted, wideband signal/noise ratio, taken with the input shorted to ground and the sensitivity set to High, was an excellent 81.2dB ref. 1W into 8 ohms. This ratio improved to 99.8dB when the measurement bandwidth was restricted to the audioband and to 102.4dB when A-weighted. Other than the unweighted, wideband ratio, which was also 81.2dB, the S/N ratios were 4dB higher in low-sensitivity mode. Spectral analysis of the low-frequency noisefloor while the Lyngdorf drove a 1kHz tone at 1W into 8 ohms revealed that the random noisefloor was very low in level, at –133dB, with power

3 See stereophile.com/content/real-life-measurements-page-2.

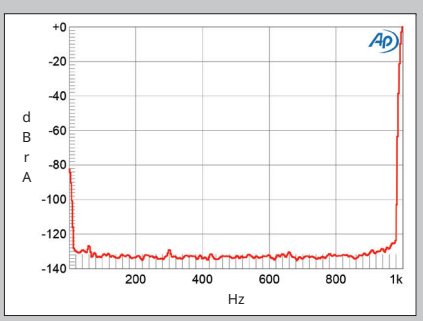


Fig.3 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, 2-Channel mode, spectrum of 1kHz sinewave, DC–1kHz, at 1W into 8 ohms (linear frequency scale).

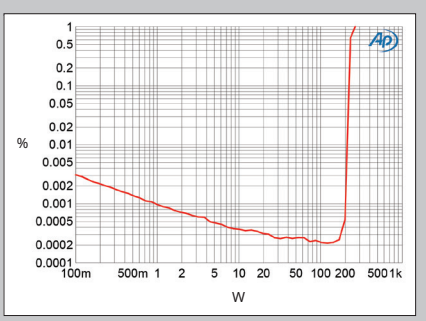


Fig.4 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, 2-Channel mode, distortion (%) vs 1kHz continuous output power into 8 ohms.

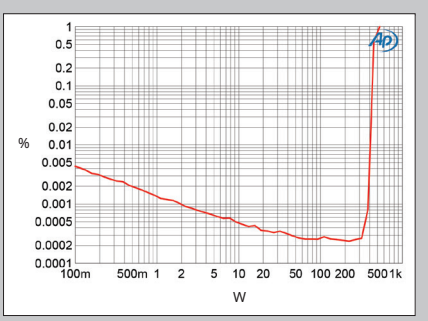


Fig.5 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, 2-Channel mode, distortion (%) vs 1kHz continuous output power into 4 ohms.

switch is on Low Power, the amp will turn on when an audio signal is detected and switch to standby when it has not detected a signal for 15 minutes. If the Power State switch is set to ON/Trigger, the amp will remain permanently on unless the Trigger In jack is in use; in that case, the state of the trigger signal will switch the amp between ON and Standby. Over on the right is an IEC power receptacle, an ON/OFF switch, and a blank panel for some future option. The MXA-8400 does not need more channels, but a Dante/AES67/Ravenna network input would be nice.

Setup

Setup was easy—I just transferred the three XLR input cables from my Benchmark amplifiers to three inputs on the MXA-8400, then moved the three speakON-terminated speaker cables to the corresponding outputs on the MXA-8400. This was, by far, the most efficient installation I have experienced, but that might not be true for most. Users with unbalanced (RCA) sources and with traditional two-wire connectors (bare, banana, spade, or phone-plug) will need adapters or new cables, or even new sources. Lyngdorf includes eight speakON connectors in the box; these can be attached to most speaker cables without soldering by using the included hex wrench.

The choice between Lyngdorf's high and low input sensitivity will depend on your system. I chose high for the bridged channels and low for the unbridged channels to most closely approximate the Benchmark amps' 23dB of gain. I then trimmed the output gain in JRiver to get it spot-on so that the front L/C/R channels remained balanced with my surrounds and subwoofers. I originally set the Power State switch to Low Power, but that meant the amp went to standby after 15 minutes without signal, and I was bothered by the amp being off too often during the day. With my listening habits, I would have preferred a longer interval before the shift to Standby. Because the interval is not adjustable, I switched the Power State to ON. I switched it on in the morning and off at night (when I remembered). The MXA-8400 required no further attention, and it remained barely warm to the touch regardless of how hard I drove it.

The MXA-800 in stereo

I am always seeking out new and interesting music, by any means necessary. I stumbled on a fascinating new recording just as I was preparing to sit back to try to get a handle on how my system

measurements, continued

supply–related spuriae at 60Hz and 300Hz just visible (fig.3).

Lyngdorf specifies the MXA-8400's maximum power in 2-Channel mode as 200W into 8 ohms and 400W into 4 ohms, both equivalent to 23dBW. With our usual definition of clipping (when the THD+N reaches 1%), the Lyngdorf amplifier exceeded the specified powers with a 1kHz signal, clipping at 270W into 8 ohms (24.3dBW, fig.4) and 530W into 4 ohms (24.2dBW, fig.5). These powers were taken with one channel driven; measuring with two channels driven into the same loads gave the same results. The amplifier's maximum power into 2 ohms isn't specified; I measured 545W into that load (24.3dBW, not shown) with one channel driven.

The FTC's updated "Amplifier Rule" states that maximum power should be assessed at frequencies other than 1kHz. I therefore repeated the clipping test with 10kHz and 20kHz signals. The THD+N reached 1% at 290W into 8 ohms (24.6dBW; not shown) at these frequencies. In Bridge mode, the Lyngdorf exceeded its specified power of 800W into 8 ohms, clipping at 990W (30dBW, fig.6).

The downward slope of the traces below 50W in figs.4–6 indicates that actual distortion was buried beneath the noisefloor. I examined how the THD+N percentage varied with frequency at 20V, equivalent to

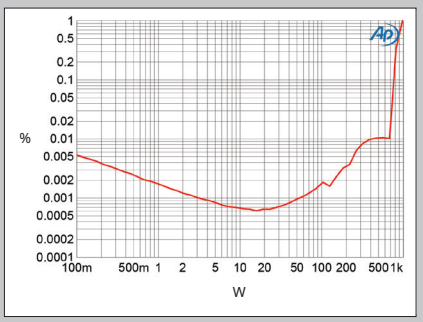


Fig.6 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, Bridge mono mode, distortion (%) vs 1kHz continuous output power into 8 ohms.

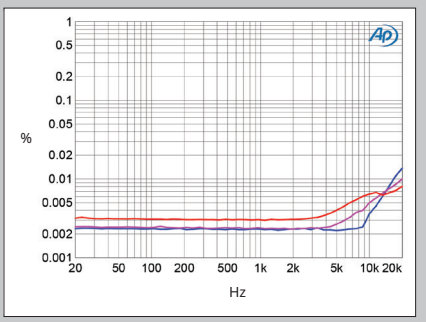


Fig.7 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, 2-Channel mode, THD+N (%) vs frequency at 20V into: 8 ohms (blue), 4 ohms (magenta), and 2 ohms (red).

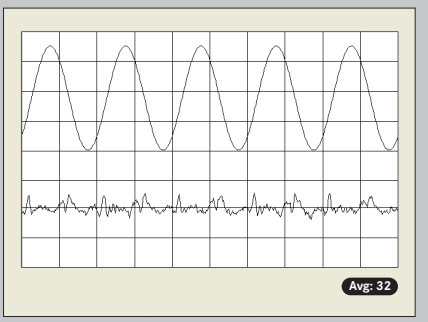
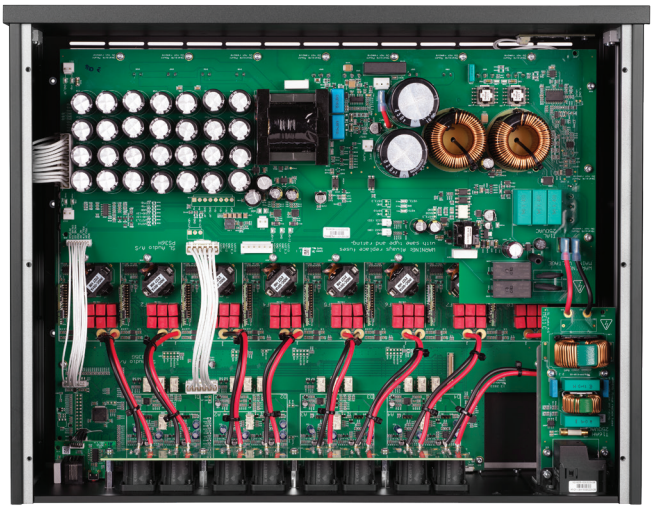


Fig.8 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, 2-Channel mode, 1kHz waveform at 100W into 8 ohms, 0.0023% THD+N (top); distortion and noise waveform with fundamental notched out (bottom, not to scale).

sounded with the MXA-8400. *Live in Berlin*, performed by Kinan Azmeh and CityBand (16/44.1 download, Dreyer Gaido 21163), is a live and lively recording of some fascinating music. In the years following the Syrian uprising in 2011, Azmeh created this music "inspired by anger, sadness, frustration, and above all the need to hold on to one's optimism, hope and creative tools in the face of atrocities." I hear it as free jazz with Western tonality, framed by the rhythms of the Middle East. The instruments (clarinet, guitar, bass, drums) are full, firm, and clear, spread from speaker to speaker with some depth. The bass and percussion are subtly powerful. All are comfortably within the expansive ambiance of the Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin, where the performers are central, and the audience completely surrounds them. In "plain old stereo," there is coherence to the presentation that reveals the warmth, depth, and passion of this remarkable music.



Recently, several labels have released music from conductor Cristian Măcelaru. His traversal of the symphonies of George Enescu with the Orchestre National de France (16/44.1 download, Deutsche Grammophon 4865505) is especially outstanding. I was not familiar with the symphonies, knowing only his piano music and his two *Romanian Rhapsodies*, which in the past were concert lollipops alongside Liszt's Hungarian ones. The *Rhapsodies* are charming and colorful. The Lyngdorf revealed, beneath the foreground themes, a gentle melodic interplay I had not relished before. I heard snap and brio as the pace accelerated toward the end. It turns out that the symphonies, too, are rich in drama and romance, with full display of orchestral presence. The Lyngdorf laid it bare.

The bass clarinet introduction that begins Kurt Weill's "Youkali" is deep and mournful, as are the opening lines sung by Marion Rampal before the transition to the plangent tango. This music puts us squarely into the serious, cynical times of post-WWI Berlin. *Bye-Bye Berlin* (16/44 CD rip, Harmonia Mundi HMM902295), with Quatuor Manfred and Raphael Imbert on saxophone, is a recreation of a cabaret show with songs by the famous and not so famous. There's a wide emotional range and, as we have a table right up front, it should be played loud. I had struggled to find a comfortable level that accommodated the soft and the loud (N.B., Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* makes an appearance). Now, the clarity and imaging afforded by the MXA-8400 and the KEF speakers provide the necessary volume without strain in the music or on our ears. This setup provides it all for a thrilling/chilling experience.

Going from the recreation of an imagined event to a live record-

measurements, continued

50W into 8 ohms, 100W into 4 ohms, and 200W into 2 ohms (fig.7). The THD+N was extremely low into all three loads and rose only slightly above 5kHz.

In addition to the Audio Precision low-pass filter, I used a 20kHz "brickwall" low-pass filter to capture the distortion waveform, as without the additional filter, all I could see at a power of 100W into 8 ohms was short bursts of high-frequency noise at the waveform peaks. With the filter (fig.8), the distortion at the same power lay at just 0.0023%, and while it no longer has the bursts of HF noise, it is difficult to see which harmonics are present. Spectral analysis reveals that the third harmonic is the highest in level, but it lies at a negligible –120dB (0.0001%, fig.9). This graph was taken in 2-Channel mode; repeating the spectral analysis in Bridge mode (fig.10) indicated that while the third harmonic rose by 10dB, it was still very low in level, at close to –110dB (0.0003%).

Even with the amplifier's slightly reduced linearity in the top audio octave, the 1kHz difference product in 2-Channel mode with an equal mix of 19kHz and 20kHz tones at 100W peak into 4 ohms lay at –126dB (0.00005%). While the levels of the higher-order intermodulation products at 18kHz and 21kHz were higher, these still lay below –100dB (0.001%).

The Lyngdorf Audio MXA-8400 offers superb measured performance, with high power combined with vanishingly low levels of noise and distortion.—**John Atkinson**

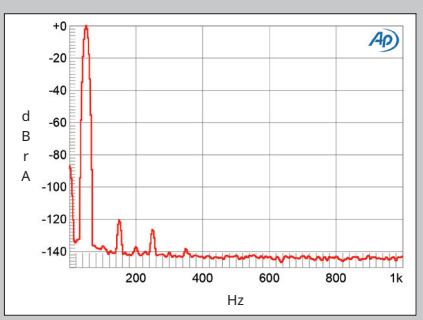


Fig.9 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, 2-Channel mode, spectrum of 50Hz sinewave, DC–1kHz, at 50W into 8 ohms (frequency scale).

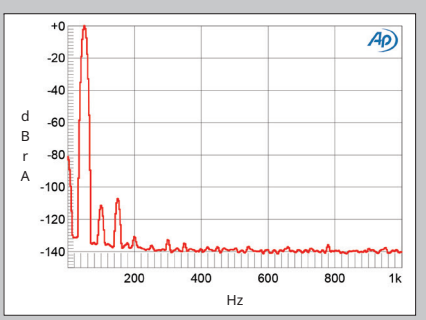


Fig.10 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, Bridge mono mode, spectrum of 50Hz sinewave, DC–1kHz, at 50W into 8 ohms (frequency scale).

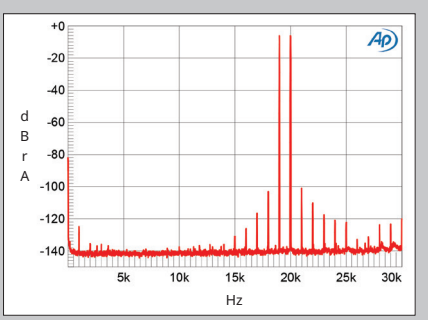


Fig.11 Lyngdorf MXA-8400, 2-Channel mode, HF intermodulation spectrum, DC–30kHz, 19+20kHz at 100W peak into 4 ohms (linear frequency scale).

ing of a real one, I put on my favorite version of "Stimela (The Coal Train)" by Hugh Masekela, from the album *Hope* (DSD rip from SACD, Analogue Productions APJ 82020). I listen to this often because it's fun. This time, after a few seconds, I realized that there was more going on. Masekela and his crew moved around within the central soundstage and the crowd sounds spread more widely than I remembered. Part of that was the ability of the Lyngdorf/KEF combination to play it at nearly live levels without apparent distortion. I was able to just close my eyes and get immersed in the music.

Three on three

I wish I had more speakers so that I could use more channels of the MXA-8400, but since I was using it to drive only my front three, it seemed appropriate to dig out some Mercury Living Presence and RCA Living Stereo albums, which were remastered and released on three-channel SACDs about 20 years ago. Back then, I was so obsessed with the original LPs, then later the SACDs, that I can hear them in my head when I picture the album cover.

The easy first choice was the Bach Cello Suites played by Janos Starker (SACD, Mercury Living Presence 470 644-2). With the first notes, I was stunned by what I heard: Starker's cello strikingly present and full-bodied. I could separate the vibration of wood from the vibration of the strings. All that music emanated from a point in space just left of the center speaker; it was within, but distinct from, a discernible acoustic space that extended wider, deeper, and higher than the speaker array. This is an acknowledged great recording, but, played at a level no higher than at a good, close seat in a recital hall, I was overwhelmed by the immersive experience.

That's just with a single cello, albeit a great one masterfully played. What about a recording of a great symphony orchestra at full strength? That should be more of a stress test of the MXA-8400 and my KEFs. I already knew what would come next: Reiner's *Scheherazade* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (SACD, RCA Living Stereo 82876-66377-2) and Dorati's *Firebird* (SACD, Mercury Living Presence 470 643-2), two stunners of the vintage. Back in the day, I used the *Scheherazade* as a demo to reveal the difference between a two-channel stereo recording and a three-channel one to people who had not made the step from stereo to multichannel. After playing most of the first movement, I asked them what they predicted would be the change in going to three channels. Most said it would result in greater detail and solidity across the center. But after I played the same selection in three channels, there was almost universal agreement that the most salient difference was a more expansive soundstage, an improvement I attributed to the removal of the center-channel content from the left and right speakers.

So let's do it again. In stereo, the Reiner Rimsky is still great, from the bold opening statement by the brass, and concertmaster Sidney Harth's romantic violin flourish, to the inexorable thematic development passed among all the orchestral sections. Heard now with the MXA-8400, there was more space and detail. But when I played it in three channels, the two-channel presentation could not compete. I now heard the immensity of Orchestra Hall and all that goes with it.

All that was also true of the Dorati *Firebird*, but with this darker masterpiece, there is an additional reward—in the bass. It's true: Three full-range tracks over three full-range speakers (no subwoofers were co-opted for this effort) does mean I'm hearing more woofers. However, I think it was the expansion of the soundstage that let me hear more clearly the melodic details in the lower strings and percussion while allowing for more impact. Played at very high levels, the MXA-8400 never blinked, even with the unbridged outputs.

ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

Digital sources Custom Intel/Win11 music server running JRiver Media Center v33 and Roon 2, Merging Devices Hapi II DAC. QNAP TVS-873 NAS. Oppo Digital UDP-103 universal disc player.
Power amplifiers Benchmark AHB2.
Loudspeakers 3 KEF Blade 2 Metas with IsoAcoustics GAIA II feet.
Cables Digital interconnects: Mogami Gold AES TD DB25-XLR0 snake. Analog interconnects: Mogami Gold AES TD DB25-XLR snake, Benchmark Studio&Stage XLR–XLR. Speaker cables: Blue Jeans speakON-terminated Canare 4S11.
Accessories Furman Elite 15 DM.
Listening environment 24' L × 14' W × 8' H, furnished with GIK Monster Bass Traps built into each front corner. Sidewalls lateral to L/R speakers have 2" thick, 2' wide floor-to-ceiling OC 705 panels. Front wall has large windows variably covered by solar shades. Rear of room opens into a 10' × 7' foyer and a 12' × 8' dining area.—**Kalman Rubinson**

Crossing the bridge?

As previously mentioned, one of the features Lyngdorf boasts for the MXA-8400 is the facility to bridge pairs of channels for up to four channels of 800W into 8 ohms. Bridging the amp is easy and fool-proof with the proper cables, and I had those. However, it turns out that I cannot make effective use of it because Lyngdorf states that bridging is limited to use with 8 ohm loudspeakers with "a minimum impedance no less than 6.4 ohms." My 4 ohm KEF Blades have a minimum impedance of 2.9 ohms, at 37Hz, so they don't qualify. So, rather than misuse the amp resulting in possible damage, I will refer you to JA's bench tests to assess the brute-force ability of the MXA-8400's bridged performance.

Conclusions

I thoroughly enjoyed the sound with the MXA-8400, as I do when listening with my bridged Benchmark AHB2s and the Buckeye monoblocks.[4] I experienced fleeting impressions, when switching to it, that the Lyngdorf was a bit fuller than either of the other two amplifiers, but that impression was confounded by observing that when I switched back, I didn't feel that anything was lost.

That said, the three amps differ significantly in power, configuration, and construction. The MXA-8400 offers more channels (duh), and compared to the Buckeyes or the bridged Benchmarks, costs less per channel. The Lyngdorf amplifier is also larger than, spiffier than, and ergonomically preferable to a stack of smaller monoblocks. There are differences in output power (the Buckeye having the most, the Benchmark the least), but all their outputs are in the same ballpark. The big difference is the number of channels in each box, and that makes the Lyngdorf an excellent value, assuming you need extra channels.

Whether I used two or three channels, unbridged or bridged, the Lyngdorf MXA-8400 sounded wonderful, driving my speakers to realistic volume and allowing them to recreate realistic and pleasing performances from the intimate to the magnificent. Power output was never an issue. There is security and simplicity in the locking-XLR inputs and speakON outputs. I was looking forward to auditioning the MXA-8400, and now I am unhappy about returning it. If you are in the market for a multichannel power amp, the MXA-8400 should be near or at the top of your list. ■

4 A Follow-Up on the Buckeye monoblocks appears on p.109 in this issue.