

**THE GREAT
DIGITAL AMP
SHOOTOUT
2007**

POWER AMPLIFIER SHOOTOUT

**A joint project of
Steremojo.com
&
GR Research**

Songs used:

“Church” from the disc “Joshua Judges Ruth” by Lyle Lovett

“Temptation” from “The Girl In The Other Room” by Diana Krall

“The Well” from the disc “The Well” by Jennifer Warnes

- THE SYSTEM -

BPT 3.5 Signature Plus
Resolution Audio Opus21 with reference mods by Great Northern Sound
VAC Renaissance Signature MKII Pre
Moscode 401HR with stock tubes plus Mullard Blackburn 12AU7
Cables are Electra IC's from CDP to Pre -- TG Audio High Purity HSR IC's from pre to
amp -- Shunyata Lyra SC's, and an assortment of Stealth and Acoustic Zen power
cords
This all sits on Adona racks

Speakers are prototype AV123 LS6's



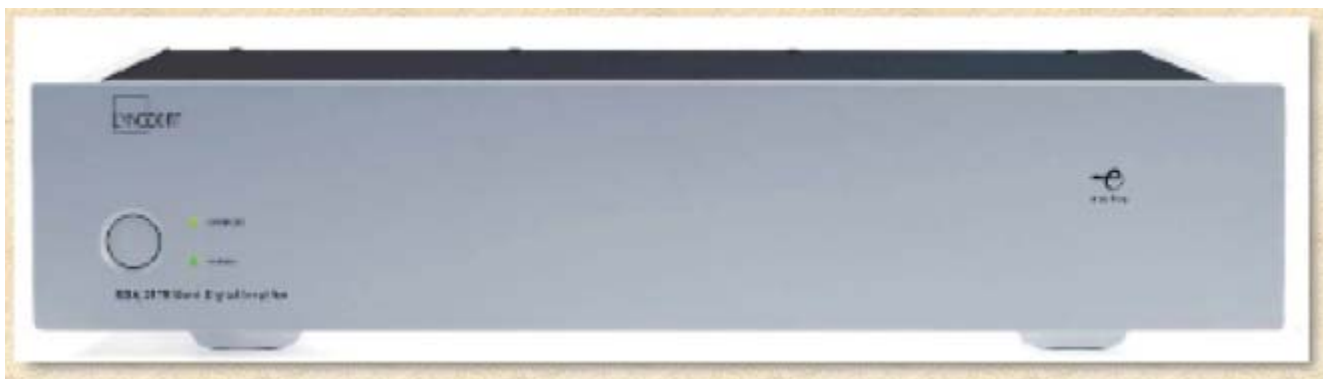


Round 1 Match up #1
Nomad Vs Lyngdorf



Nomad Niagara

Power: 200W into 8 ohms, 400W into 4 ohms per channel
Bandwidth: 10-50Khz—All Loads, All Power Levels (+0, -3dB)
Inputs: XLR and RCA (switchable)
Dimensions: 17.3" Wide, 14.5" Deep, 4.75" Tall
Transformer: 625VA per channel
Capacitance (Per Rail, Per Channel): 10,000uF
Price: \$1950.00



LYNGDORF SDA 2175

Balanced input connectors 3-pin XLR, gold plated
Unbalanced Phono, gold-plated.
Voltage gain 26 dB

Output connectors 4 insulated binding posts, gold-plated

Output power, 8 Ohms 2 x 200 W 1 kHz, 1% THD+N

Output power, 4 Ohms 2 x 375 W 1 kHz, 1% THD+N

Frequency response 0.3 Hz – 33 kHz -3 dB points, 8 Ohms load.

Frequency response -0dB/+0.2dB 20 Hz - 20 kHz, 8 Ohms load

Frequency response -0.2dB/+0dB 20 Hz – 20 kHz, 4 Ohms load

THD+N, 1 W /8 Ohms 0.004% A-wgt.
THD+N, 1 W/4 Ohms 0.006% A-wgt.
THD+N, 100 W/8 Ohms 0.01% A-wgt.
THD+N, 180 W/8 Ohms 0.07% A-wgt.
THD+N, 275 W/4 Ohms 0.07% A-wgt.
S/N ratio 117 dB A-wgt. ref 200 W/8 Ohms.
Channel separation 84 dB 1 kHz, 200 W/8 Ohms.
Peak output current ± 40 A
The amplifier cannot be used in bridged mono

Price: \$1,800

Nomad strength Comments

- Crisp and clean high end, quite airy; nice attack and leading edge on notes; clean and dynamic; excellent resolution; better high end detail with good vocals; better soundstage; handclaps sounded more realistic

Nomad weakness comments

- Found it a little forward (matter of preference); tiny bit of sibilance; midrange is a bit lean and bass is comparatively overemphasized, which creates bottom heavy sound

Preferred Nomad because:

- Cleaner in the mid to upper range, liked the attack
 - Better soundstage, more detail and resolution

Lyngdorf strength comments

- Nice fullness, highs not etched; good drive and dynamics; good detail level; warmer with strong bass; very relaxed sound; detailed and open with a touch of warmth

Lyngdorf weakness comments

- Sounded a little congested at times when the music got more complex; could be a bit boomy on the low end; less detailed than the other amp; bass is less controlled; focus suffers a bit in peaks

Preferred Lyngdorf because:

- A little greater sense of air and space, more musical of the two
- I could have chosen either, both were great, I just preferred this one by a hair for smoothness

**The reviewers were split on these by a vote of 2 to 2
1 reviewer noted it was a close call between these two
amps**

Round 1 Match up #2

Flying Mole Vs Audiosector



FLYING MOLE MA-S160

Rated Power Output
100W x 2 : @80hms, 160W x 2 : @40hms
THD 0.05% (@50W/80hms/1kHz)
Frequency Response
DC - 20kHz (+0dB/-0.5dB) / (80hms)
DC - 50kHz (+0dB/-3dB) / (80hms)
Channel Separation
>70dB (20kHz)
120dB S/N Ratio
Input Impedance
100kOhms (Fixed), 47kOhms (Variable)
Power Consumption 60W
Dimensions
11-1/16 " x 2-3/8 " x 11-3/8 "
Weight 9 lbs 3oz (4.2kg)
Price: \$1,400 (approx)



AUDIOSECTOR PATEK

This amp is not a class D or T amp, but rather a Gain Card. It was offered to us for the shootout and after some discussion we decided to include it because the shootout, while labeled "Class D & T", is also about emerging technologies - publisher

50 watts average output power into 8 ohms 100W instantaneous peak output power
Gain: 30dB
Input impedance: 22K S/N ratio: >95dB (min)
Output protection from short Output over-voltage protection against transients from inductive loads
Frequency response: 5Hz - 250kHz (-3dB)
PRICE: \$1,200

Flying Mole strength Comments

- Delicate and detailed female vocals; better low bass; better reproduction of high end; good clean vocals, very clear; I liked the overall clean and balanced sound of this one; the instrument resonance was more realistic; linearity was excellent, very lifelike sound that is dynamic; good sense of space around instruments; nice highs; smooth and easy to listen to

Flying Mole weakness comments

- Acoustic guitar sounded slightly weak and unnatural; slightly closed in sounding; highs a little recessed; background guitars on the Warnes cut seemed 2D; harder vocals, seemed sharp or glaring by comparison

Preferred Flying Mole because:

- Sounded like it had more life in the music, not quite as clean as the other though
 - More airy, musical and rhythmic

Audiosector strength comments

- Wide soundstage; airy highs; more pronounced vocals; good sustain on notes; guitar and bass sounded more realistic; balanced overall sound; very clean and relaxed sounding; nice vocals; nice extended high end; great resolution, smooth and musical; goosebumps on vocals; low noise floor; very 3D soundstage

Audiosector weakness comments

- Bass could be boomy at times; slight upper midrange boost; 2D image and soundstage; limited bass; cupboard sounding mid-bass that was also a bit forward; occasionally compressed sound;

Preferred Audiosector because:

- This amp was more airy and extended; better low end dynamics, and vocals seemed more clear and distinct
- Easier to listen to, cleaner and more enveloping soundstage, cleaner vocals

The reviewers were split on these by a vote of 2 to 2

Round 1 Match up #3
Cary Vs Dodd



CARY AUDIO CAA-1 Class D POWER AMP

Rated Power Output

125 watts/channel rms. @ 8 Ohms

250 watts/channel rms. @ 4 Ohms

Inputs: 1 pair balanced XLR connections, 1 pair RCA connections

4 - custom speaker binding posts

THD+N<0.2%

Frequency Response \pm 0.5 dB from 20 Hz to 50 kHz

Signal-to-Noise Ratio -80 dB CCIR

PRICE: \$1,499



GARY DODD CUSTOM CLASS T STEREO POWER AMPLIFIER

30 Watts per channel

Battery Powered (rechargeable)

Distortion only .05 at 30 watts

Custom exotic wood case

Production limited to 25 units

PRICE: \$1,299

Cary strength Comments

- Good detail and full sound; good soundstage; smooth with nice pace; delicate on vocals; good bass control; more dynamic than the other amp; the choir reproduction was excellent; well extended highs, and sweet too; very dynamic sounding with good linearity; good low level details; very solid vocal focus, great clarity; some goosebumps on vocals; good soundstage; very musical amp

Cary weakness comments

- Bass could extend a little lower; cymbal effect a little splashy; bass not as well controlled;

Preferred Cary because:

- I liked the pace, depth of soundstage and overall balanced sound
 - Better female vocals, more dynamic than the other amp
- Overall richer and more musical, more "foot-tapping" than the other amp

Dodd strength comments

- Good detail; better drum rim clicks; less tipped up on high end (cymbals); better female vocals; more realistic handclaps; the overall sound is clean; great clarity; musical and emotional

Dodd weakness comments

- Pace a little slow; a little tilted on the low end; slightly boomy on bass; less airy on the top end; harsh high end; hard mid-bass; linearity is not as good, slightly compressed; short resonance from instruments; a bit sharp

Preferred Dodd because:

- Slightly smoother vocals and good resolution without harshness

Cary is preferred by a vote of 3 to 1

This ends round 1

On to Round 2

Round 2 Match up Audiosector Vs Nomad

Audiosector strength Comments

- Good female vocals, very cymbal reproduction; more low end; airy but with good drive; powerful bass coupled with good high end extension produces a rich sound; good sense of dynamics and low level resolution; lowest noise floor today; clean and musical; detail level is great; wide soundstage

Audiosector weakness comments

- Image is a little limited in terms of height; maybe a little forward

Preferred Audiosector because:

- Had a better presentation, clearer female vocals, better low end, reproduction, somewhat more air around notes
 - More musical and more detailed without glare
 - Cleaner, lower noise floor, and just more musical
 - More open better soundstage, more natural sounding

Nomad strength comments

- Good separation and staging; overall clean sound; fairly smooth and musical; nice full sound, vocals sound good

Nomad weakness comments

- A little splashy or hot on the high end; the Lovett tracked sounded a bit bunched up; maybe too clean of sound; bass is a bit cardboard like; mid-bass congestion; gives up some resolution to the other amp

Audiosector is preferred by a vote of 4 to 0

Round 2 Match up Lyngdorf Vs Dodd

Lyngdorf strength Comments

- More delay between the two guitars, nice; airy highs; good detail; good dynamics and therefore the music is reproduced with good speed and pace; if you like sharp and crisp sound this amp has it; upfront and forward (this could be bad to some people)

Lyngdorf weakness comments

- A bit splashy; vocals seem forward; overemphasized bass; bass isn't right; highs seem a bit recessed and edgy; detail is not as good, it seems like reverberation is not reproduced well; slight brightness and a little too sharp at times

Preferred Lyngdorf because:

- Musicality is better with this amp, even though not quite as detailed

Dodd strength comments

- Good dynamics; good clarity on female vocals; wide soundstage; overall more detail; good balance and pace; vocals are clean and overall sound is detailed; extended highs with good image height; good resonance to instruments; overall balance is good

Dodd weakness comments

- More detail, but less musical; slight forwardness in upper midrange; bass is overemphasized compared to the mids and highs; vocals are a bit forward; midbass is cupboard sounding; higher noise floor; slight hardness in vocals

Preferred Dodd because:

- Had better detail than the other amp, still less musical though
 - Better balance, good detail, better pace and timing
- Overall easier to listen to, even though the other amp was better in some ways

**Dodd is preferred by a vote of 3 to 1
1 reviewer noted it was a close call between
these two amps**

**Round 2 Match up
Flying Mole Vs Cary**

Flying Mole strength Comments

- Great clear vocals; easy to listen to,; musical, natural and relaxed; highs sweet and extended; very good linearity and dynamics; fast response time (instruments are portrayed realistically and clean sounding); good musicality, smooth; delicate female vocals

Flying Mole weakness comments

- Highs could be a little more extended; pace seems slow, needs a little more life to the music; midbass isn't the greatest; narrower soundstage; speaker bound soundstage; bass seems slightly tubby

Preferred Flying Mole because:

- Smoother and less fatiguing, seemed less strained
- Cleaner sounding, conveyed the music better, the other sounded a bit muddy by comparison

Cary strength comments

- Full sounding; extended highs; nice pace; clear vocals; sharp and crisp detail; rich but still extended and clean; better detail and air around instruments; more cohesive presentation; good string attack and tambourine sounds; wider soundstage; mores distinct on the choir and background singers

Cary weakness comments

- Bass could extend a little lower; higher noise floor; sometimes too sharp; 2D soundstage; vocals seem forward; rich sound can be a little like white noise at times

Preferred Cary because:

- More balanced sound, highs more natural, better pace with some punch and life to the music
- More analog sounding presentation, weaker bass, but better mids and highs, better overall

The reviewers were split on these by a vote of 2
to 2

Overall Scorecard after Two Rounds
(win = +1 point / Tie = 0 points / Loss = (1)
point

Power Amplifiers	Round 1	Round 2	Overall
Dodd	(1)	1	0
Flying Mole	0	0	0
Nomad	0	-1	-1
Audiosector	0	1	1
Cary	1	0	1
Lyngdorg	0	-1	-1

Cary, Dodd, Audiosector and Flying Mole move on
to the Final Four.

- THE FINAL FOUR -

Semi-Final Match up
Audiosector Vs Dodd

Audiosector strength Comments

- Well extended highs; good soundstage (3D); open and full sounding; airy high end; very clean with low level detail and good resolution; good dynamics; more distinct spacing between instruments

Audiosector weakness comments

- Bass is not as well controlled; instrument resonance seems overdone at times; tad bit forward; a little sharp up top at times; a little more upfront and forward (not a good thing for me);

Preferred Audiosector because:

- Sounds more open to me, more balanced with a hint of forwardness, better attack

Dodd strength comments

- Very linear and dynamic sounding; very clean sounding; good 3D soundstage; clear vocals; very smooth with great vocals; better depth; more analog sounding; less noticeable high end

Dodd weakness comments

- Slightly heavy bass that tilts the balance a little; highs seemed a little recessed;

Preferred Dodd because:

- Overall cleaner sounding and more faithful to the music, the other is a tad too hot
 - Smoother and less fatiguing for longer term listening
 - More analog sounding, easier on the ears

Dodd is preferred by a vote of 3 to 1

Semi-Final Match up

Flying Mole Vs Cary (rematch)

Flying Mole strength Comments

- Good low end drive; more noticeable on bass; easy to listen to; rich, detailed sound; clarity is very good; dynamics were good; not hard to listen to at all

Flying Mole weakness comments

- Highs seemed a little recessed; less forward on Lovett track; pace was slower; slightly higher noise floor than the other amp

Preferred Flying Mole because:

- Easier on the ears, smoother high end

Cary strength comments

- Good bass; full balanced sound; clear mids and vocals; great pace; good clear extension; low level resolution and dynamics were good; good instrument resonance and presence; good sense of rhythm and pace; great detail and resolution without being harsh; very clean and musical; seems more transparent than most; this one had some soul

Cary weakness comments

- Soundstage seemed a little bunched up; kind of forward; a little forward but not etched; high end seemed forward at times

Preferred Cary because:

- Clearer midrange and better pace
- Both amps very competitive, this one had more presence
- Both were very good, but this one was better across the board. Cleaner, quieter, and had really good level of detail

**Cary is preferred by a vote of 3 to 1
2 reviewers noted it was very close between
these two amps**

FINAL MATCHUP

Cary Vs Dodd (rematch)

Cary strength Comments

- Sweet high end; detailed and dynamic; instrument resonance is good; real presence with this amp; good soundstage and imaging as well; good soundstage and recreation of resonance; rich and full sound; very open with good air and space; very clean and musical; breathy; great resolution; dead quiet

Cary weakness comments

- Midbass could be a bit cardboard sounding; high end tipped up just a little;

Preferred Cary because:

- Offers the best balance, great presence without being etched or overpowering in any area
 - More open, better full body and rich, greater detail
- If there was one amp out of these to live with, this is the one, best overall performer

Dodd strength comments

- Overall smooth sound; detailed and clean; easy to listen to; good sustain; full sounding; good detail; full-bodied sound; nice balance; good overall and nicely balanced top to bottom

Dodd weakness comments

- Instruments lack personality (they sound a bit homogenous); midbass is a bit recessed; lacks some musical cohesiveness; need more detail on the highs; not as much space between notes as the other amp

Preferred Dodd because:

- Very close, just preferred this one somehow

Cary is preferred by a vote of 3 to 1
(Of note, this is consistent with the previous match up of these two in Round 1)

WINNER!
2007 GREAT DIGITAL
AMP
SHOOTOUT



CARY AUDIO CAA 1



**Congratulations
to**

DENNIS HAD

and all the fine folks at Cary Audio

Cary Audio is awarded our



Winner
The Great Digital Amp Shootout
Power Amplifier
2007

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