

SMALL AMP FOR BIG TASKS



The TDAI-1120 is Lyngdorf's smallest integrated amplifier with room correction and streaming. Did they save money at the wrong end as part of the downsizing? We tested it!

Julian Kienzle

The manufacturer Lyngdorf again and again sets standards in the field of Class D integrated amps – such as the TDAI-3400 –, which are at the forefront of their price range both in terms of sound and equipment. The TDAI-1120 now combines the advantages of its big siblings with more compact dimensions and a more appealing price!

Admittedly, you might not call the 2,000 euro miniature a real bargain at first glance – even more so if you interpret its width of just 30 centimeters as a disadvantage, especially when compared to standard-sized components. Well, you might be wrong, though, because under its small shell many of the same technological gems that make its bigger siblings so successful are hidden.

Since 2006, the room correction system „Room Perfect“ has been one of these gems, which of course also has to be a part of the smallest TDAI – which stands for „Totally Digital Amplifier“, by the way.

The first time we were really impressed with the 1120 was when we started unpacking it: In its box, not only the amplifier itself and its matching power cord were to be found; but also a high-quality microphone with an eight-meter XLR cable and a quite robust as well as flexibly adjustable professional stand for it – which instantly puts the price back into perspective. Lyngdorf has by no means saved on the wrong end, as it seems. Anyone who has ever tried to correctly measure their room with flimsy, small microphones, short accessory cables and without a proper stand will appreciate this decision with the utmost gratitude.

The absolutely intuitive calibration process is started via the IP menu of the device. This is accessed either by entering the device's IP address in the search field of any browser or via the Lyngdorf Remote app for Android and iOS.

The app mainly functions as a remote, but occasionally had problems establishing a connection – a „real“ remote control can be purchased optionally for 90 euros. The IP interface, in comparison, always ran absolutely reliably in our test and is responsible for the entire basic setup. Thus, to use the Lyngdorf to its full extent, a second network-capable device with a browser is needed at least once for the setup.

By the way, what might look like a display on the front when you first look at it is just a glass plate with illuminated symbols behind it. Compared to the „big“ Lyngdorf products, this seems to have been a spot in which savings were made; but in a smart way that retains the high-quality characteristics of the brand and also hardly restricts its practicality. In our opinion, the Danish developers have applied their cutbacks in the right place.

Perfecting the Room

Coming back to the previously mentioned „Room Perfect“: We particularly appreciated the option to define up to eight different „focus“ points after completing the calibration – during this process, the microphone is placed at various, preferably random positions around the room and fed with measurement sounds. You can later easily switch between these different points via the remote app on your phone. If you like to watch TV on your couch – which is placed outside of the sweet spot –, you can simply create a second focus point for it.

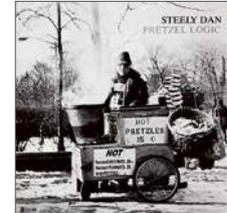
Speaking of television: The Danes behind Lyngdorf also know how to impress in terms of connectivity: they have equipped the limited space on the back with enough inputs and outputs for practically every purpose. Particularly noteworthy among these are the inputs for phono MM and HDMI CEC, for operating it via your TV remote. If you want to integrate the TDAI-1120 into a complex home theater setup, you can even configure each (!) input in the IP menu to bypass the volume control of the amplifier.

Since the TDAI-1120 already has its own network player on board, you can also play music either directly from the remote app – even though the selection is somewhat limited therein – or use the universal interfaces Roon, Airplay2 or Chromecast. Roon may be the premium solution with the most diverse list of functions, but Chromecast or Airplay also work excellently. The Lyngdorf amp also responds precisely and quickly to all inputs, no matter if they come from the in-house app or third-party applications. This seamless integration already incites us to let our playfulness go wild; making us browse through the music offered by Qobuz and Tidal filled with anticipation for the upcoming listening test.

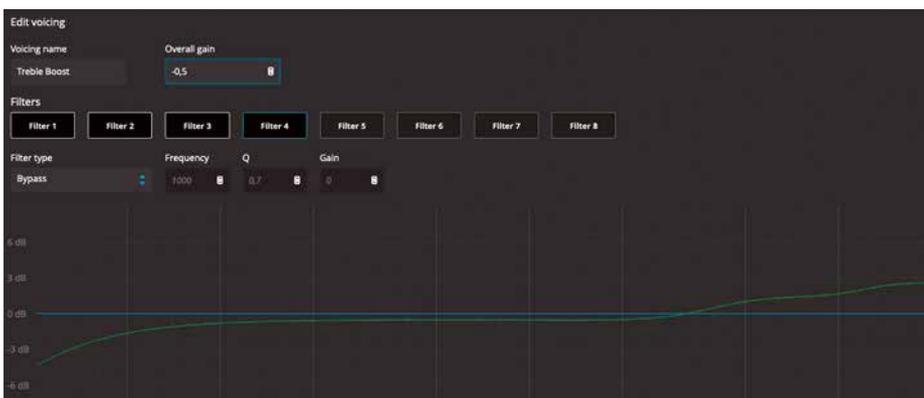
We first wanted to place particular focus on the effectiveness of the Room Perfect calibration feature. Here, as is always the case with room corrections, it should be noted that the results of course very much depend on your individual circumstances.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

Steely Dan: Pretzel Logic



A bit heavier on the pop side than other Steely Dan albums; but still fantastic. Catchy melodies between pop, blues-rock and jazz meet mysterious lyrics and good recording quality.



In the IP menu, you can define your own EQ settings as so-called „voicings“ (above). Handling these settings works quite intuitively, and you can even set an individual voicing for each source. The Remote App (right) mainly works as a remote control for volume and source selection. Very handy: The drop-down menu lets you switch between different voicings and focus positions with a single touch, or even completely deactivate room correction for purposes of comparison.





MEASURE LIKE A PRO

Kudos to Lyngdorf! We did not expect such high-quality measuring accessories to come along with their smallest amp. It makes calibrating the room twice as much fun!

Our conclusion: Room Perfect can indeed further improve the sound, even in already optimized environments: In our small STEREO listening room, for example, Aïrelle Besson's „The Sound Of Your Voice“ sounded more diffuse and flat without Room Perfect. The bass drum came across more gnarled and seemed tightened when the correction was active; the stage also seemed to open up significantly, especially towards the rear.

We continued with Ella Fitzgerald's cheeky „To Keep My Love Alive“. You can clearly see the broad grin of the First Lady of Song in front of you – even more so with Room Perfect. Then, her voice appears even more concentrated and with a better outline.

Especially in conjunction with inferior software, high volumes or in long listening sessions, it was noticeable that Room Perfect usually dampened the energy in the high frequencies a bit. If you perceive something to be missing – we never felt that way – you can easily adjust the sound with Lyngdorf's versatile voicing equalizer.

In general, the TDAI-1120 plays fast and lively, not being annoying and with a profound bass foundation, even when the DSP is not active. When performing „Pretzel Logic“ by Steely Dan, for example, the amp has an incredibly infectious musical joy. It places instruments sharply outlined in their position, but never seems sober or uninvolved.

The TDAI-1120 may not be able to play incredibly loud on inefficient speakers – but that's about the only compromise that has to be made. With most common speakers, the „small“ Lyngdorf amplifier promises highest listening pleasure, despite its dimensions! ■

TEST DEVICES

Integrated amps:

Audiolab 8300A, Exposure 2510 IA, Cambridge CXA81

Loudspeakers:

Apertura Armonia Evolution, DALI Epicon 6, DALI Opticon 6 MKII

Sources:

Aurender N10, Bluesound Node 2i, Canor CD 2.10, MoFi StudioDeck with Hana SH

Cables:

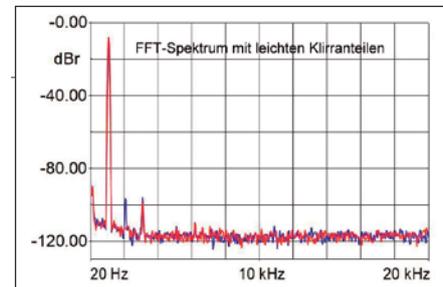
HMS, Van den Hul, Black Connect, Audioquest

Lyngdorf TDAI-1120

Price: around € 2000
Dimensions: 30 x 10 x 26 cm (WxHxD)
Warranty: 2 Years
Contact: Drei H
 Tel.: +49 40 37507515
 www.3-h.de

Lyngdorf's smallest integrated amplifier TDAI-1120 comes with an integrated streamer, excellent room calibration and stylish appearance – all put into a width of just 30 centimeters. Extremely practical and much bigger than it seems, in terms of sound!

Measurement results



Signal-to-noise ratio digital zero	63 dB
Converter linearity at -90dBFS	5 dB
Continuous power (8 Ohms / 4 Ohms)	72 W/137 W
Impulse power 4 Ohms (1kHz)	173 W
Distort. 50mW/5W/1dB Pmax	0,03 %/0,008 %/1,1 %
Intern. 50mW/5W/1dB Pmax	0,006 %/0,003 %/1,1 %
Signal-to-noise ratio at 50mW/ 5W	42 dB/62 dB
Damping factor at 4 Ohms (63Hz/1kHz/14kHz)	26/25/6
Upper cut-off frequency (-3dB/40hm)	28 kHz
Crosstalk Line 1 > Line 2	46 dB
Synchronization error Volume at -60dB	<0,2 dB
Phono MM: input sensitivity for 1 V out	1,95 mV
Stereo channel separation at 10kHz	60 dB
Power consumption stby/idling (at)	2,3 W/17 W(225 Volt)

Lab comment

Due to our methods, we measured only mediocre noise ratios – as was the case with the more expensive TDAI-3400. The converter linearity and the damping factor could also be higher. However, the 1120 has ample power and very good distortion values.

Features

Microphone, stand and XLR cable for Room Perfect; remote control optional; Remote App; Chromecast, Roon Ready, Airplay2, DLNA, Bluetooth, Spotify Connect, internet radio; inputs: 2 x each coaxial and optical, HDMI CEC, Phono-MM, RCA and USB



The limited space on the back of the 1120 has been used well; it can, however, quickly become quite crowded when using particularly thick cables.

STEREO-TEST

SOUND LEVEL 78%

PRICE/PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

OUTSTANDING