

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

Perreux Audiant 80i

Everything you

Integrated amplifiers do the same thing, except when they don't.

What exactly does this mean?

Amplifiers are amplifiers, right?

All integrated amplifiers take line level, analogue inputs, amplify them, and then send these more robust signals to loudspeakers, right?

This used to be true, but there is a new generation of integrated amplifiers that are so much more than "just" integrated amps.

The Perreux Audiant 80i looked at here is a case in point.

Yes, it does everything that regular integrated amplifiers do, but adds a fair bit of digital processing power to the mix. This processing power means that the Perreux, and others of its ilk, are perhaps better described as stereo processors than simply integrated amplifiers.

Some less charitable than me may say that these stereo processors are nothing but stereo A/V receivers without the video bits.

This may be the case with some products out there, but it certainly isn't with the

Perreux, which first and foremost is a great little stereo amplifier, albeit one with a built in DAC.

There are a number of things that make the Perreux a good amplifier.

The first of these is its solid, and what looks like bullet-proof, build quality. Just unpacking the amplifier, feeling its mass, and looking at its fit and finish, tells you that it isn't just an amplifier.

Looking at its array of inputs and features adds to your feeling that this is a good amplifier.

A look at the vital stats panel shows that the Perreux is well endowed on the input side too, and this means that the amp should be easy to integrate into almost any system.

Of the inputs, two I feel need a little more explanation.

The selectable 'home theatre' input means that the Perreux can be used to drive a set of front speakers in a home theatre system, and have the speakers' volume controlled by an A/V processor or receiver.

Number two is the USB input, which offers some mixed blessings. That a USB input is

there in the first place, is a design positive.

That it is limited to 16-bit/48 kHz data is a little bit less impressive, as while I don't do a lot of music downloading, much of what I have downloaded has been 24-bit audio.

On a far more positive note, I liked the flexibility that having digital inputs gave, and for much of the review I used the amplifier's built in DAC, which was a 24/96 up-sampling type.

When comparing the sound of the amplifier when using its built in DAC, to the analogue out of our stock Blu-ray player, I found that the DAC delivered music with a little more depth and width, and there was a little more detail to music, as well. Essentially, this means that if you have a large CD collection, instead of buying a dedicated CD player, you could, as I did, simply use your existing DVD or Blu-ray player as a transport. Of course the digital inputs mean that the Perreux can be hooked up to media servers, too.

Sonically, I was really happy with the power and performance of the Perreux.

It easily outpaced and outgunned our



need in one...



stock AV receiver, and this despite not being rated as being that much more powerful than the receiver.

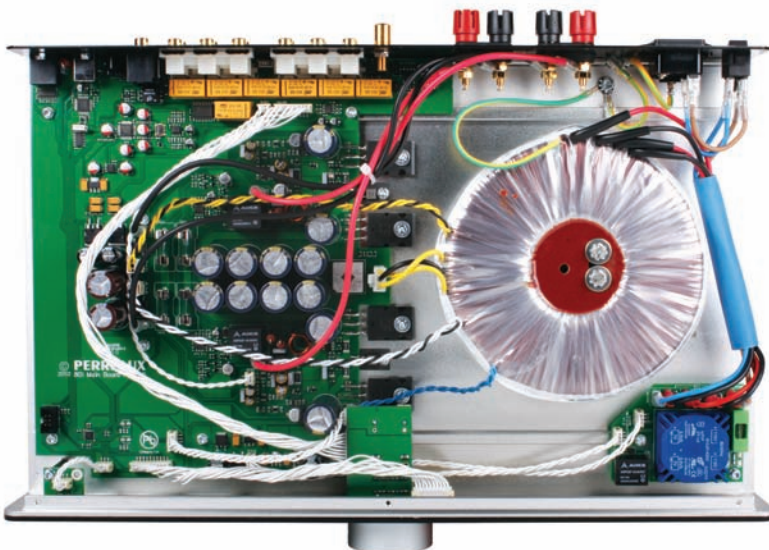
If nothing else, it shows the value of concentrating on doing stereo well, rather than trying to be all things to all people.

Getting back on track, I liked the power delivery of the amp. Bass was taught with good definition, and the organ from one of my latest favourite CDs sounded good, with definition between all notes, particularly the low ones that sometimes sound a little slow on lesser amplification.

Mids and tops are probably best described as being musical, and easy to listen for

prolonged periods of time. There could perhaps have been just a little more detail in the extreme high end, but this is nitpicking on an affordable amp (relatively). Although in saying this, I certainly don't want to imply that the little Perreux was lacking. It's more that I was holding it to a standard way above its price point.

Before closing, I want to mention the protection circuitry on the amp, which I managed to set into action a few times. Some may feel that the protection circuitry is a little too eager to intervene, but I would rather have an amplifier that protects itself, than one that blows magic smoke out its



Vital Stats

Power output 80 watts, 8 ohm

Frequency response

..... 20 Hz – 20 kHz

Signal-to-noise ratio 105 dB

Inputs 3x line, 1x phono,

home theatre, coax,
optical, USB

Outputs ..Line out, pre out, speaker out

Dimensions (WxHxD)

..... 431x67x309 mm

Weight 11.5 kg

VERDICT

The Perreux Audiant 80i offers the flexibility of analogue and digital inputs in a great sounding integrated amplifier.

PRICE.....R20 800

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ventilation holes.

I liked the Perreux, liked it even more when I got to grips with its overall sound quality, and even more when I found out its selling price. For the money you certainly do get a whole lot in one small, good looking package.

Joel Kopping