



1

Power and Control

- DUAL MONO DESIGN
- 300VA TOROIDAL TRANSFORMER
- POWERFUL SPEAKER OUTPUT

2

Digital Mastery

- NEW! ESS SABRE DAC
- NEW! APTX HD BLUETOOTH BUILT-IN
- ASYNCHRONOUS USB

3

A Design For Life

- FLOATING CHASSIS
- CLEAR CONNECTIONS
- EASY-TO-READ FRONT PANEL

Making the best better

How do you take an admired and successful integrated amplifier, one that's won respect and plaudits around the world, and make it even better?

Well, if you're a Cambridge Audio engineer, you examine every aspect of the performance - and then you do everything you can to make it 'more'. More refined, more precise, more engrossing... more musical. The CXA81: it's everything you loved about the CXA80, but more so.



Demonstration Tracks

At Cambridge Audio we use our ears constantly, both as passionate music lovers and audio professionals looking for test examples. We test our products with all types of content and the following suggestions are our picks for a great demo experience for your customers.

1

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER ME BY by THE HORRORS

V (2017)



Rhythmic, precise and melodic. Everything the CXA81 does so well is at play on this 2017 track by The Horrors. Crank it up, sit back and enjoy.

2

BARDO by GOGO PENGUIN

A Humdrum Star (2018)



Sparkling piano, textured double bass and busy rhythmical drum patterns collide in a wonderfully musical way on this 2018 track from GoGo Penguin. CXA81 presents the artist's vision perfectly.

Great British Sound

What does 'British Sound' mean? To us it's about removing any barriers that might distort or alter the original recording and not adding any of our own flavour. What you hear from our products is a pure and unfiltered 'British' sound - just as the artist intended.



1 Power and Control

Rated at 80 Watts per channel, the CXA81 has power in reserve for even the most demanding speakers. But it's the way in which this power is delivered that puts the CXA81 completely out of reach from its competitors.

DUAL MONO DESIGN

The entire internal layout of the CXA81 is designed to minimize left and right interference (crosstalk) and provide astonishing stereo separation so you can virtually place each instrument in your room. It has symmetrical and separate transformer taps for the left and right channels, twin rectifiers and separate PSUs. When combined together these 'dual mono' features deliver incredible presence and depth to your music and a wide, enveloping soundstage that's normally only available in amplifiers costing many times more.

300VA TOROIDAL TRANSFORMER

In 1968, Cambridge Audio were the first audio company to use a toroidal transformer in an integrated amplifier - the now iconic P40. Toroidal means doughnut shaped and it's this shape that makes toroidal transformers an audio industry standard - mainly due to exceptionally low levels of electro-magnetic interference when compared to traditional transformer designs. The custom grade toroidal transformer in the CXA81 is 50% larger than the CXA61 (200VA) with much greater reserves to draw on for truly impressive power and bass.



POWERFUL SPEAKER OUTPUT

Capable of outputting 2x 80W into 8Ω and 2x 120W into 4Ω, the CXA81 has huge power reserves and can be paired with a wide variety of speakers.

2 Digital Mastery

In addition to its four RCA analogue inputs, the CXA61 is designed to work in perfect harmony with digital sources as a result of its redesigned digital stage. Any digital music soars to new heights, reveals new depths and can be enjoyed like never before.



NEW! ESS SABRE DAC

A Digital to Analogue Converter (or DAC for short) has a very important job in the signal chain. It reads the zeroes and ones from a digital signal and turns it into an analogue waveform, ready to be amplified to drive the speakers.

We chose the high class ESS Sabre ES9016K2M chip for the CXA81 due to its ability to read digital files up to 32bit/384kHz and DSD 256, and its super-low jitter.

As a result, digital information coming into the CXA81 is precise, accurate and perfectly organised

NEW! APTX HD BLUETOOTH BUILT-IN

For users who want convenient wireless connection to their system, CX amplifiers now feature an aptX HD Bluetooth receiver built in.

Bluetooth makes good sense from a convenience point of view. Offering a complete connection solution for all of your media and bypassing the often poor digital to analogue converters used in phones and laptops, it also allows you complete control from the comfort of your armchair.

CX amplifiers connect using aptX HD Bluetooth when available, offering CD-like quality playback at 24bit/48kHz. If your transmitting device doesn't offer aptX HD Bluetooth support then the receiver will automatically switch down to either aptX or standard Bluetooth bandwidth.

ASYNCHRONOUS USB

From CD-ripped WAVs to 32bit/384kHz FLAC files and DSD 256, the CXA81's internal DAC handles them all when you connect direct to a PC or Mac using the asynchronous USB socket..

A Design for Life

Whilst a vast majority of the upgrades in CX Series 2 are internal, that doesn't mean there isn't plenty to talk about on the outside - it's not all about that fancy new paint job!

FLOATING BRUSHED FINISH CHASSIS

On its own the CXA81 makes quite a statement with its floating effect chassis. Stack it up with other components in the CX family and it becomes the centrepiece of a truly elegant hi-fi solution. Not only does the CXA81 look good, the sleek design encompasses a low resonance chassis that also enhances sonic performance.



CLEAR CONNECTIONS

Who else has struggled to read an input label while crouching over a piece of Hi-Fi equipment? As a clever touch, the rear connectors on all CX Series Hi-Fi components are labelled upside down as well as the correct way up.



EASY-TO-READ FRONT PANEL

With such a wide variety of inputs it's important to know what's going on at a glance. The CXA81's front panel lets you know exactly what's happening in a clear, discreet and stylish way.



In The Press

We believe in our products wholeheartedly but don't just take our word for it.

“The CXA81 sets a new baseline for integrated amps... a rare product that has the ability to make us switch off our reviewing brain and simply let us be wowed”

What Hi-Fi? Awards 2019 winner. Stereo Amplifiers Product of the Year
WHAT HI-FI, SEPTEMBER 2019



Inside Story

We're located in London SE1, right on the doorstep of some of the most creative, exciting developments in the music industry and our products are designed and engineered in-house. Outside work we're musicians, sound engineers and above all music lovers.



FRANCESCO BETTUCCI
ELECTRONICS ENGINEER

“The original CX amplifiers were excellent products for the price. Fantastic sounding too. Our job on Series 2 was to improve upon that.

My focus was on the digital stage. We greatly improved digital performance with a new ESS DAC and we updated the USB input to support very high resolution files, including DSD, which we couldn't do with CXA60 and CXA80. We then updated the Bluetooth by integrating it into the amplifier and adding support for aptX HD.

After this, we moved to sound tuning stage, which took almost as long as designing the new boards. We did many listening tests, swapping component after component. It's a long process to get to where you want.

The final result is the sum of many little refinements in many different areas of CXA.”

Stacking Up

	CXA60	CXA61	CXA80	CXA81
POWER OUTPUT (8 OHMS)	60W	60W	80W	80W
DAC	WOLFSON WM8740	ESS SABRE ES9010K2M	WOLFSON WM8740	ESS SABRE ES9016K2M
BLUETOOTH	APT X (OPTIONAL)	APT X HD INTEGRATED	APT X (OPTIONAL)	APT X HD INTEGRATED
RS232	NO	YES	NO	YES
TRIGGER IN/OUT	NO	YES	NO	YES

Technical Specification

POWER OUTPUT:	80W RMS into 8 Ohms, 120W RMS into 4 Ohms
DAC:	ESS Sabre ES9016K2M
FREQUENCY RESPONSE:	<5Hz- 60kHz +/-1dB
ANALOGUE AUDIO INPUTS:	1x balanced XLR, 4 x RCA
DIGITAL AUDIO INPUTS:	1 x S/PDIF coaxial, 2 x TOSLINK optical, 1 x USB audio, Bluetooth (integrated)
COMPATIBILITY:	TOSLINK optical: 16/24bit 32-96kHz PCM only, S/PDIF coaxial: 16/24bit 32-192kHz PCM only, USB: audio profile 1.0/2.0 (default 2.0), up to 32bit 384kHz PCM, up to DSD256 or DoP256, Bluetooth: 4.2 A2DP/AVRCP supporting up to aptX HD (24bit 48kHz)
OUTPUTS:	Speakers A+B, 3.5mm headphone, Preamp Output, Subwoofer Output
MAX POWER CONSUMPTION:	750W
STANDBY POWER CONSUMPTION:	<0.5W
DIMENSIONS:	(H x W x D) 115 x 430 x 341mm (4.5 x 16.9 x 13.4")
WEIGHT:	8.7kg (19.1lbs)

Related Products

CXN (V2) NETWORK AUDIO STREAMER

Everyone loves the convenience of digital audio. Nobody enjoys the compromises digital audio playback sometimes involves. That's why the CXN (V2) is designed to provide the effortless accessibility of digital audio, but with the uncompromised sonic excellence of Cambridge Audio's 50-plus years of hi-fi experience. Ease of use meets quality of performance.



CXC CD TRANSPORT

The compact disc format has been around long enough to include an enormous catalogue of music of all types, and to have become very affordable. Even the most evangelical devotee of music streaming will concede there's plenty of life in the little silver disc yet. CXC will let you extract every last drop of musical enjoyment from your CD collection.

