Totally Wyred

David Price gets seriously into this USA-built pre/power amplifier combination that gets back to basics

OW times have changed. Just a decade ago, music streaming was in its infancy and it was unusual to be able to purchase an amplifier with a DAC built-in, let alone a streamer. Now, so many have become complex digital hubs, with all sorts of support for the likes of Chromecast to Roon endpoints built in. So it gives me more than a little pleasure to declare that Wyred 4 Sound’s STP-SE Stage 2/ST-750LE pre/power amplifier package has none of this. In one sense, it’s very old school – offering simple line-level preamplification. There are no gimmicks, gadgets, aerials, apps or anything else of a similar ilk on this American-made combo – you just plug your hi-fi source into it, and music comes out at the other end. What could be simpler than that?

The partnering ST-750LE is a high-power stereo power amplifier, notable for being a Class D design (see boxout). That could be one reason why this Wyred 4 Sound power amplifier seems to offer such great value – in the UK it is available from distributor Elite Audio Ltd – complete with the STP-SE Stage 2 preamplifier for a package price of £4,995. By way of perspective, a generation ago this would have been one of the most powerful pre-power amplifier combos in the world. Even today, it offers a lot of bang for your buck.

It tracks dynamics in a lithe, responsive way and musters vast tracts of power amplifier seems to offer such great value – in the UK it is available from distributor Elite Audio Ltd – complete with the STP-SE Stage 2 preamplifier for a package price of £4,995. By way of perspective, a generation ago this would have been one of the most powerful pre-power amplifier combos in the world. Even today, it offers a lot of bang for your buck.

Looking closer at the STP-SE preamplifier, and it’s a fairly plain looking thing. Its rugged silver painted metal case isn’t particularly well finished, although those extra black aluminium extrusions confer a sense of solidity, as well as breaking up the uniform oblong box look in a clever way. In the centre of the fascia is a bright vacuum fluorescent display showing volume and source, and the volume knob to the right is actually an optical rotary encoder feeding discrete Dale RN55d resistors, as opposed to a conventional potentiometer. It also

**CONNECTIONS**

- Balanced XLR inputs (right channel)
- Unbalanced RCA inputs (left channel)
- Unbalanced XLR inputs (right channel)
- DC trigger in
- Unbalanced RCA outputs (right channel)
- Balanced XLR outputs (right channel)

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The ST-750LE power amplifier is a dual mono design, fully balanced, and has thermal protection and a soft clipping feature. It's a versatile power house – quoted output is 325W into a standard 8 ohm load with 0.2 percent THD, and the power amplifier can sound even so slightly incoherently – when better, often more expensive amplifiers would render it more difﬁcult and in a sweater fashion. Also, Simply Doesn’t classic sound and funk of Glamour Profession highlights the power that the bass can be not just lighter than some; others would simply say it doesn’t have any overhang at all. Overall, through a wide range of music, via all of its inputs, the STP-SE Stage 2 ST-750LE pre/power performs consistently well. Taken in isolation I’d say the preamplifier is the more capable in absolute terms, but the power amplifier is easily the better of the two – packing some serious bang for your buck.

Conclusion

It’s an unknown brand for most of us, but this Wyred 4 Sound nonsense does a lot to impress. With its broad spread of abilities, there’s much to like – it has power in spades, an expansive soundstage, lots of detail and a fundamentally beautiful and animated sound. Factor in its sturdy build, and this package is certainly well worth an audition.

Q&A

DP: What is a typical Wyred 4 Sound customer looking for?

EJ: Our typical customer is looking for classic looks and a high level of affordability price. Our customers buy into our family for the long term. I look at it as an investment in their future. Wyred 4 Sound offers industry-leading product support, class-leading products and unmatched cost-performance ratios. We are devoted to our brand day in and day out and are always available to overcome any hurdle that may arise.

Why did you decide to move up to Class D for the power amplifier?

Class D is the future of ampliﬁcation and has come along way from where it was 10 years ago. When it comes to Class D, people sometimes have this slightly negative idea in their head, but it’s time to put that aside and take a look. Productive today, ST-750LE power amplifier prove the power of Class D in a big way. It’s extremely fast, dynamic, articulate and has an extremely low noise level. Speed is one thing this amp does very well and can execute the most complex passages with ease.

Why offer a range of component packages for the preamplifier?

We offer a range of component packages for the preamplifier to ensure that our customers get started with a great product and still have the opportunity to upgrade for further improvements. We are all about customer service and supporting what is best for every budget. Having a good product can help to replace an old or incapable DAC or amp or even the whole preamp solution would be greater. This is all determined by what components the customer already has and how they work together. We are only interested in making forward moves for every customer!