

REFRESHINGLY DIFFERENT

Tube listeners are often individualists, looking for something special in their music. Why, the makers of Cayin thought, wouldn't you give them something entirely different right away?

The outstanding CS-845A is their answer.

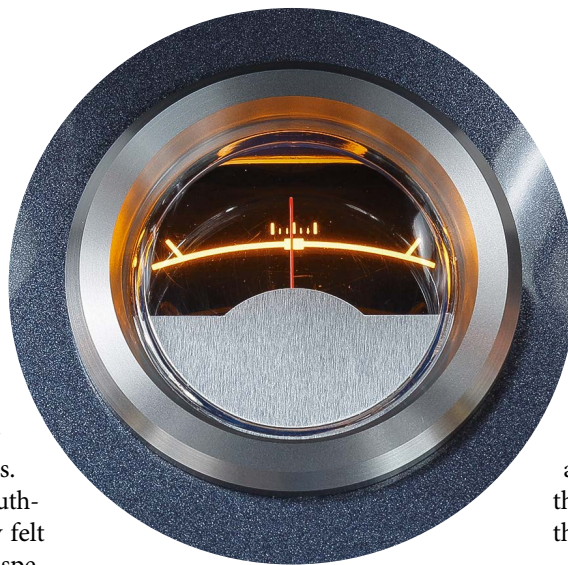


Tube circuits are in principle very straight forward. There are only a few basic recipes that can be used to construct tube-driven amplifiers. Actually, they are not even very complex, as Stefan Noll from Cayin explained. All the more importance is consequently attached to the individual ingredients. And there the tube specialists from southern Hessen in Germany apparently felt like putting together something very special with their new CS-845A. While the voltage amplification of their mighty integrated amplifier is controlled by a set of simple WE6SN7s, the power amplification is provided by two 300B and two 845 tubes each – comparatively exotic ingredients that make well-informed analog enthusiasts’ mouths water.

Lots in, little out

There is a simple reason why such a tube combination is only rarely to be found: the two power tubes that give the amp its name are designed for single-ended operation, hence the 845A runs in Class A mode. This is attractive in terms of sound. However, one also has to cope with concept-related limitations. For example, its output of just over 22 watts at four ohms doesn’t particularly make the CS the hi-fi incarnation of an aggressively snorting bull. If you are a fan of speaker concepts with an ... uhm ... “interesting” impedance curve and low efficiency, the new Cayin probably isn’t your best choice. Apart from that, you don’t have to think much about it. The majority of loudspeakers are nowadays tuned graciously, friendly and efficiently. DALI’s efficiency-wonder Epi-con 6, for example, was just as brilliant as B&W’s 805 D3. In our listening rooms, the CS was even able to generate proper levels out of such speakers.

The second characteristic to be aware of is that its low power output doesn’t stop it from sucking an impressive 320 watts out of the socket while in idle. We don’t know whether Vattenfall, RWE or other electricity providers distribute golden customer cards, but with the CS-845A you



▲ Practical Bias-O-Mat: if the needle is centered as shown in the picture, everything is fine. In case of a deviation, you can easily readjust it yourself.

Simple bias adjustment

For easy maintenance and adjustment, the amplifier has a bias indicator located centrally between the tubes, which can be separately activated for the right and left channel using two buttons on the front of the amp: simply press one of the buttons and adjust with a small screwdriver until the needle points in the middle – already the CS-845A runs like clockwork again. It

That’s a proper tube, isn’t it? The 845 is designed for single-ended class A operation. ▼

would definitely be a likely choice for one. At outside temperatures around the freezing-point such an amp, of course, has its very own appeal to it. When asked, managing director Thomas Deyerling denied that the 6000 Euro amp was the new top model in the Cayin portfolio. The 845 is not an all-rounder and therefore rather has the status of a special edition next to the CS-100A. Latter is around 1600 Euros cheaper, and much more suitable for everyday use with its output of 80 watts, in its KT 88 version.

Who chooses such an amplifier concept is certainly looking for that special touch of singularity and distinctiveness and is guaranteed not to be disappointed by the 845. The large Cayin is an eye-catcher in itself. The two power amp tubes protrude almost 15 centimeters from the cabinet and spread a cozy analog charm. The fact that their dimensions do not immediately stand out is due to the three transformers, which are not only very high, but also ensure that the CS, which weighs around 37 kilograms, is better lifted into the HiFi rack with a pair of helping hands.

The choice of materials has mainly acoustic reasons: the solid iron core reduces the electromagnetic stray fields of the transformers, which therefore have less negative influence on the amplifier circuits.



fits that the mains phase was marked with a white sticker on our model. This is not a standard feature, but can be applied to all models. With all CS amplifiers, the “hot” wire is always on the right-hand side.

The connection options are reasonable: three line inputs and a tape out that always loops through the active source. In addition, there is a “pre-in”, which directs pre-amplified signals directly into the power amplifiers. The 845 can, therefore, be used, for example, to power a regulated D/A converter or CD player. As one final specialty, there is a switch that activates two different levels of feedback. This feature can have a slightly different effect on each loudspeaker. In the case of our Epi-con 6, the Cayin Class-A-machine played noticeably wider, larger and more transparent in the “0 dB” position. This was especially evident on titles like Alan Parson’s “The Turn of a Friendly Card (Part II)”, whose crisp guitars and brass instruments detached themselves wonderfully from the carpet of strings behind them and filled the entire listening room. This was completely different with songs that rather emphasize the sound of the individual instruments and were less arranged according to the “Wall of Sound”-concept.

Bass and guitar in Kalle Kalim’s beautifully carried “Santy Anno” seemed more focused, plastic and physical in the “-3 dB” position. Although this position (nomen est omen!) is a few decibels quieter, the dynamics of the amplifier were more delicate, the bass drier and more controlled at the same time. However, as already mentioned: since the feedback always interacts with the impedance curve of the loudspeaker, the impressions can vary. Nevertheless, the “NFC” button can be a rewarding playground, especially as the function can be conveniently switched using the included remote control.

Moreover, the CS-845A managed to completely captivate us with its clear and open character. The amplifier lends instruments and voices a noble shine and presents spatial references in a wonderfully large and tangible way. The fact that it is subject to more powerful rivals such as a Symphonic Lines RG 9 in the low bass and dynamic duels is balanced by its enormously appealing level of musicality and swing. In short: an amplifier that is not only refreshingly different, but also leaves a lasting impression after an extended, relaxed listening session!

Carsten Barnbeck



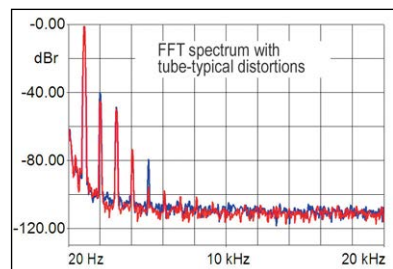
▲ Three inputs plus a power amplifier access and a record out. The gold-plated loudspeaker terminals are arranged according to loudspeaker resistance.

CAYIN CS-845A

for 5900 €
 Dimensions: 42 x25 x39 cm (WxHxD)
 Warranty: 3 years
 Contact: Cayin
 Phone: +49 6174 9554412
 www.cayin.com

Cayin’s heavyweight scores with an independent concept as well as purist, but with clever features refined, equipment and a beguilingly colorful, light-footed and wonderfully transparent character.

LAB MEASUREMENTS



Continuous power (8Ω / 4Ω)	21.6 W/22.4 W
distortion at 50mW/5W/1dB Pmax	0.07 %/0.8 %/1.5 %
Intermod. 50mW/5W/1dB Pmax	0,04 %/0,3 %/1,5 %
Signal-to-noise ratio at 50mW/ 5W	58.5 dB/79.2 dB
Attenuation at 4 Ohm (63Hz/1kHz/14kHz)	2/2,4/4
Upper cut-off frequency (-3dB/4Ω)	35 kHz
Crosstalk Line 1 > Line 2	70.6 dB
Volume synchronization error at -60dB	0.2 dB
Power consumption. Stby/idle (at)	<2 W/320 W

LAB COMMENTS

The Class A concept demands sacrifices. The power consumption is enormous with 320 watts, you get a meager 22 watts at four ohms. Distortion, intermodulation and noise are good to very good in view of the implemented concept.



FEATURES

Three line inputs, a power amplifier input that can be controlled with regulated components, and a fixed recorder tap – that’s it! In addition, there’s the bias indicator and a negative feedback switch (0/-3 dB), a metal remote control, power cable and instructions.

STEREO-TEST

SOUND QUALITY 90%

PRICE/PERFORMANCE

★★★★☆

VERY GOOD