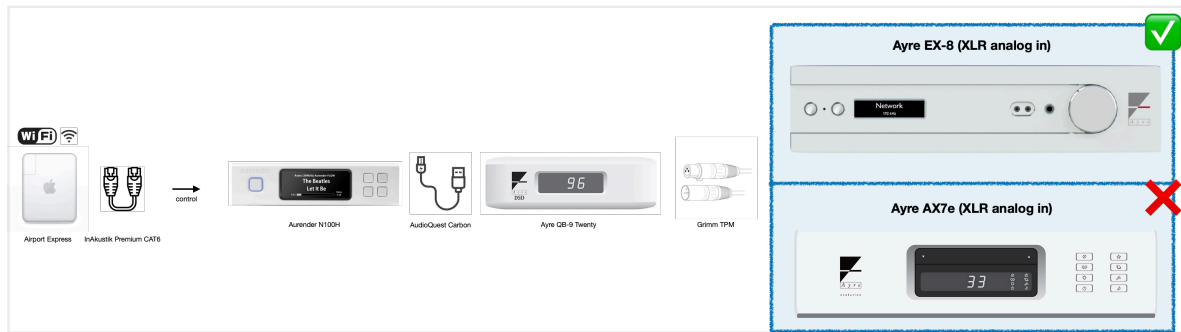


EX-8 review

24-07-2022

1 - Ayre EX-8 Full vs Ayre AX-7e



Question; which amplifier is better?

The sources for both are the Aurender NH100 + Ayre QB9 Twenty

The Ayre EX-8 has:

- A much larger (depth and width) and more stable sound stage. It projects much more accurate, sound sources are better shaped over the whole frequency domain.
- Has more body in the sound (80-150Hz). The AX7-e has the tendency to sound more empty in that domain, with the tendency to sound nasal.
- The treble has more brass and definition, without becoming irritating, sharp or pushy/brittle.
- More authority, and very nice combination of dynamics and control.

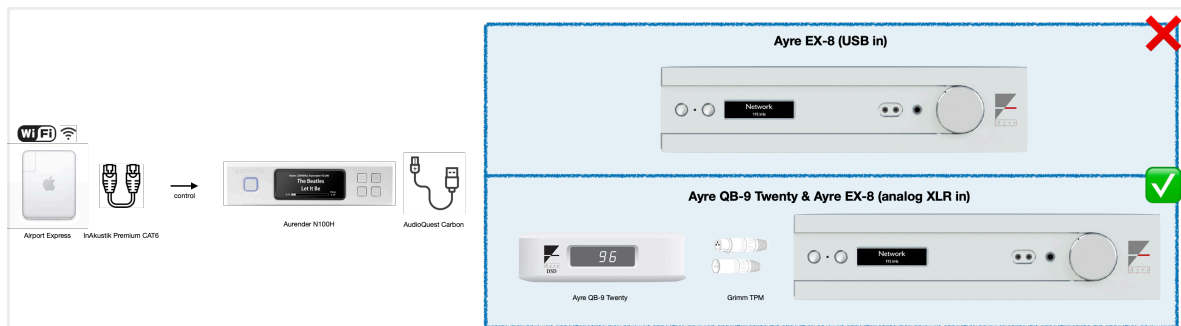
The AX-7e:

- Sounds nasal due to the lack of mid-low.
- Sound is more concentrated and projected in between the speakers
- Is relative (!!!) "lifeless" , and has less good timing.

Overall, the beautiful sound timbre of the AX-7 and its holographic projection are outperformed by the EX-8 with more neutrality, without the tendency to become too clinical. On the contrary, it has more grandeur and authority.

Answer: The EX-8 is clearly better on all aspects.

2 - Ayre QB9 Twenty vs Ayre EX-8 USB in



Question; which DAC is better.

Source for both is the Aurender NH100, connected with an AudioQuest Carbon cable. The Ayre EX-8 USB input sounds:

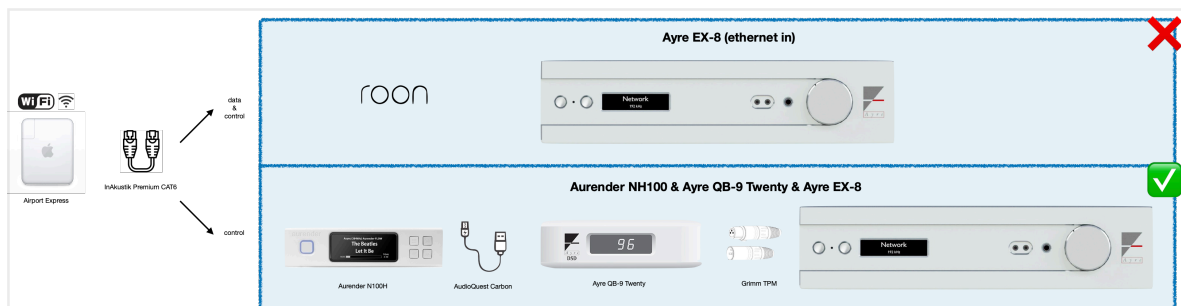
- Flatter; is misses openness and air
- The timber is flatter
- Treble is less rich
- As if you move back to the Ayre QB9 DSD
- After I did an update to the newest FW, I got the suspicion it improved a tiny bit.
- Is the 2nd best option of all options that I've listed to.

The QB9 Twenty:

- Has more texture
- Reverb isolates and decays better into dark silence
- The overall sound embraces you more
- Treble is more silky (maybe a tad too silky?)

Answer: The QB9 Twenty is overall better!

3 - Aurender NH100/AyreQB-9 Twenty vs Ayre EX-8 plus ROON



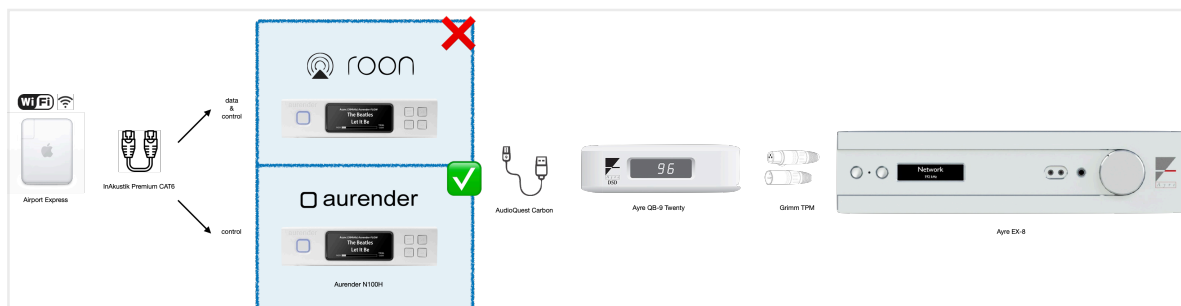
Vraag; which streamer is better.

Playing the same source file via the Aurender or via my iMac as the ROON core and the EX-8 as the audio device (no other in-between audio drivers). The Ayre EX-8 with ROON sounds:

- Flatter again; it lacks openness and air. Despite it also sounds spacious and holographic, it is as if the members of an orchestra (CPE Bach) sit closer together. With the QB9, the image opens up, and the orchestra gets more width and depth (in the sense of its reverb). Now the orchestra plays in a hall, where also the side walls of the orchestra hall are audible.
- Timbre is flatter with less texture.
- There is no rest, the notes don't decay out, and the emphasis is on the attack of the new notes.

Answer: The Aurender NH100 sounds better than ROON via the EX-8

4 - Aurender NH100 own data vs ROON



Question; which data stream & signal path is better. ROON plays via AirPlay to the Aurender

- ROON sounds flatter again; there is a lack of openness and air/space. Has more attack, and a bit "harder sound character"; treble is a bit more fierce.
- Playing the same file from the Aurender HD directly is more silky, has more micro dynamics, timbre, and intonation. It sounds less blunt. E.g.
 - False air in a sax tube has more character, flanging, ssffrrrr sounds (Andy Sheppard)
 - The hobo (Couperin) has more "tube" and reed with the Aurender, and therefore has more space for intonation and decay.

Answer: The Aurender NH100 sounds better stand-alone than with ROON via Airplay

Conclusions:

- ROON sound less good in all cases; even via the same electronic path (via the Aurender) a negative effect is audible. This matches other experiences with ROON in different setups with friends (e.g. JPlay being better than ROON)
- The Ayre QB-9 Twenty DAC sounds better than the DAC in the Ayre EX-8
- The Ayre EX-8 amplifier is a big step-up to the AX-7e amplifier

Music used for audition

Classical:

- CPE Bach, Cello Concerto No. 1 WQ170, III. Allegro Assai (Suzuki, label: BIS)
- Gyrowetz, String Quartet Op. 29/1. I. Allegro Moderato (Pleyel Quartet, label: CPO)
- Couperin - Le Concert royaux, No. 1 - II. Allemande, Légèrement (Savall, label: Aliavox)
- Shostakovich - Symphony No. 10, I. Moderato (Nelsons, label: DG)
- Rameau - Pieces de clavecin, Deuxième suite: I. Allemande (Frisch, label: Alpha)

Jazz:

- Areni Agbabian - Patience (album: Bloom)
- Shirley Horn - If you go (album: You won't forget me)
- Yuri Honig - Walking on the Moon (album: Star tracks)
- Charlie Haden - Cego Aderaldo (album: Folk Songs)
- Enrico Rava - Sand (album: Easy Living)
- Youn Sun Nah - Pancake (album: Same girl)
- Andy Sheppard - And a day (album: Romaria)

Pop:

- AC/DC - Boogie man (album: Ballbreaker)
- Supertramp - No inbetween (album: Brother where you

bound)

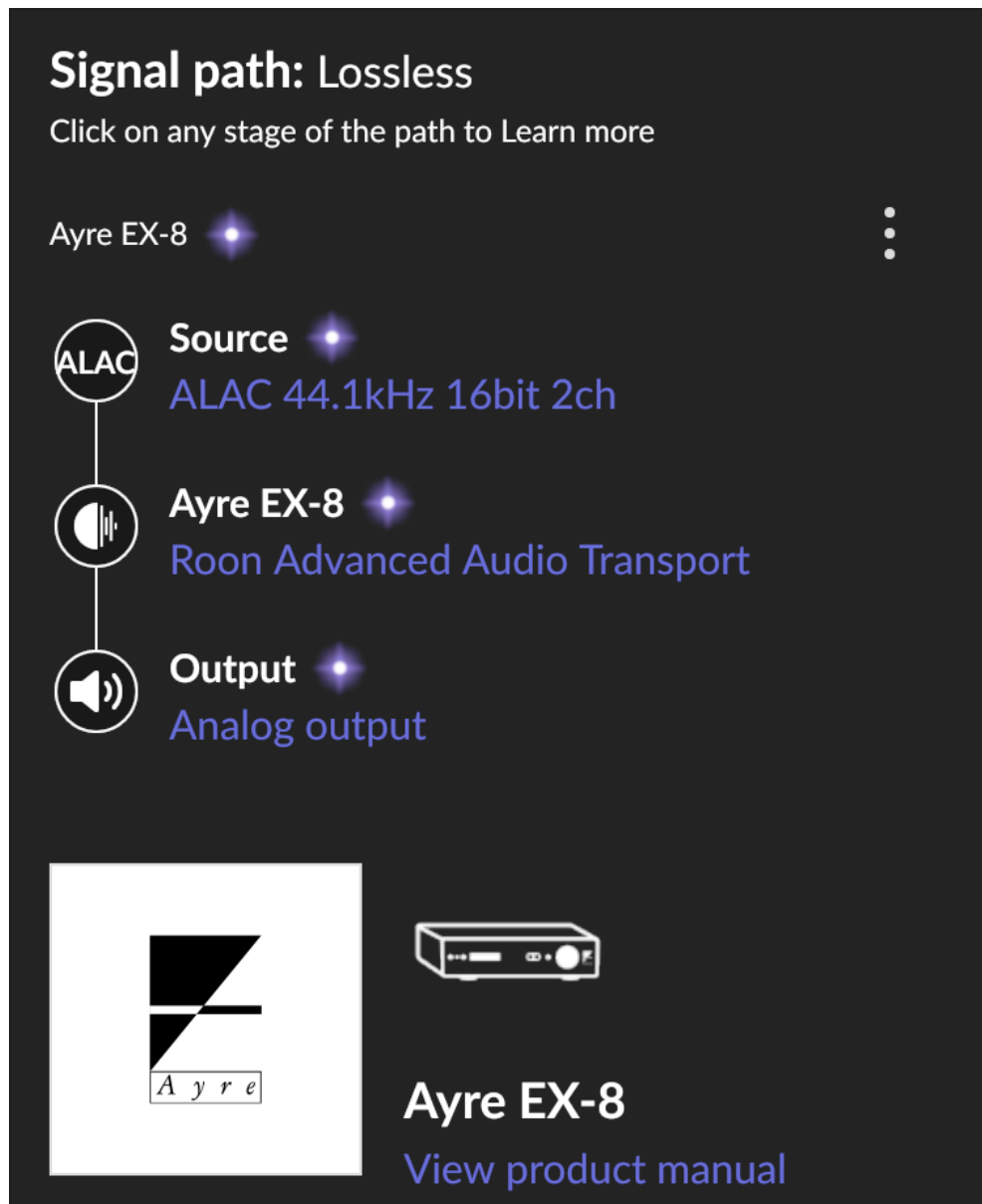
- The Bruce Katz Band - Hanging on the cross (album: Mississippi Moan)
- Earth Wind & Fire - Boogie Wonderland (album: I am)

World:

- Sera Una Noche - Soledad (album: Sera Una Noche)
- Sera Una Noche - Nublando (album: Sera Una Noche)
- Michael Godard - Victim Paschali Laudes (album: Le Serpent)

Other remarks

- All audio processing of ROON is disabled. The core is running on an iMac without any additional audio drivers in-between



Signal path: High quality

Click on any stage of the path to Learn more

Aurender N100H 



ALAC

Source 

ALAC 44.1kHz 16bit 2ch



ShairportSync 

AirPlay streaming