

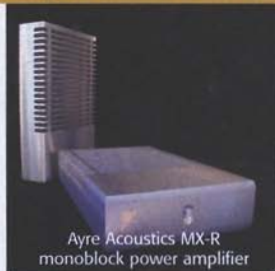
2007 **AMPLIFICATION COMPONENT** OF THE YEAR**Ayre Acoustics MX-R monoblock power amplifier**

(\$16,500/pair; reviewed by Wes Phillips, Vol.30 No.4, April 2007 WWW)

Man, talk about *sexy*—when the Ayre Acoustics MX-Rs walk into the room, you better lock the doors, pull down the shades, get the kids to cover their eyes. When Wes originally submitted his MX-R review, the entire *Stereophile* office—the people, the walls, the windows, *everything*—caught fever and blushed. He wrote: “I kept gazing at my hi-fi shelves, visually caressing the sleek Ayre MX-R monoblocks. Sexy? God help me, I *do* think so.”

Who could blame him? Artfully carved from a 75-lb billet of aluminum, each MX-R is routed into “a hunka hunka shiny, anodized audio *presence*.” Plus, the amp is a total *powerhouse*. Check the specs: output power of 300W (600W into 4 ohms), frequency range of 0Hz–250kHz, input impedance of 2 megohms. And all this in a sleek, compact shell just 11" W by 3.75" H by 18.75" D—an audio lover's dream.

In the end, though, the MX-R's sex appeal was “just gravy.” It was its sound that most tickled Wes. The Ayre's ability to present the complete musical picture, portraying the clarity of individual parts as well as the wonderful whole, was unrivaled. And it wasn't just Wes who thought so—the MX-R monoblocks won more first-place votes than any other component in our competition, and outscored our runners-up, the DarTZeel NHB-18NS and Krell Evolution 600, by a stunning 13 votes.



Ayre Acoustics MX-R monoblock power amplifier

RUNNERS-UP (in alphabetical order)

Ars-Sonum Filarmonia integrated amplifier (\$4000; reviewed by John Marks, Vol.30 No.10, October 2007 WWW)

Audio Research Reference 3 preamplifier (\$9995; reviewed by Paul Bolin & Robert J. Reina, Vol.29 No.12 & Vol.30 No.6, December 2006 & June 2007 WWW)

Audio Research Reference 110 power amplifier (\$9995; reviewed by Robert J. Reina, Vol.30 No.8, August 2007 WWW)

Ayre Acoustics K-1x preamplifier (\$7000; reviewed by Wes Phillips, Vol.30 No.6, June 2007 WWW)

DarTZeel NHB-18NS preamplifier (\$23,250; reviewed by Michael Fremer, Vol.30 No.6, June 2007 WWW)

Halcro dm38 power amplifier (\$19,990; reviewed by John Atkinson, Vol.27 No.10 & Vol.30 No.1, October 2004 & January 2007 WWW)

Krell Evolution 600 monoblock amplifier (\$30,000/pair; reviewed by Wes Phillips, Vol.29 No.12 & Vol.30 No.4, December 2006 & April 2007 WWW)

Shindo Masseto preamplifier (\$11,500; reviewed by Art Dudley, Vol.30 No.7, July 2007 WWW)

Simaudio Moon Evolution P-8 preamplifier (\$12,000; reviewed by Kalman Rubinson, Vol.29 No.11, November 2006 WWW)

VTL Reference TL-7.5 Mk.II preamplifier (\$16,500; reviewed by Brian Damkroger, Vol.30 Nos.5 & 6, May & June 2007 WWW)

2007 **ACCESSORY** OF THE YEAR**RealTraps MondoTraps**

(MondoTrap, \$300; Corner MondoTrap, \$350; reviewed by Kalman Rubinson & Jim Austin, Vol.29 No.11 & Vol.30 No.8, November 2006 & August 2007 WWW)

RUNNERS-UP (in alphabetical order)

Audyssey Sound Equalizer (\$2500; reviewed by Kalman Rubinson, Vol.30 No.3, August 2007 WWW)

Ayre Acoustics L-5xe Power Filter (\$1500; reviewed by Michael Fremer, Vol.30 No.7, July 2007)

Cayin Audio HA-1A headphone amplifier (\$795; reviewed by Sam Tellig & Wes Phillips, Vol.29 Nos.6 & 11, June & November 2006)

Furutech DFV-1 Disc Flattener (\$1480; reviewed by Michael Fremer, Vol.30 No.10, October 2007)

Ray Samuels Emmeline The Hornet headphone amplifier (\$350; reviewed by Wes Phillips, Sam Tellig, & John Atkinson, Vol.29 Nos.9 & 12, September & December 2006 WWW)

Shunyata Research Hydra V-Ray AC power conditioner (\$3995; reviewed by Michael Fremer, Vol.30 No.7, July 2007)

WallyTractor universal alignment gauge (\$149; reviewed by Michael Fremer, Vol.30 No.10, October 2007)



RealTraps MondoTrap

Six different components earned first-place votes in this year's crowded competition, but the RealTraps MondoTrap led the pack with 17 votes overall. How excited can a guy get over a large panel of rigid fiberglass and some sound-transparent fabric? Let me tell you: pretty darn excited when it gets you closer to the music, which is exactly what the MondoTrap did for Jim Austin. It lifted a veil from his room, making music even more involving, while taming room modes and giving bass instruments a fuller, clearer, more palpable sound.

If that sounds like some sort of magic, well, it *is*, but it's the sort of magic we audiophiles most appreciate—a magic deeply rooted in science and designed to serve the music. The MondoTraps' rigid fiberglass works to absorb sound energy and dissipate it as heat. Their large size is due to the fact that they work on the lower frequencies, where size really does matter. But it wasn't the Traps' mondo size that stood out in Jim's mind—it was the mondo effect they had on the *sound*.

The WallyTractor universal alignment gauge came in a distant second place with nine total votes, while the lovely Cayin HA-1A headphone amp and purposeful Audyssey Sound Equalizer earned seven votes apiece. First-place votes were also awarded to Ray Samuels' bijou Emmeline The Hornet and Shunyata Research Hydra V-Ray AC power conditioner.