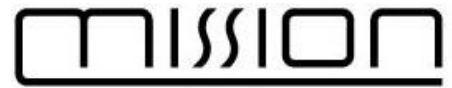


## Press release

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Press contact: Tim Bower

020 8654 8945

07854 966 071

[tim@hashstar.co.uk](mailto:tim@hashstar.co.uk)

[www.mission.co.uk](http://www.mission.co.uk)

+44 (0)1480 447700

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*Above Mission 778X integrated amplifier in black finish*

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## Mission launches first amp since the 1980s

**With copious digital and analogue inputs and captivating sound quality, the 778X is the first integrated amplifier produced under the Mission banner for almost 40 years**

*Cambridgeshire, England* – In 1983, six years after the company's formation, British loudspeaker specialist Mission launched its first integrated stereo amplifier. The 778 was a design of narrower width than typical hi-fi amps and was praised for the quality of its build and circuitry, the simplicity of its controls and its useful range of inputs, all at a relatively affordable price. Importantly, its adroitly balanced sound was a great match for the engaging musicality for which Mission speakers were already famed – that, of course, was Mission's aim.

A year later, Mission launched the Cyrus brand – an offshoot for its amps and, eventually, other audio electronics – leaving Mission to focus solely on loudspeakers. For that reason, the 778 has remained the only integrated amp ever branded solely as a Mission product.

Fast forward to 2022 and Mission is ready to launch another integrated amp under its own banner. The new 778X has much in common with its forebear from 40 years ago – a compact, half-width design that exudes elegant simplicity and delivers a sound that belies its diminutive footprint. Like the original it

sports a useful range of inputs, albeit thoroughly updated to suit modern-day music lovers. And while its circuitry has been entirely redesigned to meet and exceed contemporary standards, the new amp is a great sonic match for Mission's current range, just as the 778 was in its day.



*Left* The 778X's rear panel packs in an impressive array of digital and analogue inputs and outlets

## Well connected

When the original 778 launched, the predominant music formats were vinyl records and cassette tapes. CD had just arrived on the scene, ushering in the dawn of digital audio, but was still several years from becoming a mainstream format. 40 years on and the source devices we use for music, be they digital or analogue, are many and varied – from smartphones and computers to CD players and turntables. The new 778X is built to cater for them all at a high level of quality and an affordable price – with an RRP of £549, it costs considerably less than the original 778's price of £240 when adjusted for inflation (about £745 in today's money).

Inputs for digital sources comprise asynchronous USB Type B and three S/PDIF sockets (one coaxial and two optical), while digital outputs are provided in optical and coaxial flavours. Analogue signals are catered for by three stereo RCA inputs – two line-level plus an MM phono input for turntables – while pre-out sockets permit the addition of an external power amplifier. Bluetooth reception facilitates wireless audio streaming from smartphones, tablets and the like, with support for multiple codecs including aptX and AAC.

The front of the amp sports a pair of smooth-acting rotary controls – one for source selection, the other for volume – surrounded by white LEDs to show current settings. Between these controls are the IR sensor, power button and 6.3mm headphone output – compact, uncluttered design with attractive symmetry, built and finished to a high standard.



*Left* With tactile rotary controls accompanied by white LEDs, the 778X's front panel is refreshingly clean and simple

## Digital delights

Digital sources connected through the USB, coaxial and optical inputs, or paired for Bluetooth reception, take full advantage of the 778X's built-in hi-res DAC. This is based around the ES9018K2M chipset from the Sabre32 Reference family, enabling the amp to benefit from ESS Technology's 32-bit HyperStream architecture and Time Domain Jitter Eliminator to deliver excellent dynamic range and ultra-low distortion. Hi-res PCM is supported to 32-bit/384kHz, alongside DSD to 11.2 MHz (DSD256).

Though technically excellent, Sabre32 Reference DAC chips can be challenging to implement to maximum effect. If the circuitry that accompanies them is not of a sufficient standard, the resulting sound may appear hard and bright; treat them right, however, and the level of detail and musical expression these chips dig from the digital signal is captivating. One such critical element is the post-DAC active filter; Mission's design team has paid great attention to this circuit, using op-amps that were specifically chosen for their synergy with the ES9018K2M.



*Left* Measuring 235x95x380mm (WxHxD), the 778X is a neatly proportioned and well-appointed amp available in black or silver

## Amp it up

The 778X's power amp stage is a Class AB design incorporating a low-noise 200VA toroidal transformer. This is followed by 2x15000uF reservoir capacity (30000uF in total), helping to maintain firm control of the music whilst enabling excellent dynamic range. The amp's output from its gold-plated speaker terminals is conservatively rated at 45W into eight ohms and 65W into four ohms – there's plenty of power on tap to drive any speakers the amp is likely to be partnered with to high volume levels with consummate ease.

The preamp section is kept as simple as possible to maintain signal purity, with line input signals passing to a precision, microprocessor-controlled analogue volume stage. Much effort has gone into the physical layout of the 778X's circuitry, protecting the sensitive preamp section from noise interference. This, plus the use of independent low-noise power supplies for all critical stages, helps the amp to excel sonically across all manner of digital and analogue sources.

## Turntables and headphones

Vinyl lovers will appreciate the addition of a phono stage for moving magnet cartridges. This high-quality, low-noise, JFET-based circuit provides precise RIAA equalisation, adding to the amp's already impressive format flexibility.

Headphone listeners are equally well served by the 778X's dedicated headphone amp. With its current-feedback design and high slew rate, a dynamic and detailed performance with all manner of headphones is assured.

### Perfect partners

The 778X is an ideal amp to partner with a wide range of speakers, from models costing as little as £200 per pair to upmarket designs at several times that price. It isn't designed to solely suit Mission speakers; but it does match them superbly!

To prove the point, Mission is promoting two package deals that combine the 778X with popular standmount models from its range, forming great-value, high-quality audio systems. The first includes a pair of Mission LX-2 MkII speakers at a package price of £649, saving £130 from the individual RRP's. The second upgrades the speakers to the Mission QX-2 MkII at a package price of £799, saving a total of £150. In both cases, the speakers are available in a choice of matt black, matt white or walnut.



*Left* At a package price of £649, the 778X makes a great-value system with Mission's LX-2 MkII speakers

### Mission accomplished

Mission's official slogan – music leads, technology follows – inspires every Mission product design, not least the 778X. It feels like a traditional hi-fi amplifier, with its uncomplicated front-mounted controls and simple remote, yet its specification is tailor-made for modern-day music lovers. Above all, every part of its technical design is focused on delivering sonic excellence – a means to achieve a marvellous musical end.

Its sound is free-flowing and fleet of foot, smoothly controlled yet fully engaging the listener in their music of choice. Crisply defined detail reveals the character of voices and instruments, impressive dynamic range conveys natural impact, and the amp's transient ability keeps feet tapping with rhythmic music. For all its versatility, this is an affordable amp that always puts the music first.

The Mission 778X integrated stereo amplifier is available from December 2022 in a choice of silver or black, at an RRP of £549.



*Clockwise from top left* Mission 778X in black with LX-2 MkII speakers in matt black; Mission 778X in silver with LX-2 MkII speakers in matt white; Mission 778X in black with QX-2 MkII speakers in matt black; Mission 778X in silver with QX-2 MkII speakers in matt white

## MISSION

Mission has built a world-class reputation for advanced audio design since the company's formation in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire in 1977, with an engineering-led approach to product development that has resulted in some of the most popular and iconic loudspeakers ever devised.

Three things have always characterised Mission speakers. First, the cabinets and drive units use innovative materials and sport a distinctive, modern appearance. Second, the sound they produce is fast, detailed and engaging. Third, they deliver excellent sonic and material value for money.

Today, Mission continues to stretch the boundaries of what can be achieved at specific price points, pioneering technologies to create fresh, new designs. The brand now benefits from the unrivalled manufacturing facilities and global reach of parent company IAG, with all the component parts of every speaker made in-house. Yet the company's roots remain firmly entrenched in Huntingdon, where much of Mission's design, servicing and technical support work is still carried out. This, coupled with a design team brimming with homegrown talent, ensures Mission speakers remain as impressive today as they were when the company first established itself at the forefront of the burgeoning British audio scene some 45 years ago.

[www.mission.co.uk](http://www.mission.co.uk)



For more information, please contact Tim Bower  
 T: 020 8654 8945 M: 07854 966071 E: [tim@hashstar.co.uk](mailto:tim@hashstar.co.uk)