

THE
GRYPHON





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Gryphon Essence

Stereo / Mono Power Amplifier

Owner's Manual

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The Gryphon Name

The Gryphon namesake and symbol is an appropriate image for the brand, inspired by Greek mythology, part eagle, part lion, the perfect union of grace and agility with power and authority.

Gryphon Audio Designs is quite simply
“the ultimate choice for the enthusiast who wants the sound with no frills other than the luxury imparted by the fit, feel and finish.”

(Hi-Fi News & Record Review magazine, UK)

The Gryphon Genetic Code

The genetic code of all things Gryphon is derived from what one writer defined as:

“a code of perfectionism, the likes of which I’ve only ever seen at the Bugatti atelier in Alsace or at the great watch houses in Switzerland.

It is the result of not accepting the notion of compromise, on any level.”

(Ken Kessler, audio critic)

At the very core of this genetic code lies what one critic described as Rasmussen’s

“subversion of traditional hi-fi styling”

(HiFi Choice magazine, UK)

with designs *“so clean and simple, yet elaborate.”*

(Positivefeedback.com, USA)

Similar sentiments echo around the world.

In the Very Best Company

In virtually every area of consumer goods, including such diverse fields as fashion, motoring, furniture, wine and spirits, there exists a revered top tier of luxury and excellence, a small, yet crucial, High End segment populated by innovative leaders who march to the beat of a different drum with scant regard for mundane concerns such as mass production or cost.

Their obsessive brief is always sublimely simple: To make their offerings the very best that they can possibly be, for the discerning few who can afford and appreciate them.

With aspirational brands, premium quality, aesthetic design, exclusive materials, advanced technologies and extravagant build quality are key elements that come together to create a rarefied level of luxuriant performance, fit, feel and finish.

While many of the aspirational brands will be familiar to the majority of luxury consumers, there are other activities and interests whose *High End* purveyors are known only to a limited group of cognoscenti.

Audible Illusions

Curiously, High End domestic sound systems remain unexplored territory for many of even the most affluent. This lack of enthusiasm has often been justified by products that could easily be dismissed, because they were, rightfully, deemed to be unattractive or too complicated for casual users who dwell in lovingly crafted and styled domestic environments.

Fortunately, the issue of complexity has been resolved with the emergence of comprehensive home automation management systems with intuitive, customized user interfaces that simplify and integrate access to the functionality of a home entertainment installation.

As for aesthetic considerations, because beauty is in the eye of the beholder, the music lover with a critical, demanding eye can now have the final say in matters of styling and finish with unique, personalized custom exteriors.

For those who perhaps live under the misconception that they are unable to distinguish finer musical nuances as reproduced by the best systems available, the fact is that even the briefest exposure will demonstrate how easy it is to appreciate the enhanced value of great music rendered by true High End home entertainment equipment capable of creating a credible illusion of actually being in the presence of the performers.

The fortunate few with the means to acquire the ultimate *in-home* entertainment owe it to themselves to experience the soul-stirring difference.



The Man Behind the Brand

After 33 years at the helm of iconic Danish High End brand Gryphon Audio Designs, Flemming Erik Rasmussen has retired from the company he created almost unintentionally in 1985 to devote himself to his favourite pastimes which include fly fishing, photography, motorcycles, vintage automobiles and especially his first love, painting.

Rasmussen entered the audio field from an unusual direction after earning a degree in painting and graphic arts at the Aarhus Art Academy in Aarhus, Denmark. He then taught painting and photography for ten years before becoming chief designer of textiles and imprints for Scandinavia's largest sportswear brand.

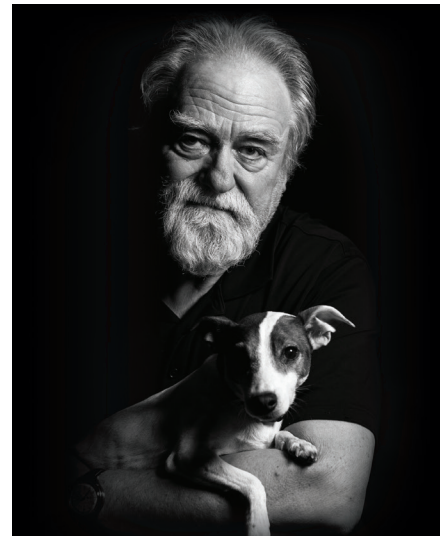
Bitten by the audio bug, Rasmussen resigned to form 2R Marketing, which grew quickly to become Denmark's leading High End audio importer.

Rasmussen's passion for cutting edge audio technologies resulted in the design and manufacture of the Signal Master range of cables and plugs, making him the first to introduce PC-OCC (Pure Crystal Ohno Continuous Casting) cable technology outside Japan.

Gryphon Audio Designs was founded in 1985 as an offshoot of 2R Marketing. The first product, the now legendary Gryphon Head Amp, grew from a one-off spare time project developed only for the designers' own home systems. Although the Head Amp was initially strictly a hobby project, not an actively pursued commercial venture, demand generated by reviews and word of mouth acclaim led to the formal establishment of Gryphon Audio Designs as a separate corporate entity.

Following the immediate success of the Gryphon brand, import activities were phased out in 1993, so that Rasmussen could dedicate his efforts entirely to Gryphon.

Rasmussen's background in fine arts and industrial design imbued every Gryphon product with distinctive, luxuriant styling. His elegant, uniquely Scandinavian black on black designs were the original Nordic Noir, long before TV crime dramas appropriated the term.



Flemming Erik Rasmussen



The legendary Gryphon Head Amp

The Gryphon Story



The Gryphon story is extensively documented in two volumes, *The Gryphon Unplugged: 25 Years of Gryphon Audio Designs* (2010) and *The Art of the Gryphon: Form and Function in a Spiritual Union* (2015), a sumptuous photo gallery of Rasmussen's designs.

In the transfer of daily management in connection with Flemming E. Rasmussen's departure, there has fortunately been no doubt or uncertainty regarding the future direction of the Danish High End brand that continues to garner praise and admiration in audiophile circles around the world.

The enthusiastic and highly skilled Gryphon team of engineers, craftsmen and support staff remains wholly intact at all levels and each and every member continues to stand behind the brand's proven track record and renewed promise to offer the world's most inventive, technically most advanced and aesthetically most satisfying audio creations to the Gryphon audience of serious, dedicated music lovers.

Quite simply, the engineering, artistic and marketing resources that have defined the Gryphon for 35 years remain firmly committed to the founding principles that have been the bedrock of the company from the very beginning.

Gryphon Audio Designs proudly reaffirms our unwavering passion for audio in the service of your listening pleasure.

The Gryphon Master Tape Collection

In the Gryphon listening rooms, we have over the years had exclusive access to a unique library of original master tapes of recordings made during the Golden Age of studio engineering from 1956-1976. Unlike conventional commercial LP releases, these master tapes capture the dynamic contrasts and subtle inner harmonic structure of the musical event, forcing us to work to a higher standard in our efforts to maintain the integrity of the original musical performance.

Design Principles

With state of the art technical equipment and some of the finest minds in the audio engineering field at our disposal, the Gryphon brand continues to define the highest audiophile standards of subjective and technical performance.

The dual mono configuration radically eliminates any possibility of crosstalk or other interference between channels and provides infinite channel separation which contributes to the ability to create space, focus, depth and transparency.

Because the electrical power coming out of your wall fluctuates wildly in terms of voltage and distortion, Gryphon incorporates heavily regulated multi-stage power supplies that act as effective mains conditioning filters. Displays and control circuits are fed by a separate power supply to isolate any digital noise artefacts and effectively prevent them from contaminating the signal path.

While the printed circuit boards in more conventional audio products utilize conductor tracks a mere 35 μm thick, Gryphon employs at least 70 μm traces of the highest purity.

Beginning with our very first product, the Head Amp all Gryphon products have featured extremely wide frequency bandwidth, because the ability to reproduce ultra-sonic frequencies with no difficulty ensures linear phase across the audible frequency range.

The implementation of circuits with wideband frequency response is a painstaking endeavour in which the actual layout and ground pattern of the circuit boards are crucial to the achievement of superior sonic performance with no loss of inherent stability. Wideband frequency response ensures the high slew-rate essential to the realistic handling of the ultra-fast transients which routinely occur in live music and is crucial in recreating the natural decay of musical instruments.

Wide bandwidth also improves phase characteristics, for more correct sound-staging and imaging. All Gryphon designs are realized with none or an absolute minimum of negative feedback, which when present in large amounts can actually increase transient intermodulation distortion.

All Gryphon amplifiers are designed with zero negative global feedback except for the Gryphon Antileon series of power amplifiers which have a minimum amount of negative global feedback for improved linearity and bandwidth.

Gryphon research into the detrimental effects of magnetically induced distorted (MID) has led to the elimination of magnetizable materials wherever possible. To eliminate the effects of stray magnetic fields, non-magnetic materials are employed throughout, with the unavoidable exception of the transformer shield box. The mechanical design of the cabinet and assembly methods are all carefully calculated to ensure minimal resonance, either through the use of mechanically grounded high mass or decoupling. Vibration-sensitive components, capacitors in particular, are thus guaranteed a non-resonant environment.



The heavy, thick chassis offers a vibration-proof environment for the sensitive electronics inside and provides crucial shielding from a polluted world of low and high-frequency radio waves, power-line radiation and other electrical interference. Meticulous attention to such issues makes a significant contribution to the relaxing, open and transparent Gryphon sound.

Unique, non-invasive protection circuitry offers reliable, fuss-free protection without compromising signal purity and signal path simplicity. The ground path has been carefully laid out in order to achieve superior sonic performance with no loss of stability. Component layout has been designed to ensure the shortest conceivable signal path.

Exhaustive investigation underlies the selection of every component part and many original, proprietary components are custom-built exclusively for Gryphon. Because what is left out is just as important as what goes in, an absolute minimum of internal wiring is included.

By lavishing attention on each aspect of the circuit and fully understanding the purpose and behaviour of every single part of the whole, our designers can optimize performance in each section, before moving on to the next step. This ensures simplicity, a short signal path and a unity of purpose with a single, well-defined objective: musical purity.

In the interest of ultimate fidelity, tone controls, balance controls and other unnecessary components have been banished from the signal path.

Exterior Design

From the very beginning, every Gryphon product has offered stunning audio performance, sumptuous styling and superb user-friendliness, catering to the needs of the discerning audiophile who demands musicality, convenience and aesthetics, all without compromise. In every Gryphon product, form follows function in a unique synthesis of aesthetics and practicality. Gryphon stands for sophisticated technology with a high standard of industrial finish that also incorporates the best of handcraftsmanship. The peerless finish, build quality, ergonomics and pride of ownership that contribute to the totality of the Gryphon concept can only be fully understood and appreciated up close and in person.

Every Gryphon product offers a distinctive, luxuriant finish which arises organically out of the audio circuit design and the user interface for a truly unique integration of form and function.

Manufacture and Assembly

At our laboratories and manufacturing facilities in Denmark, we maintain full control over every aspect of development and production, and the members of our conscientious staff diligently follow each Gryphon model from initial concept to early prototype, through to final quality control. Printed circuit boards are assembled by a supplier of precision military and medical equipment with strict standards of quality control and pre-inspection of components. Chassis parts are manufactured by specialists chosen solely for their outstanding quality of workmanship. In every aspect of every Gryphon product, the same stringent standards of excellence apply. Each unit is individually tested, after a 48-hour burn-in sequence, each product undergoes both electrical and audio performance tests again.





The Home of the Gryphon is located in beautiful surroundings in Ry, Denmark

Placement

Do not place your Gryphon component on or near any source of heat such as power amplifiers. Do not place any object on the top covering the ventilation holes of your Gryphon component. Do not place it in an enclosed space such as a cabinet, unless ample ventilation is provided. If these guidelines are not observed, overheating may result.

AC Voltage

Your Gryphon unit is especially made for the AC voltage of the country to which it has been shipped. If the voltage has been changed, the warranty is void and the product may be unsafe or malfunction. Correct AC polarity contributes greatly to optimum performance. If you are not using a three-pin, non-reversible power plug, please experiment with the orientation of the plug for optimum performance.

Choice of Cables

Because your Gryphon component is a high-resolution audio device, it will immediately reveal the characteristics and possible limitations of the other components in your system, as well as those of the interconnects and loudspeaker cables used to connect your system.

Wiring should never be utilized as “equalizers” to correct errors elsewhere in the system. Instead, any error should be corrected at the source, so that interconnects and loudspeaker cables can be selected solely on the basis of sonic neutrality. For this reason, we employ Gryphon’s own range of interconnects and cables at every stage in the design of every Gryphon product.

Care and Maintenance

Gryphon products are handcrafted by individuals who take great pride in the high level of fit and finish which we achieve. To maintain your Gryphon components in pristine condition, please follow these simple instructions. Metal surfaces may be cleaned with a damp cloth. Some products made for treatment of vinyl interiors in cars may be useful. Test the product on a non-visible surface, before using any fluids. Acrylic surfaces should only be wiped with a very soft, dry cloth. Small scratches may be removed with polish for acrylic surfaces. Fingerprints may be removed with a damp cloth. Do NOT use spirits or paper tissue.

Burn-In and Warm-Up

Your Gryphon unit has been thoroughly tested and burned in before shipping. Performance will continue to improve during the first 40 – 50 hours of normal use. After this period, optimum performance will be reached approximately 45 minutes after turn-on.

Mains Switch

The main ON/OFF switch on the Essence Power is placed on the bottom center of the unit, near the front.



SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

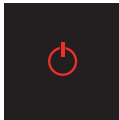
Hazardous live AC power! Please find important safety instructions on p. 24

Essence Power Stereo & Mono Manual



Figure 1. Essence in Standby

User Instructions



ON/STB touch button:

ON/STB symbol is red when the Essence is in standby mode.

(If the Gryphon Logo blinks three times in STANDBY mode, after activating the ON/STB touch button, this indicates incorrect mains voltage.)

Turn-ON procedure:

1. Turn ON source components, Turntable, CD-players, etc.
2. Turn ON preamplifier.
3. Allow a few moments for components to stabilize.
4. Turn ON the Essence Power Amplifier.

Turn-OFF procedure:

1. Turn off the Essence Power Amplifier.
2. Turn off the rest of the system.

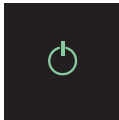
ALWAYS TURN OFF THE ESSENCE POWER AMPLIFIER BEFORE CONNECTING OR DISCONNECTING ANY CABLES TO THE SYSTEM.

Essence Power



Figure 2. Essence Power in the default ON Standard mode

Essence Power ON



After activating the ON/STB touch button, the ON/STB symbol lights green. The Gryphon Logo and the blue light bar blink for approximately 25 seconds before they both are constantly illuminated.

Essence Power

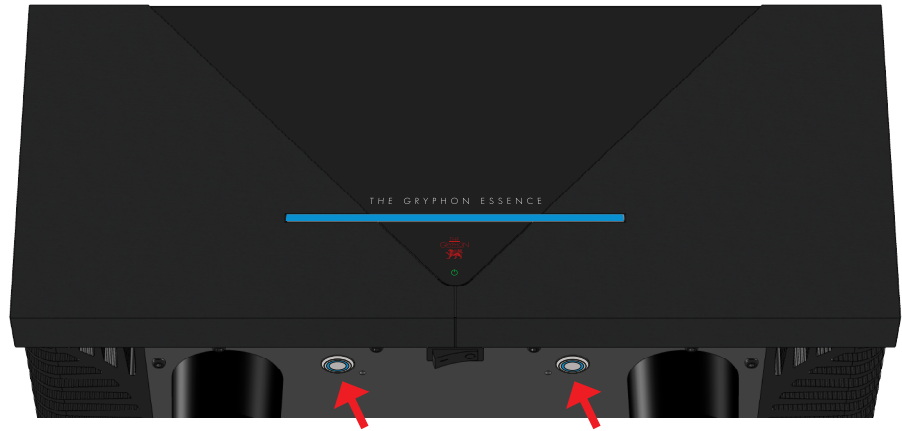


Figure 3.

Mode switch

Bias switch

Changing Lightbar Mode

The lightbar serves as an amplifier mode and bias indicator.

The Essence mode setting is toggled with the Mode switch at the bottom, left side of the Essence, see Figure 3.

1. In standard mode 1 (default), the Essence lightbar is blue.

When changing Bias setting in this mode, the actual Bias setting: Low (green) or High (red) is indicated approximately 10 seconds before the lightbar returns to blue.

2. In mode two, the lightbar permanently shows the actual amplifier bias setting:
Red indicates Bias High and green indicates Bias Low.

3. In mode three, all light indication except the green ON symbol is off (Stealth mode).

When changing Bias setting in Stealth mode, the actual Bias setting, Low (green) or High (red) is indicated approximately for 10 seconds before the lightbar returns to off (Stealth).

Essence Power

To be able to see the current Essence lightbar mode, the lightbar's white light changes status when toggling the Mode switch. See the three illustrations on the next two pages:



Figure 4. Lightbar indicating Standard mode 1

Standard mode 1 is chosen, when the left segment of the lightbar lights up white.



Figure 5. Lightbar indicating mode 2

Lightbar mode 2 is chosen, when the first and second segment of the lightbar light up white.

Essence Power



Figure 6. Lightbar indicating Stealth mode 3

Stealth mode 3 is chosen, when the complete lightbar lights up white.

Essence Power

Changing Bias Setting

Bias setting is changed (toggled) with the Bias switch at the bottom, right side of the Essence. See figure 3 on page 13.



Figure 7. Essence in Bias Low

Bias Low is active when the lightbar is all green. Essence runs in Class A/B in this setting.



Figure 8. Essence in Bias High

Bias High is active when the lightbar is all red. Essence runs in full Class A in this setting.

Essence Power

Green Bias

If you own a Gryphon preamplifier with Green Bias output, you can connect the Green Bias cable and thus enable the Essence Power amplifier to automatically change bias with reference to the current position of the preamplifier's volume control.

Please note that the green bias system and cable are not in the signal path and only refer to the volume control setting of the preamplifier.

The Essence Power amplifier will change bias setting corresponding to preprogramed switching points from the preamplifier's volume control. It is possible to change these volume control switching points in your Gryphon preamplifier, please refer to the manual for the preamplifier.

In order to enable Green Bias control; the Essence Power amplifier must be set manually to Bias High using the Bias switch on the bottom of the Essence Power amplifier.

Please refer to pages 13 and 16).

The Essence Power amplifier will ignore Green Bias control if you manually set it to Bias Low using the BIAS switch on the bottom of the Essence Power amplifier.

The Essence Power will change to Bias High if receiving "Bias Medium" and "Bias High" commands from the preamplifier.

It will change to Bias Low if receiving "Bias Low" command from the preamplifier.

If you remove the green bias link cable between the Essence Power amplifier and the Gryphon preamplifier, the Essence Power amplifier will automatically revert to manual bias operation only.

If you own a Gryphon preamplifier with only one green bias link output, and you have two Essence Power Mono amps, do the following:

1. Connect the extra green bias link cable supplied with the Mono's, between the two Essence Power Mono channels, Green Bias input and pass-thru.
2. Then connect the second green bias cable between one of the Essence Power Mono's (Green Bias input or pass-thru) and your Gryphon preamplifier's green bias link output.

Rear Panel Connections



Figure 9. Essence Stereo connections, seen from rear panel

From top:

Right and left stereo channel XLR inputs.

Pin 1. Ground
Pin 2. Positive
Pin 3. Negative

Right and left stereo channel +/- speaker terminals.

Main fuse holder:

100-120Vac: T 10A / 250V
220-240Vac: T 5A / 250V

Mains input socket:

IEC Appliance Inlet C20
(for power cord with IEC C19 receptacle)

Chassis ground terminal.

12VDC link input and pass-thru:

Mini Jack socket. Positive on tip.

Green Bias input and pass-thru

Rear Panel Connections



Figure 10. Essence Mono connections, seen from rear panel

From top:

Mono channel XLR inputs.

Pin 1. Ground
Pin 2. Positive
Pin 3. Negative

Mono channel +/- speaker terminals.

Main fuse holder:

100-120Vac: T 10A / 250V
220-240Vac: T 5A / 250V

Mains input socket:

IEC Appliance Inlet C20
(for power cord with IEC C19 receptacle)

Chassis ground terminal.

12VDC link input and pass-thru:

Mini Jack socket. Positive on tip.

Green Bias input and pass-thru

Features and Specifications

- Dual Mono configuration
- Zero global negative feedback
- 20 (Stereo) or 40 (Mono version) very high current bipolar output transistors
- 440,000 μF (Stereo) or 880,000 μF (Mono version) capacitor bank
- Balanced dual differential class A input circuitry followed by a high-speed voltage amplifying Class A stage
- Fully regulated low noise power supply for all voltage amplifying stages
- DC servo coupling
- Frequency-independent damping factor
- Polypropylene capacitors used for local power supply decoupling
- Four-layer up to 70 μm copper printed circuit boards
- Custom made 1350VA toroidal transformer
- Separate power supply for digital and analog circuits
- Soft Start turn-on prevents triggering of fuses in the home electrical system
- Gold-plated Neutrik XLR socket for one balanced input per channel
- Gold-plated custom-made binding posts
- 12VDC link in for power up and down
- Automatic Green Bias setting or manual Low/High bias
- Non-invasive protection system
- RGB LED bar indicating Low/High Bias status
- Standby current consumption < 0.5W
- EU CE approval
- Designed and built in Denmark

Specifications Stereo version:

- 2 x 50W @ 8 Ω , 2 x 100W @ 4 Ω , 2 x 190W @ 2 Ω at 115V/230V AC supply
- Output impedance: 0.015 Ω
- Bandwidth (-3dB): 0.3 Hz - 350 kHz
- Power Supply Capacity (both channels): 440,000 μF
- Gain: +31.0dB
- Input Impedance, balanced (20-20,000 Hz): 20 k Ω

Specifications Mono version (each Mono unit):

- 1 x 50W @ 8 Ω , 1 x 100W @ 4 Ω , 1 x 200W @ 2 Ω at 115V/230V AC supply
- Output impedance: 0.0075 Ω
- Bandwidth (-3dB): 0.3Hz - 350 kHz
- Power Supply Capacity (each Mono unit): 440,000 μF
- Gain: +31.0dB
- Input Impedance, balanced (20-20,000 Hz): 20 k Ω

Dimensions:

- 47cm X 24cm X 46cm (W x H x D), 45 kg net. each cabinet.

Specifications can be changed without notice.

Error Indication

The Essence lightbar also serves as a possible electrical error indicator.



Figure 11. Lightbar indicating error in Left channel



Figure 12. Lightbar indicating error in Right channel

Two different error situations can be indicated:

1. An overheat temperature error is indicated when the lightbar is blinking red **slowly**.
2. A DC/HF error is indicated when the lightbar is blinking red **rapidly**.

When excessive heat is detected, the Essence will mute and the amplifier will enter stand-by mode. Normal operation can resume when the temperature is within safe operating limits.

If a DC/HF error is detected, the Essence will mute and the amplifier will enter stand-by mode.

Gryphon Keepsakes

To fully express your pride in the ownership of a Gryphon product, we offer a range of Gryphon branded accessories, apparel and more.

Gryphon CD & Super 45 rpm heavyweight Vinyl



Gryphon business card holder, designed by Georg Jensen



The Gryphon Sculpture, created by sculptor Kaj Hansen, individually sandcast, polished and hand-finished

Gryphon carpet, 2x3m or 1.5x2m



Book

The Art of the Gryphon: Form and Function in a Spiritual Union, 140 pages photo gallery

Warranty & Support

The Gryphon Essence Power is warranted against failures arising through faulty workmanship and materials for a period of 2 years from date of purchase. The warranty is not transferable.

This warranty is only valid in the country where the product was purchased.

All claims under this warranty must be made to the distributor in the buyer's country by returning the unit securely packed in the original box with all accessories, postage/freight prepaid and insured. The unit will be repaired or replaced at no charge for parts and labor.

This warranty remains valid only if the serial number of the unit has not been defaced or removed and repairs are not performed by non-authorized Gryphon dealers or distributors.

The warranty does not cover damage due to misuse, accident or neglect. **This warranty is not valid if the operation voltage of the product has been changed or other modifications are performed.**

The distributor or manufacturer, Gryphon Audio Designs, Denmark, retains the exclusive right to make such judgement on the basis of inspection.

The retailer, distributor or manufacturer of the Gryphon shall not be liable for consequential damage arising from the use, misuse or failure of this product, including injuries to persons or property.

Please do not contact Gryphon for repair, warranty issues or technical questions. Our local representatives are competent and happy to help you.

To secure the best service, the enclosed warranty registration card must be filled out and returned to the manufacturer within 10 days of purchase.

Alternatively, you may wish to register online from our website. www.gryphon-audio.com

To confirm your warranty registration, you will receive a little Gryphon token to welcome you to the family of Gryphon owners.

Notes

Gryphon Model:	
Serial No:	
Date of purchase:	
Dealer:	
Country:	

Important Safety Instructions

1. Read these instructions.
2. Keep these instructions.
3. Heed all warnings.
4. Follow all instructions.
5. Do not use this apparatus near water.
6. Clean only with dry cloth.
7. Do not block any ventilation openings. Install in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
8. Do not install near any heat sources such as radiators, heat registers, stoves, or other apparatus(including amplifiers) that produce heat.
9. Do not defeat the safety purpose of the polarized or grounding-type plug.
US power plugs (NEMA5-15) only: A polarized plug has two blades with one wider than the other. A grounding type plug has two blades and a third grounding prong. The wide blade or the third prong are provided for your safety. If the provided plug does not fit into your outlet, consult an electrician for replacement of the obsolete outlet.
10. Protect the power cord from being walked on or pinched particularly at plugs, convenience receptacles, and the point where they exit from the apparatus.
11. Only use attachments/accessories specified by the manufacturer.
12. Unplug this apparatus during lightning storms or when unused for long periods of time.
13. Refer all servicing to qualified service personnel. Servicing is required when the apparatus has been damaged in any way, liquid has been spilled or objects have fallen into the apparatus, the apparatus has been exposed to rain or moisture, does not operate normally, or has been dropped.
14. Do not open the equipment to reduce the risk of electrical shock. Refer all disassembling to qualified service personnel.
15. **WARNING:** To reduce the risk of fire or electric shock, this apparatus should not be exposed to rain or moisture and objects filled with liquids, such as vases, should not be placed on this apparatus.
16. To completely disconnect this equipment from the mains, disconnect the power supply cord plug from the receptacle.
17. The mains plug of the power supply cord shall remain readily operable.
18. No naked flame sources, such as lighted candles, should be placed on the apparatus

**There are multiple internal fuses in the Essence Power Amplifier.
Fuse values are printed on the Essence Power main printed circuit board.**

