

HDBaseT to a T

This multiroom system will have you routing 4K like a pro, says **Steve May**

THE ARCAINE WORLD of matrix switchers is generally restricted to professional AV installers who need high-spec signal distribution, usually for large properties with drive-in wardrobes and subterranean gyms.

But now CYP has produced a matrix switcher for the rest of us. Straddling the prosumer market, its MA-421 is generously specified, and could easily provide the backbone for a two-zone UHD system in an apartment or family home, yet is small enough to accommodate amidst gear in a rack, although you'll also need to squirrel away its power brick.

The kit contains an HDBaseT/HDMI matrix switcher/stereo amplifier (2 x 20W, with Phoenix-style terminals) and partnering receiver, the PUV-1710LRX-AVLC. The latter is a small unit which would typically serve a flatscreen in a second room. All that's needed to link them is Cat 6/6a/7 cable, which is where HDBaseT works its magic.

As you might expect from a brand that specialises in pro-grade matrices, neither component is particularly pretty (more decidedly functional), but they are robust. The MA-421 has four HDMI inputs, and is supportive of 2160/60p, Dolby Vision HDR and HDCP 2.2. There's one HDMI output for a local screen, with a mirrored HDBaseT output.

Alongside this is a second-zone HDBaseT RJ45 output, which links to the diddy receiver via Cat cable. CYP's AVLC (Adaptive Visually Lossless Compression) technology is used to deliver 2160/60p, with HDR/Dolby Vision compatibility, to both HDBaseT outputs.

All in one

HDBaseT is rather clever. Standardised in 2010, it can convey video in 4K resolution up to 35m, or HD to

The MA-421 will feed two displays in one room, and a third in another zone via HDBaseT



SPECIFICATIONS

CONNECTIONS: 4 x HDMI inputs; 1 x RJ45 (control); RS232-C; 1 x HDMI output (Zone A); 2 x RJ45 outputs (Zone A and Zone B HDBaseT); 5 x IR outputs; 1 x 3.5mm audio output; Phoenix speaker-level stereo output
AMPLIFIER POWER OUTPUT (CLAIMED): 2 x 20W
DIMENSIONS: 219(w) x 156(d) x 78(h)mm
WEIGHT: 1.3kg

ALSO FEATURING: CYP Control App (iOS/Android); web GUI; learning IR remote control; AVLC (Adaptive Visually Lossless Compression); LPCM, Dolby Digital Plus, Dolby TrueHD, Dolby Atmos and DTS-HD Master Audio multichannel passthrough; Dolby Vision

70m, along with audio, data and power. It'll even pass through multichannel PCM and bitstream audio formats (including Dolby Digital Plus, Dolby Atmos and DTS-HD MA), so this receiver could actually serve another home cinema system in that second zone. As well as its RJ45 connector, it has a single HDMI with ARC, plus two mini jacks for IR blaster and extender use.

Beneath the hood there's even more sophistication, including RS232 control, Telnet and a web GUI, not that normal folks need to worry about such things. If you do want to get your hands dirty, you should download Discovery Device software, available from the CYP website. Suitably empowered, you can then decide how deep you want to go down the rabbit hole.

This matrix is, at its simplest, a convenient 4K switcher. You can cycle through connected sources for display from its main HDMI output, as well as those for the second zone.

It comes with a rather daunting-looking IR learning remote. If you feel the need, its buttons can be reprogrammed using the aforementioned web GUI. There's also CYP's control app, if you'd rather use a smartphone or tablet.

For me, there are two key objectives for any HDBaseT matrix, ease of use and distributed AV quality. This CYP scores highly on both

counts. The good news is it's literally plug and play. I simply powered the system up, connected a 4K Blu-ray source and was good to go; local HDMI switching is straightforward. Then I connected the HDBaseT receiver to the matrix using a 20m Cat6 cable, connected an HDMI, and after a few seconds of handshaking, the same sound and vision poured forth.

There are no obvious compression artefacts in the image; detail, greyscale and colour fidelity mirror the source. You don't even need to find a local mains supply for the receiver, thanks to the PoH (Power over HDBaseT) technology. Genius!

If you've a need for pro-grade UHD signal distribution, CYP's MA-421 is nigh-on perfect. Build quality inspires confidence, and there's a huge amount of versatility built-in (although you can take what it offers at face-value, without incurring undue complication). This is how HDMI switching and HDBaseT should work ■

AV INFO

PRODUCT: HDMI HDBaseT matrix amplifier and distribution system

POSITION: Part of CYP's prosumer line, for two-zone setups

PEERS: Wyestorm 4x4 HDBaseT Lite Matrix

HCC VERDICT



CYP MA-421

→ £1,250 → www.cypeurope.com

WE SAY: This prosumer HDMI HDBaseT matrix kit is just the thing for routing 4K AV. Plug-and-play attitude disguises a raft of functionality.