



MOOR AMPS ANGEL 4

Hifiandmusicsource.com review of the Moor Amps Angel 4 Amplifier & the Angel preamplifier
By Simon Wilce, published on 17 September 2021



“
...this is audio
heaven
”

I recently thought I had approached audiophile nirvana with the introduction of Tellurium Q speaker cables to a Chord Étude power amplifier combined with the Kudos Cardea C10 standmounted speakers and the super clean Auralic Vega streaming DAC. Without giving this review away too early, this is all blown away now with my two weeks so far with this Moor Amps Angel 4 amplifier and the sibling Angel preamplifier.



DESIGN

The Moor Amps Angel 4 is a class A/B power amplifier offering a claimed 75W RMS per channel into 8 ohms. It is a scaled-down version of the stunning Angel 6, the main ideas behind the angel amplifiers being one of very low feedback, thereby low noise, and high current delivery. Inside the Angel 4, there are separate electronic islands that separate the management of the power supply and the amplifier output. The more powerful Angel 6 has three of these internal electronic islands, additionally separating the power supply from the input stages in the amplifier.

The Moor Amps Angel 4 has a claimed frequency response of 5Hz to 50kHz +/- 1dB. The quoted THD is less than 0.01% with the IMD also quoted less than 0.01%, this being the Intermodulation Distortion (IMD) in the amplifier, this is something Tim Narramore the designer of Moor Amps believes is of particular importance. It is IMD that can cause 'muddying' of sound when several frequencies are present and why it needs to be properly managed. The Angel amplifiers are designed to be linear which, combined with low feedback, produces a very low IMD. This low IMD delivers exceptional transparency which I am fortunate to experience with the setup I have, see below.

I am using the Moor Amps Angel 4 with the matching Moor Amps Angel preamplifier. This is a singularly beautiful piece of analogue equipment designed just to organise and present the signal to the power amplifier with no frills and it does the job perfectly. It has RCA and XLR output. The Moor Amps Angel 4 only takes RCA input, but the Moor Amps Angel 6 can receive XLR input as well. This is something I would have liked to see in the 4 as well, however, in the interests of cost-saving and making the 4 that bit more affordable, these compromises are necessary.

The Angel 4 has just a pair of RCA style inputs, one for each channel, an on/off switch at the front and a pair of solid speaker binding posts per channel.

The heavy casing is important to the design with different panel thicknesses to cancel each other out and avoid vibration in the components.

MOOR AMPS ANGEL PREAMPLIFIER

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The preamplifier itself is passive, so it doesn't do a lot to the signal path in respect of adding to the signal save for controlling the volume.

The Angel-pre has four RCA inputs a unity-gain AV input and a tape-in out loop (old school!). The Angel-Pre (as it is known) comes with a solid remote control that is a beautiful hunk of metal with volume and input control, a mute function that can be set to just reduce the output, not mute it completely and a power button. The Moor Amps Angel 4 and Angel-pre can be linked to enable power management to be controlled with a single button press.

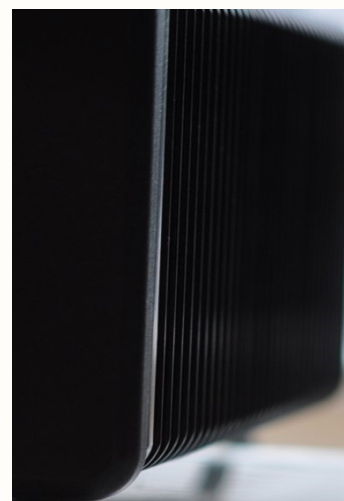


QUALITY

The Moor Amps Angel 4 has a clean look that belies its performance. The heat fins to the sides are deliberately milled round to avoid injury. The aluminium casing is chosen to avoid magnetic field effects and has that anodised effect to soften it.

The Angel 4 just has the on/off button at the front, that's it, the front fascia does require careful finger management. There is a beautiful, understated sea blue 'moor amps' illuminated LED on the front, telling you the amplifier is awake, it is reminiscent of the glowing green 'Naim' logos I am familiar with.

The Moor Amps Angel 4 amplifier dimensions are 430mm x 340mm x 120mm (w x d x h). It weighs in at a hefty 16kg.



PERFORMANCE

REVIEW EQUIPMENT

I'm reviewing the Moor Amps Angel 4 with the Angel-pre and the beautiful Moon 280D streaming DAC with Atlas Mavros interconnects between the Moon and the preamplifier. The DAC is ideally suited to the preamplifier as it has unity output, only. Speaker output remains with the now legendary (for me) Kudos Cardea C10 standmounted speakers. I'm using the amazingly transparent Tellurium Q Ultra Black II speaker cable, that delivered my recent Eureka moment, from the Angel 4 to the C10s. I'm supporting the C10s with a REL T/5i subwoofer, connected via the speaker terminals.

INITIAL THOUGHTS

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I usually go to a few familiar tracks and using the Moon 280D and the MiND 2 controller I went to Amos Lee's *Keep It Loose, Keep It Tight* (Qobuz, FLAC, 44.1kHz), to check the resolution in the system is retained by the Angel 4. Sure, enough the flash of the finger in the guitar strings is heightened and the detail in the vocal is soulful. The vocal in the following track, called *Seen It All Before* is similarly expressive and the bass line accompanying the track is controlled and tight.

Next a check-in with Fleet Foxes' *Fool's Errand* from the album *Crack-Up* (Qobuz, FLAC, 96kHz) to check if the Angel 4 retains width and space. It's clear and rhythmic and comes across beautifully. The amplifier is offering the space the recording needs.



I instinctively queue up my favourite Fleet Foxes track, *Helplessness Blues* (Qobuz, FLAC, 96kHz), and that too is spacious, and the energy from the numerous guitars comes across with perfect rhythm and pace. The vocal remains clear and centred throughout the track and the transition in the middle 8 at 2'48" with the change of pace works nicely.

DYNAMICS

With an amplifier, I guess you are listening to see if it can transfer rhythm and deliver the dynamics in a track without crushing it. That's what I'm thinking at any rate, so it is most likely using established and favourite tracks are going to get you the answer you need, for me, that's Ed Harcourt's track *This One's for You* (MQA Studio, 44.1kHz) and album wise it's Ryan Adams' *Gold*, a masterpiece in my view though it is now shining less brightly than before for external reasons.

Channel separation, as you would expect with a synergistic pre and power arrangement is excellent. Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* is a great album for demonstrating this quality.

RHYTHM & SOUNDSTAGE

I am moved to find a rhythm and that tingle, the moment when you realise something is really, really special. Kasabian's L.S.F. delivers this moment accidentally as it appears in the MiND 2 playlist queue, the Angel pulls the bass line rolling through C10s. I was actually queueing up Jay-Z's Empire State of Mind (MQA Studio 44.1kHz) to find that relentless rhythm and dynamic drive and the Angel 4 delivered the pounding beat in an effortless four minutes and thirty-six seconds

I wanted to be clear in my mind where the amplifier was adding to my listening experience, so I inevitably ended up in the Radiohead back catalogue. Whilst King of Limbs is certainly not my favourite album of theirs, I really think Codex (Qobuz, 24 bit, 44.1kHz) is a stunning moment in time. The Angel 4 delivers the soundstage delicately with the help of the C10s, there is height to the vocal, width with the brass and an undefined, ethereal presence, particularly with a bit of volume behind it. Decks Dark, from Radiohead's A Moon Shaped Pool (Qobuz, 24 bits, 48kHz) delivers a similar cinematic soundstage, the detail and the dominance of the stage are as fulfilling as I can recall. There is a richness to this Moor Amp Angel 4 power amplifier, and I must say, after a good few days of fairly intense listening (born of joy), I am experiencing no aural fatigue that can sometimes emerge with certain electronics.

As an aside, I am really liking the heavy yet tactile remote control, this is my remote control of the year!

OVERALL

I know I am listening to nearly eight thousand pounds worth of pre and power amplification from Moor Amps but their synergy and simplicity in presentation make them a must-listen if this is anywhere near your budget. Although Moor Amps is a smaller British producer there is something very special going on here and the audio world and you should hear it.

Why are these amplifiers called Angel? It seems Tim enjoys Wille and the Bandits live and their track Angel resonated on an early assessment of the Angel 6s capabilities, the name has endured, good choice, this is audio heaven. Editor's Pick means I'd like to buy it, I have a lot of Naim equipment, but I'm working on it. This is an easy Editor's Pick.

The Moor Amps Angel 4 is retailing at £4,995 and the Angel-pre is £2,795