
Subject: Re: What's your preferred solid-state amp now?
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 04 Aug 2026 17:29:06 GMT
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I have a strong affection for the Yamaha receivers of the early 1980s, especially the CR-840 and CR-1040. The models just before that - the CR-820 and CR-1020 - are also good, but I slightly prefer the CR-840 and CR-1040.

The CR-x20 series used discrete bipolar components, whereas the CR-x40 series used integrated circuits. I owned both, and while the x20 series is easier to maintain, I preferred the sound of the x40 series. Trouble is though, you can't get the integrated circuits anymore, so a broken x40 requires a donor to repair.

What I loved about those models is actual a trivia detail, but one that makes a huge difference in overall quality, in my opinion. The Yamaha engineers purposely designed the amps so that - as long as the input wasn't overdriven - a full clockwise rotation of the volume knob set gain just below clipping. Essentially, given an appropriate source, you couldn't make it clip.

As a qualitative matter, it's very important for a solid-state amplifier to not be driven into clipping. As long as that rule isn't violated, a well-designed solid-state amp is pretty good.

So when the Yamaha engineers took the time to factor that into their overall design, it made those amplifiers pretty awesome, in my opinion. Ironically, the implementation would have only required a simple voltage divider - a couple resistors - in each signal path. Just don't allow the volume potentiometer to overdrive the output stage. But that one simple detail made all the difference in the world to me.
