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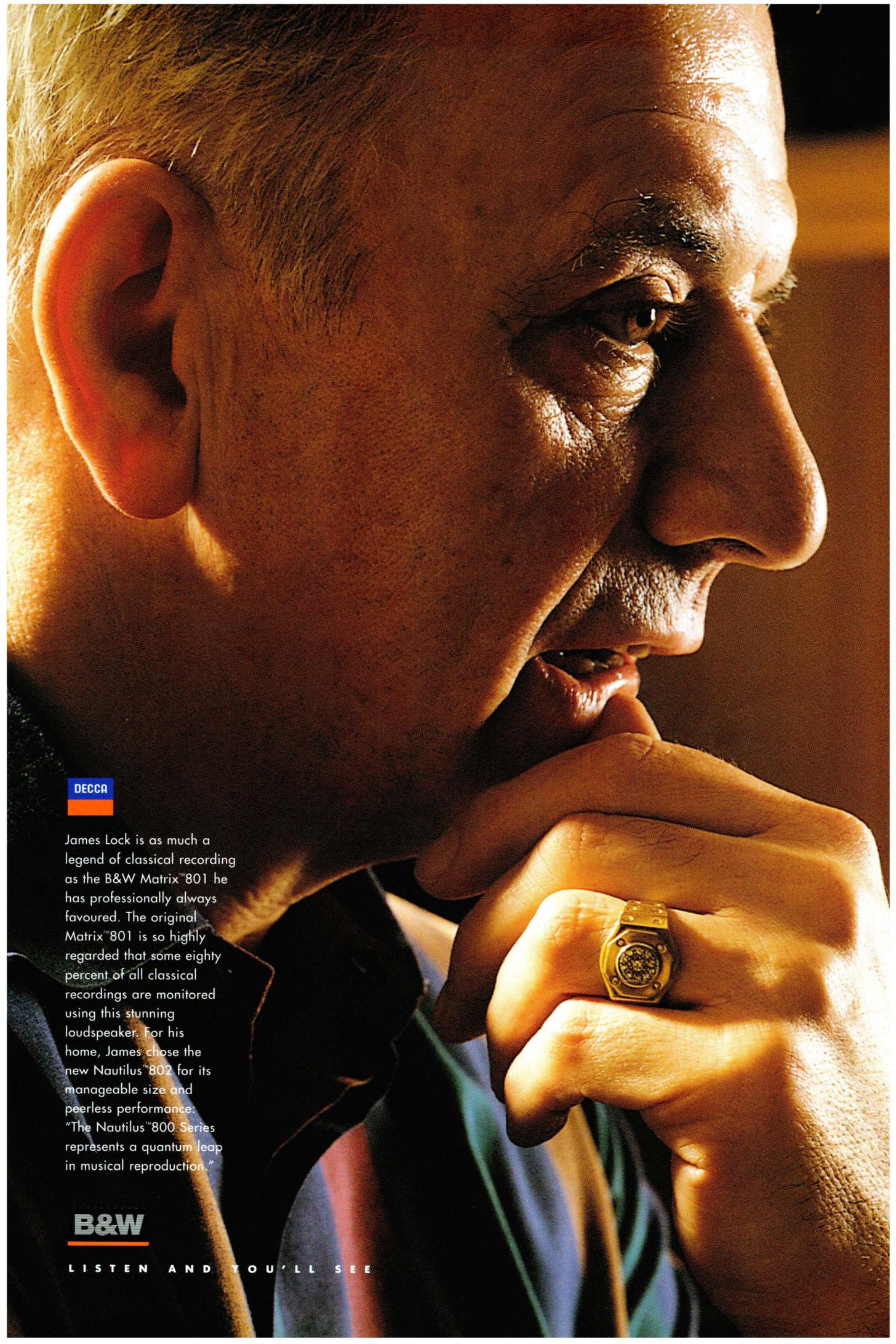
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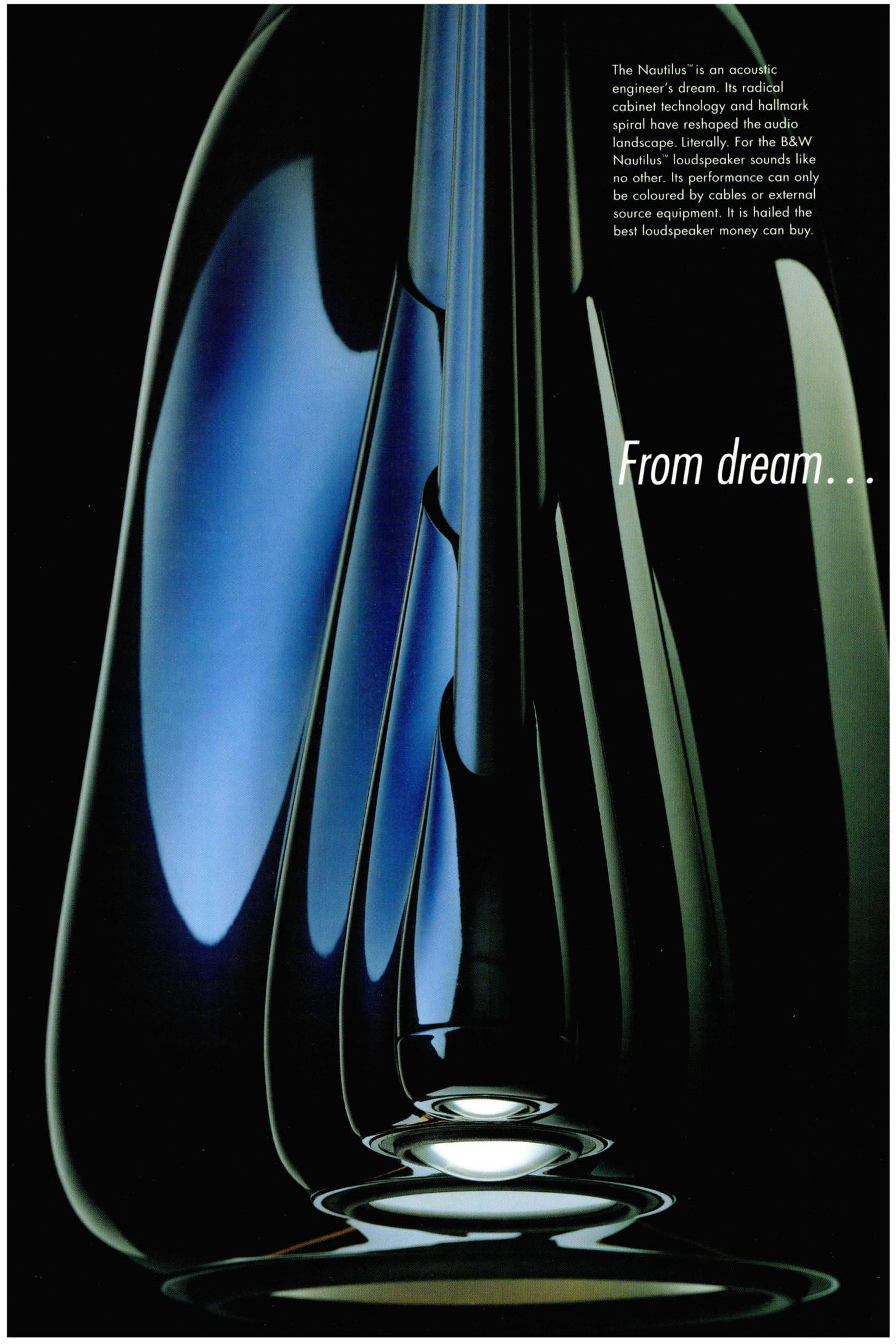


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James Lock is as much a legend of classical recording as the B&W Matrix™801 he has professionally always favoured. The original Matrix™801 is so highly regarded that some eighty percent of all classical recordings are monitored using this stunning loudspeaker. For his home, James chose the new Nautilus™802 for its manageable size and peerless performance: "The Nautilus™800 Series represents a quantum leap in musical reproduction."

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# HI-FI CHOICE

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*Hi-Fi Choice* is the UK hi-fi magazine representative of the European Imaging & Sound Association (EISA). Every year EISA honours the finest hi-fi and home cinema products throughout Europe.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Stan Vincent introduces a new look and content for *Hi-Fi Choice*. Plus: new Editor's Choice awards.



A great philosopher once said: "They must often change who would be constant in happiness or wisdom." Magazine publishers certainly subscribe to such a view. It is an easy way of blowing fresh air into a magazine to redesign it. But all too often, a cosmetic redesign is only skin-deep, when what's needed is a full-scale investment in editorial quality.

Unlike other, glossier magazines, on *Hi-Fi Choice* we have always tried to invest heavily in editorial quality. Our rigorous mega-tests, carried out by specialist reviewers, are not cheap to undertake. So our purpose in redesigning the magazine this month is to make a good thing better. Our Art Editor, Del Gentleman, has burned gallons of midnight oil poring over typefaces and layouts, seeking not only to aid ease of reading and clarity, but at the same time, to cram in even more useful information. Del's done a great job, and gets my most sincere vote of thanks.

However, not all of the changes are in design. We've also tried to enhance our content, to answer the charge that, sometimes, we assume too much technical knowledge on the part of our readers. Henceforth, we will include lots more glossaries, hints, tips and other advice throughout the magazine.

*Hi-Fi Choice* has never been criticised for skimping on technical details. These are essential in a field like hi-fi, which deploys the laws of physics to communicate the full artistic beauty of music. But now, specification boxes have sprouted throughout the magazine, and specification comparison tables will also enhance our mega-test conclusion pages. And from next month, in our big group tests, Technical Editor Paul Miller will compare his measurements of key product specifications, with those claimed by manufacturers. Readers will see straight away if product brochures are being economical with the truth.

## ENTER THE EDITOR'S CHOICE

Rest assured, however, if you're worried that we're changing *Choice* for change's sake. We're not. In fact, we are very conscious that *Hi-Fi Choice* is one of Britain's more venerable titles, as it has been in business since the mid-'70s. Throughout its life this magazine has been respected for objective appraisals of hi-fi equipment.

Perhaps the most instantly-recognisable aspects of *Hi-Fi Choice*'s reputation are the 'Best Buy' and 'Recommended' swing-tags which we award to equipment which makes the grade, and has proved itself in the context of a price-matched group test.

However, we recognise an élite raft of very expensive products which continually

set new standards to which more affordable equipment aspires. The 'high end', as this exclusive breed is known, does not lend itself to group testing; most often, high-end pieces are one of a kind. However, to recognise the importance of the high end, and the ethos it embodies, we have introduced a new award for products which break moulds and set standards. This is the Editor's Choice, and the first two recipients appear in the box below.

I hope our hard work has not been in vain, and that you find *Hi-Fi Choice* an even more pleasant read than usual.

Above all, enjoy your listening this month!

Stan Vincent

## THIS MONTH'S EDITOR'S CHOICES

Editor's Choice is a new HFC award conceived to recognise the achievements of unusual or expensive hi-fi components.

This month I have selected two components which perform superbly in their own right, yet which also complement each other perfectly, making an excellent case for the European high end.

**B&W'S N802** £6,000 (p36) is certainly a technological tour de force, the result of many years' R&D. Only a company like B&W, which makes even drive-units in-house, could have contemplated a speaker such as this.



**SIRIUS'S D200** £3,000 (p35)

meanwhile, offers a unique amalgamation of many key hi-fi virtues, such as timing and resolution, which are normally single facets of an amp's performance.

Combined, the B&W and Sirius showed why it is worth saving up for top-notch hi-fi: lack of colouration. In both cases they domesticate the best parts of a studio monitor characteristic, which is neutrality. They prove that true neutrality is difficult and therefore expensive to achieve. In cooking, the best way to disguise cheap ingredients is to add any number of flavours; the same is true for inexpensive hi-fi components, especially those designed to sell themselves off the shelf. But neutrality and effortless music-making should be the goal to which we all aspire.



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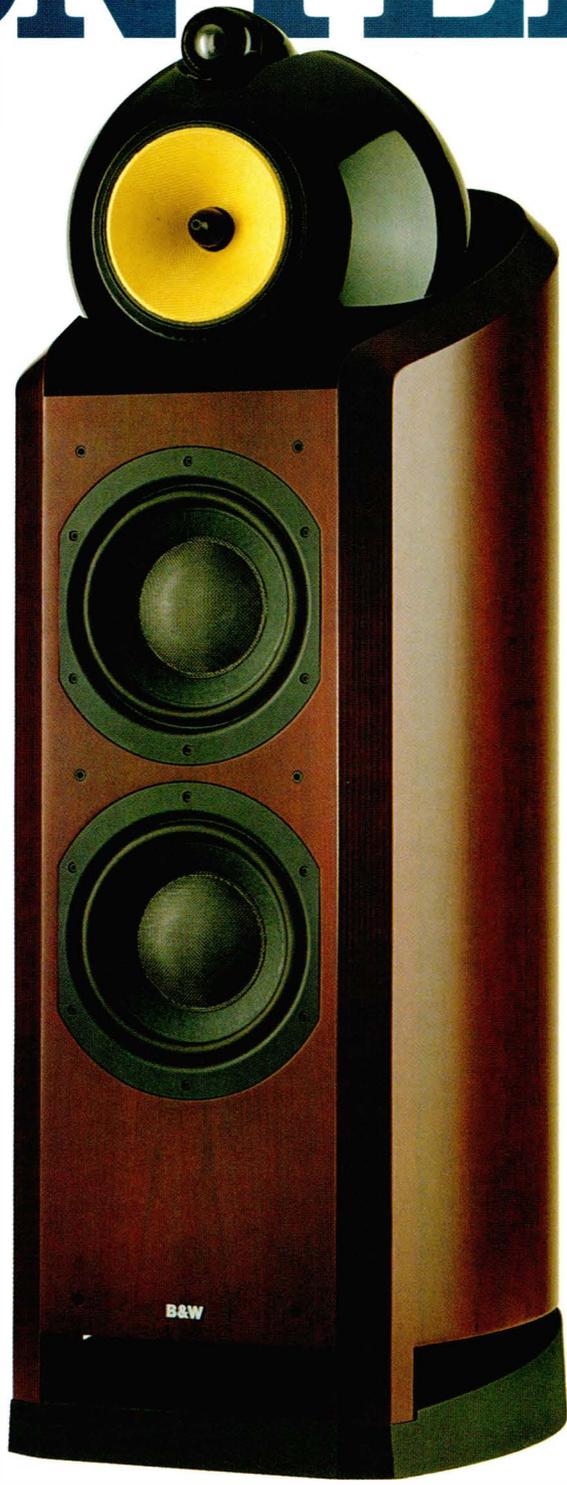
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# NEWS & VIEWS

What's new and hot? Catch up on the top stories with Charlotte Ricca and Jason Kennedy.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

- **HIGH-END VIENNA '98** will be held at the Vienna Plaza Hotel, Schottenring 11, A-1170 Vienna, from October 30th to November 1st 1998. ☎ (+43) 1 405 11 56
- **WILMSLOW AUDIO** has been appointed sole UK distributor for Hovland Musicap capacitors, film and foil polypropylene devices often specified for high-end hi-fi gear. ☎ (01455) 286603
- **SEVENOAKS SOUND & VISION**, the hi-fi and home cinema dealership, has opened new stores in Bromley, Holborn, Hull, Ipswich and Southgate. ☎ (01732) 741717



- **ERRATUM:** In HFC 182 we printed the price of the Panasonic SL-SX500 CD portable (above) as £1,199, though the correct price is a more affordable £149.95. The Revox Exception CD player, meanwhile, retails for £2,249.
- **TAG MCLAREN AUDIO** has launched a Web site at <http://www.tagmclarenaudio.com>. ☎ (0800) 7838007



- **DE-RÈGLE** of Wisbech has become the new UK distributor for California Audio Labs products, whose range sports DVD players (including the CL-25, above), CD players, DACs and CD transports. ☎ (01945) 463077
- **LFD SPECIAL PROJECTS** has engineered a modification for Sony XE200/XE210, XE300/XE310 and XE500/XE510 CD players. The Phase II claims to enhance the power supply and analogue stages of these players, and upgrades the Toslink digital output. Price is £249 inc. return carriage. ☎ (01255) 422533
- **JAMO** has announced the CS-5 loudspeaker for computer multimedia applications. This £200 product has 20 Watts RMS bi-amping, and may be connected to an active subwoofer. Finish is black or grey, with a green grille. ☎ (01327) 301300

## Re-recordable CD for less

 Philips has finally fulfilled a promise made earlier this year, to launch a CD-R/RW deck with built-in CD transport for direct disc dubbing. Hot on the heels of the CDR880 single-deck recorder (HFC 179), the CDR765 double-decker is due for launch during September and October, priced around £400, undercutting the '880 (and the rival Pioneer £500 PDR-555RW) by £100. In a clear development from the traditional twin-tape deck, the CDR765 will copy CDs onto CD-R or rewritable CD-RW discs at double speed. It can also be used as a DJ-style machine with both decks hav-

ing independent playback and analogue/digital output controls. Up to 30 tracks can be programmed between the two drives. However, the CDR765 does not share the CDR880's sample-rate converter, and thus will only record from 44.1kHz CD sources.

Philips has also set the same launch dates for the £350 CDR760 CD-RW deck (a CDR765 with only one mechanism) and the mini-sized CDR560S (£350, or with the FW538R system for £550 complete). Philips CE Ltd ☎ (0181) 665 6350

◉ A new species: is CDR765 the ultimate home dubbing deck?



## Power-packed reception for DVD

 DVD-Video is rapidly becoming one of the most successful electronic product launches, so it's no surprise to see two new multi-channel AV receivers from Technics. As the company's publicity points out: "Just look at

those hefty speaker terminals, tailor-made to squeeze the last ounce of power down heavy duty speaker cable." Woof!

The SA-AX6 claims six 100 Watts channels of 'Enhanced Class H+' power, and accepts five video sources, including S-

video. To the AV enthusiast it offers built-in Dolby Digital and MPEG decoding, plus a full-function AV remote control, and is priced at £449.95.

The £299.95 SA-AX720 combines a Dolby Pro-Logic decoder with six-channel 'Dolby-Digital-ready' inputs and claimed power to match the SA-AX6. It accepts three video sources plus four audio inputs. ☎ (0990) 357357

◉ Technics' SA-AX6 crams in Dolby Digital and MPEG discrete surround-sound decoders, plus a claimed 600 Watts of power on tap.



## KEF's new musical monitors

 KEF's Monitor Series' newest addition is the RDMthree (£1,499), claimed to work as a "high-end floorstanding monitor" that is also very "musical", and ready for AV duties with magnetically-shielded drivers. In this three-way design, the bass driver is a new version of the B169 'Racetrack' unit, loaded by a ported 27-litre enclosure. Its 160mm polypropylene midrange driver includes a centrally-

mounted 25mm soft-dome tweeter, in KEF's Uni-Q coaxial time-aligned configuration. Both Uni-Q drivers are loaded by a sealed 6.3-litre enclosure.

Available finishes are red lacquer or high-gloss cherrywood. KEF ☎ (01622) 672261

◉ RDMthree: more fun from a monitor!



## NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **BOSE** will launch its new Lifestyle 30 Music System at the Our House show, in Birmingham's NEC from October 28 to November 1. The Lifestyle 30 includes five 'jewel cube' speakers, a six-disc CD changer, amp, tuner and a RF remote handset.

☎ (01795) 475341

■ **SWISS HIGH-END SPECIALIST**, Goldmund, has announced the Mimesis 28.4 monoblock power amps. The new DC-coupled amplifier circuit claims to deliver more than 200 Watts RMS of continuous power per channel into eight Ohms, and over 600 Watts before clipping. There are four 'fast' transformers, a symmetrical circuit layout and balanced inputs. ☎ (+41) 22 823 05 65

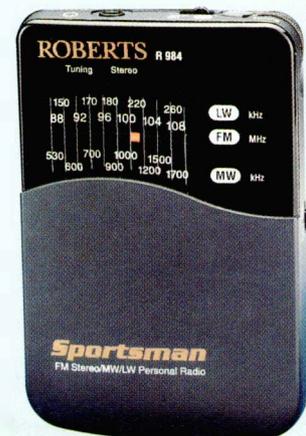
■ **MADRIGAL** is taking over some sales and marketing functions for fel-



low Harman stablemate Revel, though the speaker specialist remains an independent company in Chatsworth, California. Another Madrigal brand, Proceed, has two new amplifiers on the market, both intended to build on the success of the company's AMP 5 with higher power outputs. The HPA2 and HPA3 (above) are dual and triple monaural amps, respectively, both rated at 250 Watts per channel into eight Ohms.

☎ (01494) 441736

■ **ROBERTS RADIO** has launched the £79.99 R881 stereo 'world band' radio, equipped with MW/SW/FM wavebands. Functions include a memory for 45 stations, digital clock, travel pouch and earphones. Roberts has also released the new Sportsman radio (£29.99, below), which is ideal for the Test Match fan with its LW coverage (plus MW and FM). It is smaller than a pack of cards and has headphones. ☎ (01709) 571722



## Arcam dabbles with DAB

Arcam has announced the first-ever hi-fi digital radio tuner, the Alpha 10DRT, which is due to have been launched at London's Live '98 show. Production samples are scheduled for late November, with full production volumes due in January 1999. The 10DRT will be priced at £799.90 to match Arcam's Alpha 9 CD player and Alpha 10 amp.

At the heart of the 10DRT is Roke Manor Research's Gold Card receiver module. Arcam has added a Crystal DAC and eight separately regulated power supplies. Features include analogue inputs for

an FM tuner, accessible via a bypass switch, and digital outputs for use with external DACs or MD/CD recorders. There are seven presets plus programming and search functions.

Digital radio is said to reach 60 per cent of the UK population at present, and claims freedom from interference, 'near CD quality', scrolling text display and requires a smaller aerial than an FM tuner. Arcam ☎ (01223) 203203

◉ Digital domesticity becomes a reality with Arcam Alpha 10DRT.

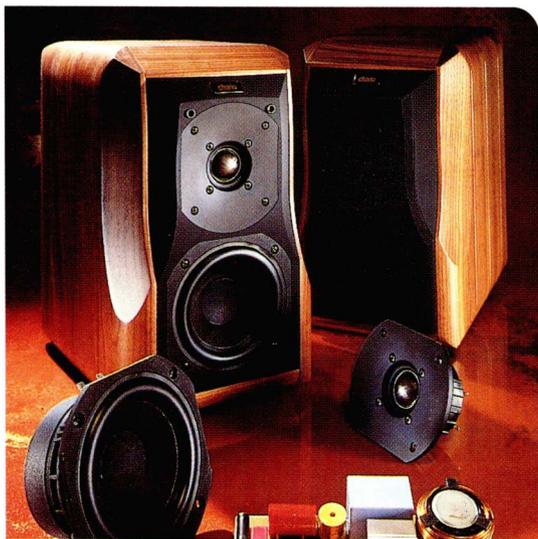
## Millennium challenge

Italian speaker specialist Chario has launched the Academy Millennium 1 (£1,299), to replace the long-running Academy 1. This solid walnut stand-mount is a two-way reflex-loaded design with a large 29mm Scanspeak tweeter and a 130mm carbon fibre/paper mix woofer.

Chario claims it is devoid of response aberrations in a 180 degree horizontal plane, and that it will offer bass down to 50Hz. Sensitivity is a claimed 87dB/Wm, nominal impedance four Ohms.

Chario recommends installation in what is called RLX geometry, whereby the listener sits in the middle of the room with the speaker axis crossing in front. In this way, allegedly, reflections give a wider perceived soundstage! Chario intends the Academy 1 as a product with which to tackle the challenge of the year 2000. Indeed, it will be the forerunner of an entire Millennium range.

The Musical Design Co ☎ (01992) 574343



◉ Academy Millennium 1: Italian audio design for the future.

## Keep it in the family with JVC

JVC has announced new products to keep the whole family happy! First up is the XV-D2000 DVD-V player, priced at a ground-breaking £199.99. It has a built-in Dolby Digital decoder (implemented in LSI with JVC's one-bit PEM DAC), feeding six analogue outputs for multi-channel amps. Another proprietary feature is the 'jitterbusting' K2 interface. JVC claims an 'industry-best' 108dB dynamic range.

The XL-MC334 200-CD changer (£399.99) is distinguished by CD Text compatibility and the facility to display on a TV screen via the matching RX-774R receiver. The 25 discs

exposed at the front can be swapped without interrupting play. The option to title your own CDs allows you to store data on, and search for, up to 200 discs.

The EX-CD90RMD (£799.99) and EX-CD70R (£399.99) are two new mini systems. The former incorporates a receiver, CD player, MD recorder, power amp and a pair of three-way, three-driver speakers with sub-woofer. The EX-CD70R has a receiver, CD changer and a pair of two-way speakers.

Last but not least, four new JVC personal CD products. The three least expensive have 10-second 'triple shock protection', while the top model has a 40-second memory. JVC ☎ (0181) 450 3282



◉ XV-D2000: new technology at old prices.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **THE JOB D/A CONVERTER** was originally designed for the professional audio field in the USA, but is now being used by European audiophiles. Measuring only 15x5x20cm, it has three switchable inputs, with connections via balanced XLRs, SPDIF coaxial, and Toslink. It can convert signals up to 24 bits and, JOB claims, may be used in any system.

☎ (+1) 805 530 0252

■ **THE SCOTTISH HI-FI & VISION EXHIBITION** celebrates its 21st anniversary at one of Scotland's most prestigious venues: the conference centre overlooking Scotland's national rugby stadium. The show will take place over three days: Friday 30th, Saturday 31st October and Sunday 1st November. ☎ (0131) 556 7901



■ **PIONEER** (above) has unveiled its global business strategy and new corporate brand identity, in the most radical change of its 60 year history. It aims to more than double its turnover by 2005 to nearly \$9 billion and lead the world in DVD and plasma displays by the year 2000. ☎ (01753) 789500

■ **PHILEX SELECT'S** latest accessory is the SLR863 rechargeable RF cordless headphones, which have a range of up to 100m and can pass signals from the source of choice to the headset through walls and ceilings. Complete with a built-in charger they are set to retail at around £69.99.

Two other new headphones are the £24.99 SLW-250, which has a built-in active bass amplifier with separate bass level control, and the £12.99 SLW240. ☎ (0181) 457 2100

■ **THE BUDAPEST HIGH END SHOW**, Hungary's premium high end show, will be held between November 6th and 8th at the Hotel Atrium Hyatt, Roosevelt ter 2, Budapest, Hungary.

■ **BAYGEN POWER**, the company behind the Freeplay wind-up radio (as featured in HFC 179) has launched complementary accessories in the shape of lightweight headphones priced at £10, plus 'digitech' in-ear phones at £6. To improve reception on the short wave band, there is the Sangean SW Antennae at £15. Other products include £10 mains adaptor and a £3.50 car adaptor. ☎ (01285) 659559.



## TAG McLaren races forward

Following the preview in HFC 181, of TAG McLaren Audio's new F3 range of hi-fi electronics, the company has confirmed pricing for the successors to Audiolab's 8000 components. The amplifier line-up comprises the integrated 60i (£799), remote-control 60iRv (£999), preamp PA10 (£849), remote-control preamp PA20R (£1,499), phono pre-amp PPA20 (£1,499), 60 Watts per channel power amp 60P (£849), 100 Watts per channel power amp 100P (£1,099) and monoblock 125M (£1,199). Many of these incorporate so-called 'Straight Line' technology in which coupling capacitors have been eliminated from the signal route and feedback paths have been direct-coupled. Other refinements are said to include premium-grade metal-film resistors, high-spec servo op-amps, and PTFE-shielded, silver-clad OFC wire.

The F3 Series' digital components are the £1,249 CD20R CD player (with 20-bit Crystal DAC), the £1,499 CDT20R transport and the £1,249 DAC20 DAC. The T20 tuner, priced at £1,099, is a digitally-synthesised design with 39-preset station memory.

TAG claims the F3 series will "set new standards of quality, precision, reliability and listening pleasure." The range was formally launched at the September Hi-Fi Show with a celebrity appearance from Formula One driver David Coulthard. Products will be released in the UK, Austria, Germany and Hong Kong after the show, with rest-of-world introductions to follow. STOP PRESS: see page 8's *News In Brief* for details of the company's new Web site. TAG McLaren Audio ☎ (0800) 783 8007

⦿ 60i SL: TAG McLaren Audio's bright hope for the future.

⦿ Knobs and buttons are bead-blasted 6082-TF aluminium alloy.



## Polk's port power

 Polk Audio of Baltimore, Maryland has unleashed four second-generation RT Series loudspeakers onto the stereo and home-cinema markets.

Priced between £199 and £499 per pair, the RT Series of bookshelf designs incorporates a number of the company's technologies. Among these are the Power Port (a gas-flowed rear mounted orifice), and Acoustic Resonance Control ports on the front baffles designed to cancel standing waves.



The range also benefits from Dynamic Balancing, courtesy of a Polk/John Hopkins University tie up that claims to have eliminated cone resonance. The range-topping RT55 features a 25mm tri-laminate dome tweeter made of polyamide, aluminium and stainless steel.

Polk Audio ☎ (01582) 418618

◉ RT55: tri-laminate tweeter.

## Sapphires are forever

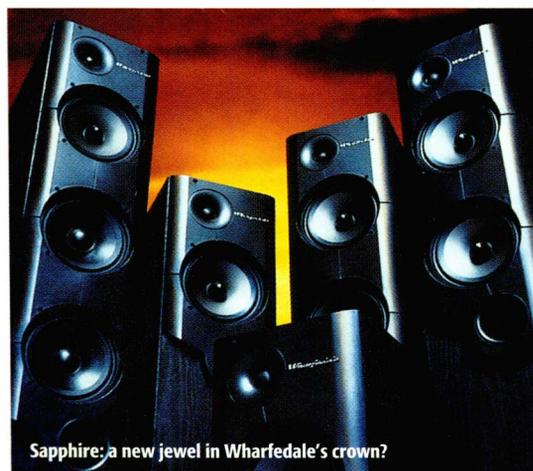
 Wharfedale has launched five new speakers, under the Sapphire brand. The range features offset mounted tweeters, claimed "to help ensure a flat frequency response", and moulded front baffles to reduce diffraction.

The £139.95 SP-83 is the only shelf/stand-mounted speaker in the group. It's a two-way reflex design with a 170mm bass/mid range unit and a 25mm dome tweeter. The larger SP-85 at £199.95 features two chambers and its 170mm bass midrange unit has a mineral-loaded polypropylene cone.

Third in line is the SP-87, a three-way, front ported reflex speaker priced at £249.95. The £299.95 SP-88 is also a three-way speaker, with front and rear ports in a braced MDF floorstanding cabinet, which incorporates two separate enclosures.

Top of the new range is the SP-89, priced at £379.95. It, too is mounted in an MDF cabinet, and features a sealed-box two-way system within an upper section, plus a twin sub-woofer assembly beneath, which comes into operation below 150Hz.

Wharfedale ☎ (01480) 447 700



Sapphire: a new jewel in Wharfedale's crown?



## PAUL MESSENGER

A TV revolution is on the way. Could this be a boon for hi-fi?

**T**elevision today is unquestionably an important source of hi-fi quality sound. Music lovers might regard the medium with deep suspicion. But unless you're one of the poor unfortunates living in a still-Nicam-free zone of the country, TV is now a potentially very respectable stereo sound source.

Television is about to change radically, by going digital, and there's a potential format war between two rival services to come. There's Digital Terrestrial TV (DTTV), which is calling itself ONdigital (formerly BDB), and Digital Satellite TV (DSTV) under the Sky Digital Satellite/BIB banners. Both will be bundling together their own selection of packages from a variety of broadcasters.

The two protagonists are already trotting out their propaganda, and probably trying to sell a subsidised 'black box' decoder while persuading you to sign up for a monthly subscription service.

It seems unlikely that there'll be much difference between the two systems on picture or sound-quality grounds. Much more TV material will be available with widescreen pictures, though we don't yet know how much data compression individual broadcasters will use, or indeed how this will affect quality.

What does seem pretty certain is that, for the foreseeable future at least, the sound will be stereophonic. Hopefully it will also be broadly similar to Nicam in quality, though this is by no means guaranteed. The MPEG-format digital transmissions allocate much less bandwidth to the audio channels than Nicam, relying on data compression techniques to make up the shortfall.

If quality is unlikely to be a factor for discrimination between the two services, the range of programming on offer is very different. ONdigital is supposed to work using an existing terrestrial TV aerial, which, if feasible, will be a major convenience bonus. However, the roll-out will take time to reach the whole population. ONdigital is planning around 30 channels, 15 of them 'free' (including the five terrestrial networks).

Sky will start up first and its satellite platform has the advantage of 100 per

**“ What does seem pretty certain is that, for the foreseeable future at least, the sound will be stereophonic. ”**

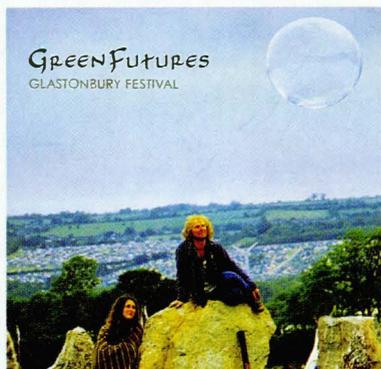
cent coverage — once you've got a dish. Existing dishes will need to be re-directed to pick up the digital satellite. A connection also needs to be made between the 'black box' and a telephone line, to access some interactive services. Sky promises 'up to 15 free' channels including most terrestrial networks (not ITV), but that's only the tip of a total which is quoted as '200 plus'.

Sky plans to include 40 audio channels of continuous, DJ-free music programming, which could tempt the hi-fi enthusiast. I'll reserve judgement until I've heard what Music Choice sounds like, but the concept could mark a sea-change in our whole perception of music consumption.



## PREVIOUSLY UNHEARD

**Phil Strongman** digs out rare tracks or albums appearing on CD or virgin vinyl for the first time. Ambrosia for the ear-canal!



**VARIOUS ARTISTS: Green Futures, Glastonbury Festival (Creativeman)**

If you've ever seen ambient and world groups at Glastonbury, then forgotten their names, this is for you. Recorded in 1997, it's an eco-trip with verbal tree-hugging. Baka Beyond's *Aziz Aziz* contains superb Latin guitar, while Hiroki Okano captures the spirit of the event on *Sunshine*. The mix by Dave Goodman has captured a wide dynamic range, and as this was a solar-powered recording, it's surprisingly clean-sounding. It sounds like a studio cut, not some group jamming in a field. If you can't make Glastonbury '99, block your toilet and stick this CD on instead! ★★★★★

**JEFF BECK Blow By Blow (MFSL UDCD)**

In 1975 Jeff Beck made his first jazz-fusion album and re-established himself as the planet's ultimate guitarist. Encompassing Beatles numbers, reggae, swing, funk and full orchestral work-outs (courtesy of George Martin), Beck's style veers between devastatingly simple and complicatedly interwoven. Hugely influential in the US. If you missed Sony's MasterSound version, catch this Mobile Fidelity UltraDisc from *Vivante London* ☎ (0181) 977 6600. ★★★★★

**ZOOT SIMS feat. JIM HALL**

**The Bossa Nova Sessions (Westside)**

Cut in 1962-'63, with the late sax-man extraordinaire doing the Brazilian thing perfectly, aided by Hall's light-but-strong guitar. Easy listening of the highest order, crisply re-mastered by Adam Skeaping of Sound Mastering fame. One for the jazz generation — and their Lounge-core kids. ★★★★★

**JUNGLE BROTHERS**

**Straight Out The Jungle (Gee Street)**

This came out in 1988 with two bonus tracks, one the single *I'll House You*, a pumping tune that still fills floors across the land. Back then the Jungle Bros attempted to add smiley-faced energy to a Hip Hop scene which was fast drifting towards out-and-out gangsterism, and elements of humour can still be heard on raps like *Braggin' & Boastin'*. The JB's have gained a strong cult following but, for many, tracks like *I'll House You* and the tight *Black Is Black* represent their finest hour. Also available on limited-edition vinyl. ★★★★★

**MENTIONED IN DISPATCHES...**

**THE SHEPPARDS Bunky's Picks 1959-69 (Westside)**

Chicago's last great doo-wop — and first soul — group made some street-corner classics. They're all here showcasing some fine Windy City blues gee-tar. ★★★★★

**JOHN COLTRANE Settin' The Pace (JVC XRCD2)**

Popular jazz gem, back and better than ever, thanks to JVC's XRCD process. ★★★★★

**RALPH MACDONALD Sound of A**

**Drum/The Path (Westside)** Percussionist RMD shows his hit *Calypto Breakdown* was no one-off. *The Path* is an Africa/West Indies/NYC drum trip — and a half. ★★★★★



## Movie magic



The company which provides monitoring for the makers of films like *Titanic* and *Jurassic Park*, now announces the Bryston 9B-ST.

This new power amplifier claims to deliver 120 Watts into eight Ohms, or 200 Watts into four Ohms from each of its five channels. Its chassis resembles a professional 'amprak' in miniature, with each channel benefiting from its own toroidal transformer.

It is possible to run the amp's inputs in balanced or unbalanced mode, through either regular RCA inputs or XLR-type connectors. Loudspeaker connections are via five-way gold-plated sockets.

Weighing in at a mighty 75lbs, the 9B-ST commands a mighty price of £2,390, but this includes a 20-year warranty. As importer PMC states, "If it's a clean, potent-enough sound for Hollywood, it'll do an awesome job in your home theatre sound system." Say no more.

A THX-approved version, the 9B-THX, costs £2,495. This has a remote 12-Volt circuit for use with suitable THX trigger-equipped components.

PMC ☎ (01707)

393002



○ Bryston 9B-ST: heavy in every sense.

## Budget with brains



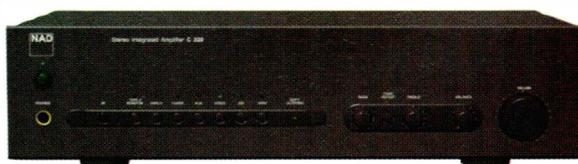
NAD has a new budget amplifier, the £199.95 C320, which it alleges will be the "3020 of the Millennium". (The 3020 set the standard for affordable integrated amps back in the '70s.)

This is one of the first NAD products to include Impedance Sensing Circuit topology, which allegedly permits the amp to deliver maximum performance under "virtually any circumstances." According to NAD, the associated circuitry claims to automatically recognise the impedance characteristics of a connected loudspeaker, then adjusts its power supply settings to best cope with that specific load. This also enables the RMS output to remain constant at 40 Watts, irrespective of whether eight or four Ohm loads are connected. Power output is quoted as 160 Watts into two Ohms, with 35 amps maximum current capability.

The remote-control C320 includes traditional NAD features such as Soft Clipping.

Audio Club ☎ (01296) 482017

○ C320: hopes to take on the 'budget legend' mantle.



# The PC radio



In this month's second digital audio broadcasting (DAB) announcement (after Arcam's Alpha 10DRT on p9), software designer Radioscape has joined with DAB hardware specialists Roke Manor Research, to produce a PC DAB receiver planned for a Spring '99 launch. Price is due to be under £100.

Radioscape has added its software to Roke Manor's OEM DAB module, which performs the demodulation and decoding processes on a standard Windows PC with a minimum of 133MHz MMX Pentium processor. Since both music and data can be broadcast on this new medium, the PC is potentially a most cost effective way of gaining full access to DAB's potential. One obvious application is digital recording of music off air straight on to CD-ROM.

[www.roke.co.uk](http://www.roke.co.uk) • [www.radioscape.com](http://www.radioscape.com)

# Happy families



Musical Fidelity, the company whose new product department never rests, has added three new products to its swelling range. The £800 X-AS100 power amp has been designed to offer the X-A200 monoblock's "essential" sound in a more compact package. It has a rating of 100 Watts per channel, but a claimed peak current output of 34 to 40 amps. Within the casework there's a pair of monaural power amps each fed by separate windings from an external transformer.

To partner this amp, Musical Fidelity has introduced the £800 X-P100 remote preamp. It shares the same circuit topology as the NuVista preamp, but uses MOS-FETS instead of the latter's rare Nuvistors.

The £500 E624 24-bit CD player aims to be one of the best CD players in the world for under £1,000. MF has placed great emphasis on jitter reduction, yielding a claimed figure of only 200ps. The DAC is a Burr-Brown. It has an output impedance of under 50 Ohms which, Musical Fidelity claims, enables it to match any amplifier with ease.

Musical Fidelity ☎ (0181) 900 2866

◊ X-P100: NuVista without nuvistors.



# From EL8 to Alya



Rega Research has replaced its long-standing EL8 loudspeaker with the £350 Alya.

This new floorstander is a two-way design with a ¾-inch soft-dome tweeter and a five-inch bass/mid driver of the company's own creation.

Rega has also launched a new turntable, the Planar 6, at £600. Based on a solid plinth it features the manual speed change of the Planar 2 and 3 but has an electronic alignment circuit to eliminate motor vibration. It also features a Klotz-wired RB300 arm. Finishes include maple, cherry, rosewood and ash. Rega Research ☎ (01702) 333071



# JIMMY HUGHES

Horn speakers, every home should have a pair!

About a year ago, some people I knew imparted to me their intention to make a horn-loaded loudspeaker. I wondered whether the dream would ever become a reality, but finally it has. Enter the £2,225 Eclipse Statement. I hoped it would be good, but it has turned out to surpass my wildest expectations. This relatively compact floor-standing speaker has a big vivid sound.

The first surprise was its subjective sensitivity, high even by horn standards. This is due to two factors. First, the midrange horn, which with its extra depth and flare, subjectively increases articulation and presence at middle frequencies. There is greater forwardness and attack in the midband, giving voices and instruments a louder, more penetrating quality. Second, the tweeter is used without a small series resistor for damping. This usually increases treble clarity and attack, but often at the expense of smoothness.

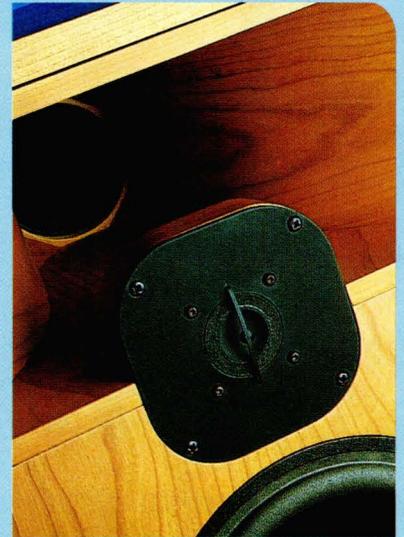
However, in this case high frequencies are extremely sweet and clean, with no trace of spikiness. The tweeter is an inverted titanium dome unit from Focal. Despite sharpness and attack at high frequencies, the overall balance was well integrated and homogeneous.

The heart of the Statement is the midrange horn. Made partly from aluminium, but veneered to match the rest of the speaker, it produces a forward, highly-detailed sound, with unusually crisp articulation. The rest of the enclosure is made from thick plywood.

Bass is full, warm, and pretty deep given the size of the box. The maker describes the enclosure as a 'Quarter Wave Acoustic Line', terminated in an 'Hyperbolic Slot'. The Line doubles back on itself, so it is quite long despite the relatively small size of the cabinet. Like other compact horns, its bass isn't vastly deep. But it has a satisfying richness and weight while being 'fast' and animated.

Despite outstanding dynamics, integration is very good, and there's a seamless quality through from bass to treble. Stereo imaging is absolutely outstanding; pin-point precise in terms of location, yet very 'out of the box' too. Sounds placed at extremes of left and right in the soundstage are vividly portrayed, but the centre image is also very strong.

Coloration is pretty low, and the tonal



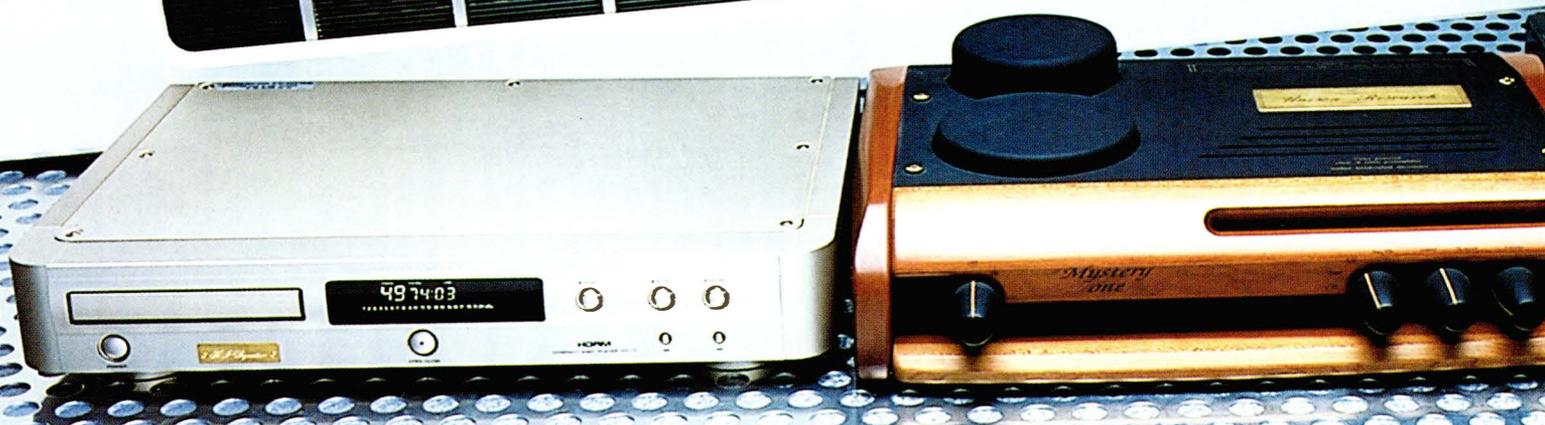
◊ The Eclipse's Focal tweeter is resistor free.

balance is nice and open. There's just a hint of tonal hardness at times, but it's not serious and after a few minutes one ceases to notice it. It's almost inevitable that a speaker which is as vivid and immediate as the Statement, will sometimes sound a touch hard.

Certainly, I'm very taken with what I've heard so far, and I am sufficiently impressed to contemplate buying a pair to replace my Impulse H-1s. Yes, they really are that good.

Nemesis Audio ☎ (0181) 686 9331





# FOUR STEPS TO

**Alan Sircom** visits an alternative audio retail outlet, only to fall for a somewhat Bohemian system at a suitably high-end price to match.

## THE SYSTEM

Marantz CD-17 KI Signature	£1,100
Unison Research Mystery One	£1,750
Graaf GM20	£2,750
Audiostatic DC1	£2,500
Interconnects	£200/m pair
Speaker Cable	£390/3m pair
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£8,100</b>

The Audio Consultant is not like your common-or-garden hi-fi shop, probably because it isn't a shop! The company is based in Camden Town, but not among the dodgy shoe-shops or veggie-burger vendors. Instead, The Audio Consultant is based in Bayham Street, right in the heart of the arty bit.

This is because when proprietor Steven Harper is not audio consulting, he is taking photographs for a living. The place is divided into two floors: the top studio is packed full of the finest hi-fi around, the bottom studio is full of camera equipment and lighting gear.

Usually, we approach a hi-fi dealer with specific price guidelines and tastes. However, for this month's excursion, we felt our system-building approach should reflect the diversity of wares available in the Audio Consultant's show-

room, and the 'funky' nature of its location. So, we asked Steven Harper to assemble a system based on smart design and neat lines. The sound quality was important, of course, but not as vital as the aesthetics.

To this end, there was one part of the system that would be impossible to change – the Audiostatic £2,500 DC1 electrostatic loudspeakers. These elegant Dutch panels are the first electrostatic speakers not to have capacitors or any form of protection circuitry between amp and speaker. They are tall and thin full-range designs, very sensitive to their surroundings and the amplifier which drives them.

We had two power amp options that worked well with the DC1. The best match of all was with the £3,500 Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A tube power amplifiers from Virginia, USA. These made rich, smooth and bold sounds that gave the speakers some dynamic range.

The other option was less successful in an amp/speaker matching kind of way, but made some extremely magical sounds and looked distinctive enough to count by our criteria. The Italian Graaf GM20 OTL (output transformerless) power

amplifier (£2,750) lacks the sort of grunt needed to drive the DC1 to any levels, especially in the bass. But, the concept of a set of tubes hooked directly to electrostatic panels was just too tempting to resist. And the sound matched the concept, if the volume level and bass were kept to normal levels. There was a cleanliness that made almost every other amp/speaker combination sound almost mushy.

In the real world, the Graaf would not be used with the DC1

With only a single set of transformers in the power amp audio path, the c-j sound was still remarkably alive and vivid.

Preamplifiers were a less black and white choice. The two main options were the £1,990 Conrad-Johnson PV12AL and the £1,750 Unison Research Mystery One. Both products are line only, both did without the remote control and both use valves. The differences between the two are simple: the Mystery One looks fabulous in its curvy

“When you come to replay an audiophile disc, the sound is heavenly, but [the system] also sounds good on discs that have nothing to do with audiophiles at all.”

by anyone. Two of them – or the bigger and more expensive (£7,500) GM20 OTL power amplifier – would have the sort of grunt to avoid clipping at the first sign of a bass line. Neither of these options were on tap, however, which is why the Premier 11A was the best practical power amplifier in the shop.

wood finish and sounds warm and soft, while the more conventional gold-fronted c-j is a more natural-sounding superstar. In a style-led system, or for those who seek their sounds as sleek as their looks, the Mystery One is perfect. The c-j is the more dynamic and open of the two, but there is not a great

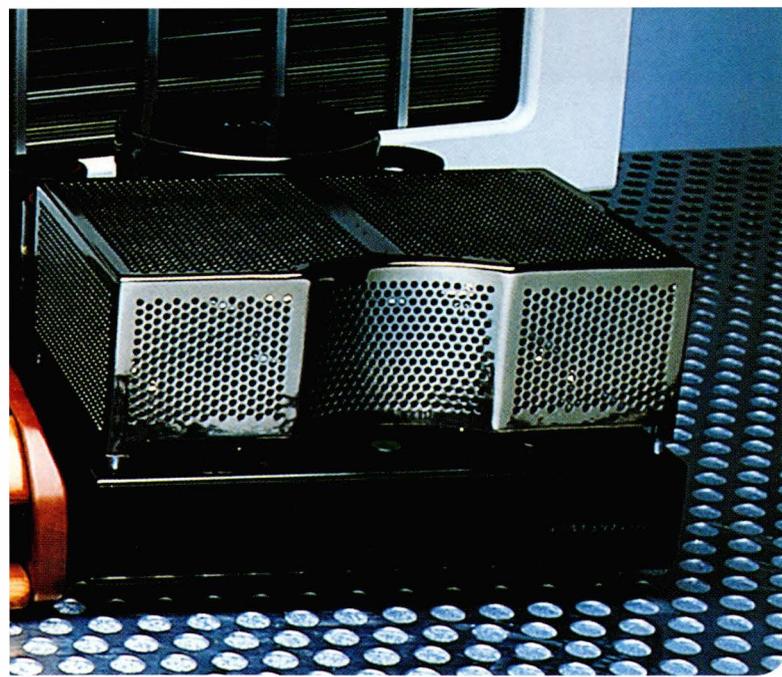


○ Mystery One: smooth, curvy lines with a warm sound to match. Nice.



○ Graaf GM20: interesting design, but rather lacking in the grunt department.





# HEAVEN

deal between the two in outright performance terms.

Central to the system's performance is the CD player and once again we had two options available, with one hailing from Virginia. The £1,695 Conrad-Johnson DF-2 and £1,100 Marantz CD-17 KI Signature

players share Philips internals and a few other features aside. The more expensive player has been extensively modified by Conrad-Johnson, with particular attention paid to the analogue outputs, whereas the less expensive player has been extensively modified by Ken

Ishiwata of Marantz, with particular attention paid to the analogue outputs. Once again the c-j follows the family sound of smoothness and refinement, while the Marantz is a more crisp, bright and up-front player that matches well with the rest of the system.

Cables, regardless of system were all Cardas Quadlink, from the £200/m interconnects to the £59/m speaker cables. This stuff – never tested by HFC, alas – sounds excellent, managing to enrich and satisfy like all good American cables, without sounding as intrusive and music-stultifying as some wires of this type.

Both versions of the Audiostatic system clearly excelled. If you opt for the all c-j kit, the sound does everything true high-end systems are capable of and then some. It combined warmth, detail and openness with a deft touch.

The other system, using the Marantz, Unison and Graaf, produced a sound that matched the sleek looks perfectly. It was as cool as a cucumber, but imparted a sense of urgency to the sound which would better

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**SYNERGY** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £8,100

Stunning looking system with a sound quality to match – but you need two power amps for best results.

The Audio Consultant ☎ (0171) 380 0866

suit rock fans. (Even though more powerful amps are mandatory.) It was clean, open and dynamic, yet had enough grunt to sound coherent even with the likes of Tom Waits and Paul Weller. When you come to replay an audiophile disc of Patagonian Nose-Flute dances, the sound is heavenly, but it also sounds pretty good on discs that have got nothing to do with audiophiles at all.

As this system was designed to be a 'looker' as much as a 'sunder', the latter system was an obvious one, but only with the extra power amp. It sounds great and looks fabulous – but the c-j option has the upper-hand for audiophiles.

## THE SYSTEM COMPONENTS

### CD PLAYER

#### MARANTZ CD-17 KI Signature £1,100

Popular CD player, 'breathed upon' by Ken Ishiwata. Sounds cool and controlled and will work reasonably well in a wide variety of systems.

ALTERNATIVES: Conrad-Johnson DF-2 £1,695, Copland CDA-266 £1,199, Meridian 506 £1,100



### PRE-AMPLIFIER

#### UNISON RESEARCH Mystery One £1,750

Distinctive looking wooden tube preamplifier with a warm (if slightly woolly) sound quality and a relaxed overall tone.

ALTERNATIVES:  
Conrad-Johnson PV-12AL £1,990  
Copland CTA-301MkII £1,399  
DNM 3C Primus £2,550



### SPEAKERS

#### AUDIOSTATIC DCI £2,500

Tall, thin and elegant floorstanders with full-range electrostatic speaker panels. Very open, thanks to the electrostatic panels and the lack of protection circuits.

ALTERNATIVES:  
Martin-Logan CLS IIz £4,555  
Quad ESL 63 £3,450  
Sound-Lab Aura £6,490

### POWER AMPLIFIER

#### GRAAF GM20 £2,750

20W Output transformerless design sounds remarkably perfect for electrostatics, but two bridged amps are needed to drive speakers properly.

ALTERNATIVES:  
Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A £3,500  
Copland CTA505 £2,099

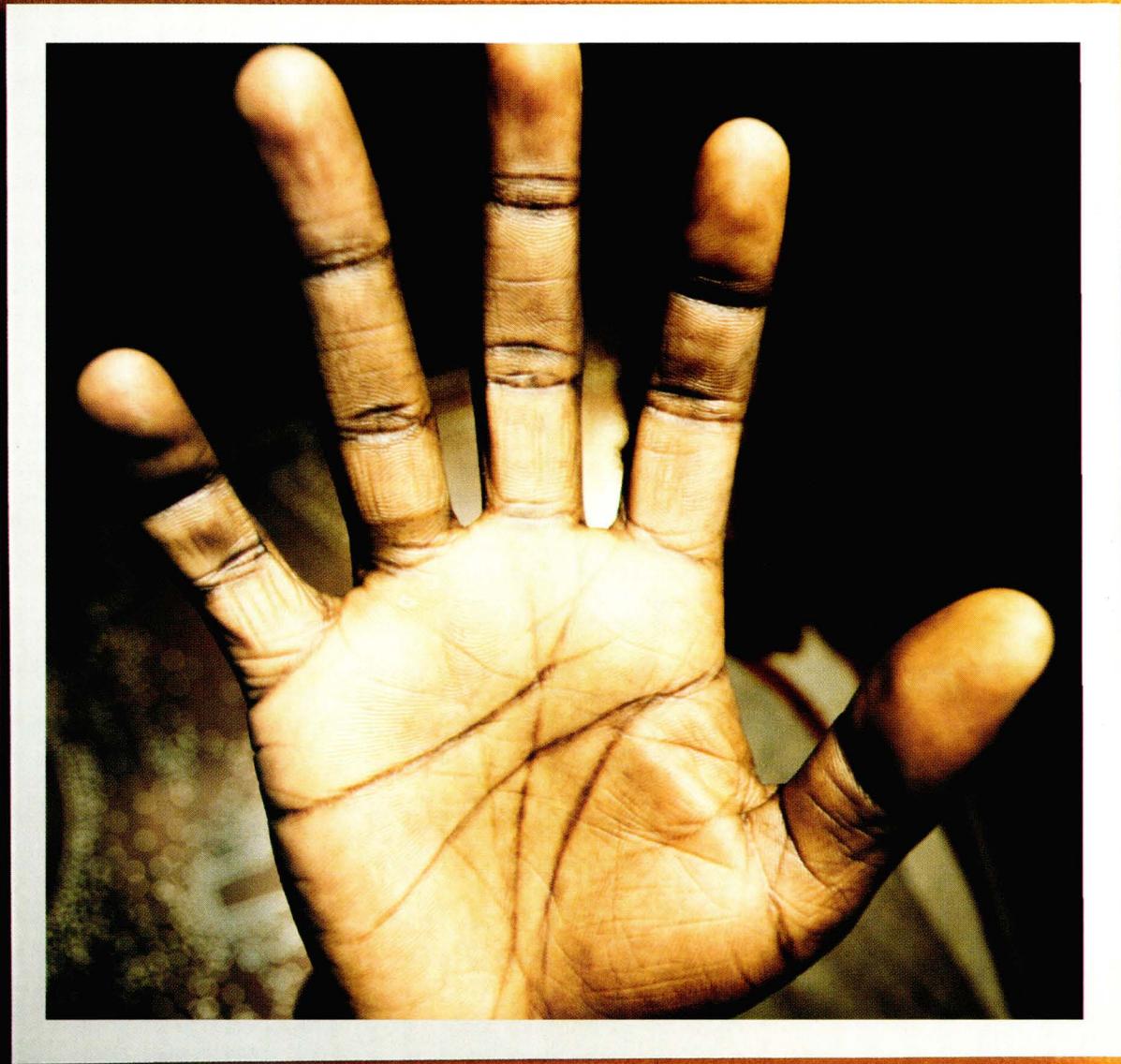


### CABLES & SUPPORTS

Regardless of the electronics, this system rested on the sleek, if slightly Scandinavian-looking Pagode range of supports by the German high-end table makers finite elemente. Cables were from the USA, all made by Cardas Audio and all called Quadlink.



“MAKE A CD  
AS UNIQUE AS  
YOURSELF...”



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# JASON KENNEDY

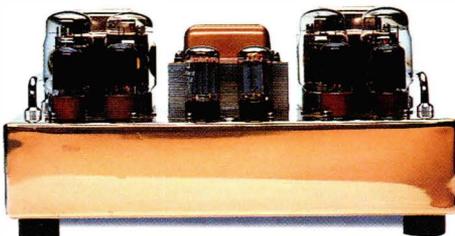
**Fancy your own hand-built, made-to-measure valve amp?  
Or how about something glowing in a tall, slim glass?**



**T**here is a wonderful thing about valve amplifiers: unlike semiconductors, the technology of vacuum tubes is comprehensible to most clued-up enthusiasts, and nearly anyone can build their own valve amp. As a consequence, many people do, some with inevitably greater success than others. Of course, it is quite tricky to design a decent valve amp that runs quietly and reliably, and has usable power output and bandwidth. Probably 75 per cent of 'homebrewers' would fail to manage such a feat.

However, within the enlightened upper quartile is a small band of people who build custom-crafted amps for a word-of-mouth clientèle. One such chap is Anthony Matthews from Hengoed, South Wales. He has been building amps for five years now, selling them at barely more than cost and experimenting with tubes, configurations and parts that have led to the design you see on this page. This design is the Tube Distinctions KT88 push-pull, and the particular sample on this page has been made for a London-based, all-tube recording studio which specified the 'antique' GEC output tubes. So scarce are these highly-regarded

❖ The use of original GEC KT88s and a 4mm thick copper chassis set this amp apart from the crowd.



❖ Distinctively tubular, this push-pull power amp operates entirely in Class A and weighs five stone!

valves, this is a more expensive variant of a product which normally costs £2,600, and uses Chinese-made bottles.

Anthony claims pretty impressive specs for this five-stone behemoth: unclipped class A output is said to be 28 Watts RMS, while bandwidth, allegedly, stretches from 20Hz to 30kHz. The componentry is as solid as the four-mil'-thick copper casework, designed to short out eddy currents and stop circulation of magnetic flux. Inside there are Rel Multicaps and Kadoc resistors with hardwire connections using 14-gauge solid-core cable. The excessive mass of the amp is put down to the case and the output transformers, which have been developed to give a high damping factor.

## MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

I tasted the fruits of Anthony's labours using an SJS Arcadia preamp and a number of speakers. First enclosures were the stalwart JBL 4312mkII, a nice, efficient design, and one which that 'all-valve' recording studio should consider installing above their mixing desk. The 4312 complemented the tight yet smooth character of the amp, drawing the listener into widely-varying musical pieces and styles. By comparison with the incisive Sirius (p35) the Tube Distinctions amp inevitably sounded mel-

low, but it gave no quarter in resolution or timing. It sounded easily powerful enough, revelling in timbre and musical interplay.

When hooked up to the mighty Living Voice Air Partner horns, the amp revealed its remarkably keen sense of timing by comparison with a more expensive single-ended (SE) valve amp. The latter was more open — a classic single-ended hallmark — but struggled to compete with the cohesiveness and speed of the copper-clad newcomer.

Round three was with the heavyweight B&W Nautilus 802 (p36), which presents a somewhat more challenging load. Nonetheless, the Tube Distinctions rig remained unperturbed when played at a sensible volume level. Here again, the amp proved how well it stops and starts, and

“ For the price of a trip to Mid Glamorgan, you could save yourself about £1,900. Looks like a pretty good deal from where I'm sitting! ”

delved into the most subtle elements of instrumental interplay. Perhaps the balance was a little on the smooth side, but that never harms listenability.

Anthony Matthews plans to continue making his amps only on demand, building them to customers' specs — he purveys bespoke amps to those more interested in sound quality than a snazzy badge.

In a dealer's demo room, this kind of product would cost about £4,500, so for the price of a trip to Mid Glamorgan, you could save yourself about £1,900. Looks like a pretty good deal from where I'm sitting!

**Tube Distinctions ☎ (01443) 814738**

## GUM SHOE CORNER

**A** few designers specialise in vacuum-tube designs and make a living from established companies seeking to market a valve-based product.

Occasionally such soldering-ironers make quite a name for themselves, and Andy Grove is a prime example of the breed. He has worked with Gamma Acoustics, Audio Note and World Audio Designs over the last few years; now he resides near Huntingdon where his efforts are being channelled into new products for IAG, the parent company behind Wharfedale and Quad.

His current project is a range of electronics to be launched under the long-defunct Leak brand at next January's CES show in Las Vegas. First up will be a KT90-based push-pull power amp, developing 100 Watts per channel, and housed in what preliminary designs would suggest to be a striking chassis, which incorporates curved glass and a tall, slim configuration. If the finished item even just resembles the concept, reborn Leak could become a serious competitor for the big US tube brands. Also planned is a matching preamp, natch, and — sit down now — an all-tube tuner! These blokes are clearly bonkers. Marvellous!

**IAG ☎ (01480) 447700**



# PAUL MILLER'S OASIS OF SANITY

Our Technical Editor **Paul Miller** investigates the challenge of extracting good low frequency response from a ported wooden box.

This month's Mega-Test (p70) takes more than a passing interest in the delivery of effective bass. For practical reasons, within that test, my individual Lab Reports must be economical in scope. But in this column I will explore the matter of low-frequency performance in greater depth. Additionally, I can elaborate on the comprehensive loudspeaker measurements regularly performed behind the scenes at *Hi-Fi Choice*, while drawing together our earlier discussions on loudspeaker bass tuning, impedance and phase angles (*HFCs* 168, 175, 176, 177 and 179).

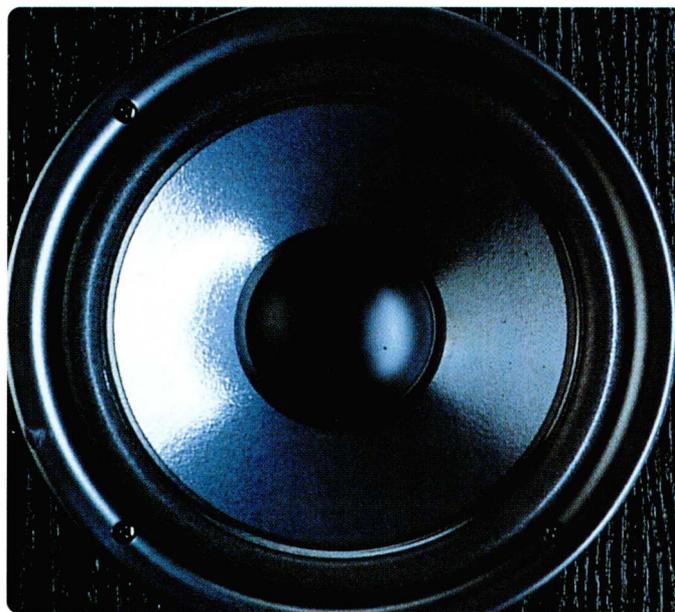
The plots printed here combine three or four sets of data from four speakers. A nearfield analysis of each speaker's port output from 10Hz-1kHz (black trace) and bass driver (red trace), is superimposed atop its impedance curve (light blue shaded trace). The left-hand scale refers to the speaker's SPL (sound pressure level), while the right-hand scale shows impedance in Ohms. Some of the plots also show changes in the speaker's phase angle (dark

blue trace) with an embedded scale to the left. In all cases, the horizontal scale represents the logarithmic frequency from 10Hz to 1kHz (two decades).

**FIGURE ONE**

To start the ball rolling, I've chosen an ideal – if not entirely textbook – example from System Audio (see p89). At resonance, the output of its two bass drivers falls sharply (1) and the speaker's impedance (2) is largely determined by the voice coil plus cabinet losses, particularly air leaks around the driver. The 'real' voice coil value appears at (4) (3.65 Ohms @ 245Hz) after the system resonance (5) and before the inductance of the voice coil takes

**“ The Low-Q port resonance attempts to squeeze out a uniform, albeit reduced quota of low bass, one of several engineering compromises available. ”**



over (7). Properly tuned to 58Hz, the bass driver's nulled output (1) corresponds to the Helmholtz resonance of the port (3) and the impedance minimum (2) between the lower and upper system resonances (5) and (6) respectively.

The bass drivers do show a slight emphasis in output before rolling-off (8). This response shape is neither optimally flat (the Butterworth alignment) which confers ideal transient behavior nor especially

**○ There's more to bass quality than the size and design of your woofer!**

'peaky' (QB3 or Chebyshev) which provide a bigger boost but poorer transients and a sharper, typically 4th-order, roll-off. Also, note how the relatively smooth decay in the port's contribution (9) allows the bass unit (red trace) to take over unencumbered through the upper bass.

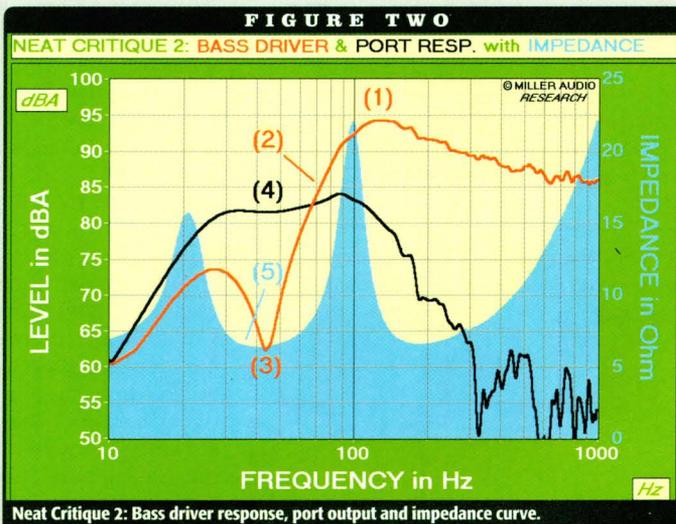
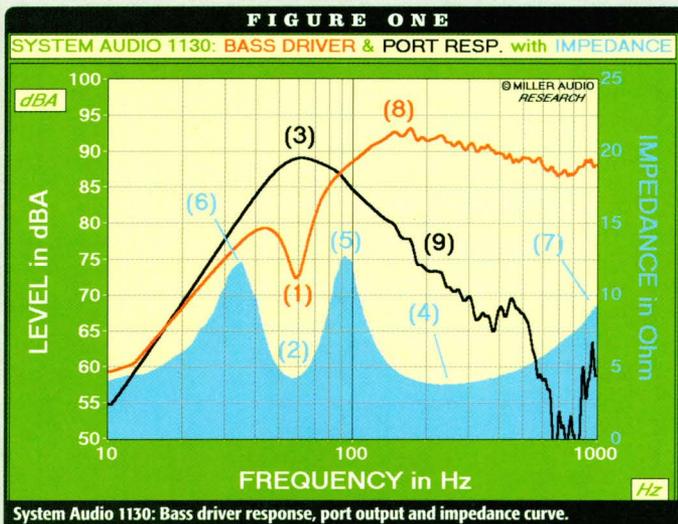
**○ Neat Critique: produces uniform albeit limited low bass.**



**FIGURE TWO**

By contrast, the response shape of Neat's 160mm bass/midrange unit is noticeably 'peakier' (1)

THE MEASUREMENTS



and the roll-off proportionately sharper (2), trading some extra level in the mid bass (130Hz) for a compromised transient performance. Importantly, the Critique's bass tuning is not misaligned but it does demonstrate a very low-Q behavior. The driver null is sharply articulated at 43Hz (3) but the restricted port diameter offers a broad reinforcement from 23Hz-140Hz (4) and this is reflected in the equally broad sag in its impedance (5). This is not accidental, for while the 'peaky' upper bass (1) is intended to give the speaker some clout, the low-Q port resonance (4) attempts to squeeze out a uniform, albeit reduced quota of low bass. This is one of several engineering compromises available to designers of very compact loudspeakers.

**FIGURE THREE**

The Jamo Cornet 195 demonstrates the same technique, arguably used to excess, in a far larger enclosure. Once again, we see a peaked bass response at 90Hz (1) with a steep roll-off (2) allied to a very broad, low-Q port resonance that stretches from 28-98Hz (3). In this case, the net output of the two bass units, augmented by this port resonance, is markedly higher than the mean midband level, prompting the listening panel to criticise its 'boomy bass' (see p75).

This plot also highlights some other features. The broad dip in impedance (4) at the port resonance will be familiar by now, although its sub-eight Ohm value is tougher than average. Some amplifiers may also be stretched by the bold

**“ Mission’s 774 provides a very interesting example of how demands for a modern aesthetic can impact on the ultimate potential for a speaker’s performance. ”**

swings in phase angle (a difference in phase between current and voltage) that traverse the bass region. Here, as the impedance trend increases to a 'safe' 17 Ohms at the system resonance (5), the amplifier will experience a 70-degree change in phase angle (-35 to +35 degrees). Note that at the maximum +35 degree phase angle (6), the speaker's impedance is only just eight Ohms.

Finally, instead of 'disappearing' above 200Hz or so, the port (black trace) releases some spurious energy (a pipe or cabinet resonance) at 360Hz (7). This is also clearly reflected as a notch (7) in the nearfield response of the bass driver (red trace). This additional amplifier loading and port coloration is likely to influence the subjective quality of bass in some systems.

**FIGURE FOUR**

Mission's 774 provides a very interesting example of how the demands for a modern aesthetic can impact on the ultimate potential for a speaker's performance. Its inherent LF reflex alignment is

○ Mission 774: a new tweeter housing should prevent air leaks.

actually very good indeed. This is demonstrated by the coincidence of the dip in impedance (1) coinciding almost exactly with the null in the drivers' output (2), the zero-cross point in phase angle (4) and peak in port output (3) at 48-50Hz. Neither is the little 'wobble' in phase angle through this region (dark blue trace) a problem for the amplifier.

Yet this plot has obvious complications. There's what appears to be a secondary port resonance at 140Hz (5) together with another driver null at 105Hz (6). This is reflected in the speaker load by an impedance 'shoulder' at 110Hz (7) and additional variations in the associated phase angle (dark blue trace). The spurious output at 680Hz (8) is probably unrelated to this unusual LF behavior.

Instead, I thought it possible that this additional 'resonance' could emanate from a visible gap between the bass unit's shiny chromed phase plug and the Aerogel cone. What other evidence do we have? Look at the big difference in impedance minima at the port resonance (1) and at 245Hz (9) where the inherent resistance of the voice coil is more accurately

exposed. This difference is revealing of cabinet losses, and air-leaks in particular.

I contacted Mission with these results who, while agreeing that the traces indicate box losses, have suggested the 'leak' is more likely to arise from a pre-production tweeter housing. This housing has been subsequently modified to preclude the chance of this happening with full production samples...

**GLOSSARY**



**REFLEX PORT (Above):** This is a tube, or vent, in the speaker enclosure. The Helmholtz resonance of the air in this tube is used to boost the speaker's bass extension at the expense of some loss in transient performance. The sharpness of the resonance is defined by its 'Q'.

**IMPEDANCE CURVE:** This is a representation of the electrical load presented by the loudspeaker to an amplifier. Measured in Ohms, the curve typically varies with frequency, but is given a 'nominal' value such as 4 or 8 Ohms. The lower the impedance, the tougher the speaker is to drive.

**VOICE COIL:** This is part of the drive unit's 'motor system'. The coil of wire is wound around a former at the centre of the cone or dome and sits in a gap within the magnet behind. Any (music) signal applied to the coil causes it, and the cone/dome, to vibrate in and out of the magnetic gap, making the sound we hear.

**SPL:** or Sound Pressure Level, is a measure of loudness in decibels (dBs).

**PHASE ANGLE:** Because a speaker's impedance typically has both reactive and resistive components, the current and voltage drawn from the amplifier are out of step with one another. This difference is called the phase angle. Large phase angles also make the speaker tough to drive.

Do you have a subject matter for Paul Miller's Oasis Of Sanity?

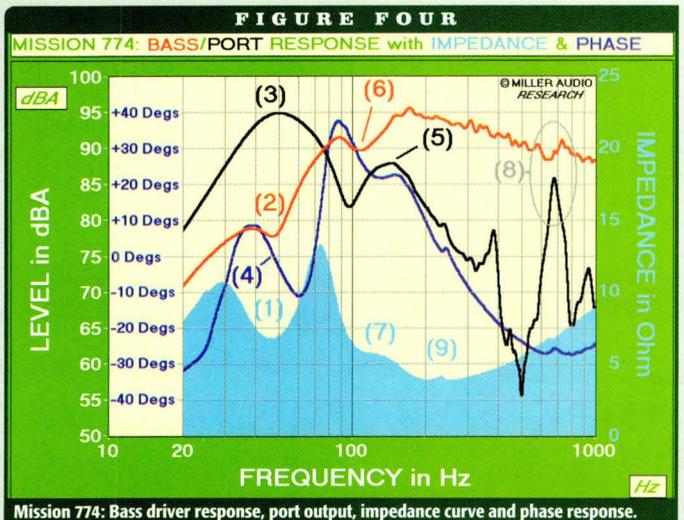
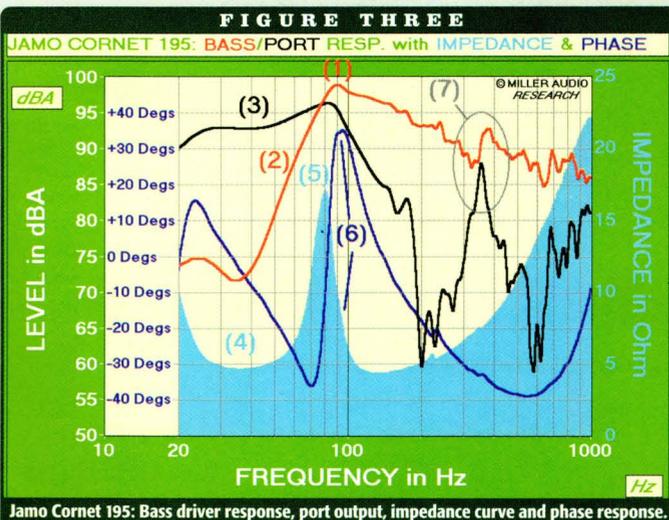
Please contact P.Miller

via E-mail on:

MILLER\_AUDIO\_RESEARCH

@compuserve.com

THE MEASUREMENTS



# LETTERS

Hi-Fi Choice's very own 'points of view' page, where you, the reader, can express your opinions!

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### LOST IN MUSIC

Oh, please what is this hi-fi by numbers nonsense? (Phil Strongman, *HFC* 182). Do we really listen to "a strange noise two minutes 54 seconds in"? I think not!

What's really important is how many shivers run up and down your spine when the solo viola enters in Vaughn Williams's *Tallis Fantasia*; or how liberated you feel when Ian Curtis sings "I'm not afraid any more" in Joy Division's *Insight*; or how much you want to play air guitar listening to *Who's Next*; or how close to tears you are after the finale of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*.

Good hi-fi gives you more of an emotional response – that's how you know it's good! Forget the train-spotter stuff, put down the stopwatch, and as EM Forster said: "Only connect!"

David Dallard, Bristol



Get into the groove with this bargain. (see below)

### CLASS A UPGRADE

Following your magazine's recent report on Tom Evans's Lithos A upgrade for the Michell ISO phono stage (p11, *HFC* 181), I decided that it might be worth a try.

I could not wait to play my favourite vinyl when the upgraded ISO turned up. And now the weight and bass extension is just unbelievable. The treble is much clearer and sweeter and the overall resolution has improved too.

For £199 this upgrade is THE bargain of the millennium! For the past two weeks I have not bothered to listen to CDs. I could not believe my ears when I played some of my collection of 1960s box sets of classical music. The violin and piano sonatas sound so real and spacious. In Santana's first album I can hear each instrument crystal clear and place each member of the band in our lounge.

M Ngui, Ewell, Surrey

### TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

I fully agree with David Vivian's suggestion to listen carefully before buying hi-fi (*HFC* 181). He is also correct in saying that spending a lot of money does not guarantee a great sound.

A few years ago a high-end shop opened in Tel Aviv, where I tried out a system comprising a Theta transport/DAC, Mark Levinson pre/power and a pair of Wilson Audio WATT/Puppies. I brought along some good classical CDs, and what commenced to radiate from this £30,000 system was quite horrible: a harsh, relentless sound which was thoroughly cold and unforgiving.

However, the other day I visited a shop, where I was told to listen to a system. Handel's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* came to life so convincingly, sweetly and vividly – I was stunned. Then I saw the components: an £80 Lenco CD player, feeding a 25-year-old Scott valve integrated amp (around £300), into a pair of £60 JPW Mini-Monitors. Rarely have I heard such magic in reproduced sound. Had I been asked to predict what would

emanate from this system, I would probably have dismissed it with some mockery.

So, if music is important to you (and why else would you spend some good dough on hi-fi?), then do yourself a favour and listen before you buy.

Yuval Goldstein, Rishon LeZion

### RUSTY HAZE

I am writing regarding Paul Miller's *Oasis of Sanity*, *HFC* 181, which discussed CD sound quality.

I have a number of CDs that are going a rusty colour. This discoloration compromises the sound quality and gets worse as the colour deepens. They all bear the brand "made in the UK by PDO"; some are on the budget Pickwick label, some on full-price labels.

Is there any course of action one can take in matters like these, and should CDs go 'rusty'?

D B Evans, Norwich



Don't buy Wilson WATT/Puppies before you've tried JPW Mini Monitors! (see left)

Jason Kennedy replies... We have not encountered this phenomenon per se, though in the late '80s there was a scare with a different kind of CD rot. Have any other readers had similar problems?

### DSD IS OK

Many thanks for the detailed and thoughtful article on dCS converters by Richard Black (*HFC* 181). Mention was made of some reservations we had regarding the possible problems with the absolute sound quality of DSD, which arose whilst we were wrestling with some of the engineering issues. Having done a lot more work on DSD, and learnt much in the process, I can now state that our initial concerns have been completely allayed.

We are now shipping professional DSD A/D and D/A converters and the feedback from users in the field, including Sony itself and Tony Faulkner, has been without exception, excellent, for both our units and DSD itself. We have no hesitation in putting DSD badging centre stage on our professional equipment.

Robert Kelly, Data Conversion Systems Ltd

### ATTAINABLE ASPIRATIONS

I read with great interest and amusement the letter from Mr Stones (*HFC* 180), self-styled head of the Suffolk 'upgrading police'. He has no understanding or empathy with the manufacturers of consumer goods, who toil away, researching and developing new and advanced products to bring to market. Yes, they turn in a profit, but they also generate real advances in their chosen fields while bringing employment to many. Without them, for example, how could a hi-fi magazine exist?

Furthermore he has no comprehension of why the customers are happy to graft away so they can afford (and aspire to own) a more comfortable home, better car, or higher-quality, better-sounding



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audio apparatus. Not the super-luxury items available only to the super-wealthy, you understand, but realistic, attainable items which reward the efforts of many years labour, and combine to make life worth living.

Kevin Bower, Alfreton, Derbyshire

### SERVICE WITH A SCOWL

I am afraid that I am writing to condemn the service, or rather lack of service, that I have had from Mission Cyrus. A month ago I sent a letter to their Head Office, and they have not even acknowledged receipt of it. This is not the first time that they have ignored me.

I think that if you buy a CD player for the best part of a £900, you don't expect to have to fork out another £100 in repair bills before two years of light use have gone by.

Maybe they just think I'm a crazy foreigner who will go away if they ignore me! In fact, I'm English. One thing's for sure, when I return to the UK, I will not be buying any more Mission Cyrus products.

Pete Langford, via the internet

David Marchant, Marketing Director, Mission Cyrus Group replies....

Tragically, Mr Langford wrote to our Managing Director at a time when we were in the process of moving our London office, and as a result a delay in replying occurred.

However, as always at Mission in the unusual event of a complaint, it has been dealt with in a way that has left the customer very happy. Mission operates a 'no questions asked' service policy, and is recognised throughout the industry as the 'benchmark' by which all others are judged.

### WRITE TO US

- The Editor-in-Chief, Hi-Fi Choice,
- 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7JH
- f 0171-917 5512.
- e editorial.hifichoice@dennis.co.uk.
- We reserve the right to edit all letters. Concise correspondence preferred!
- All letters must include address and daytime telephone numbers.

### WIN A T-SHIRT AND PEN!

Every letter published on these pages wins a KEF pen while the best letter every month wins a stylish KEF polo-shirt.



Pioneer DVL-909: the 'how many bits make a DVD player' debate starts here.

### GOLDEN EYE

My letter for your excellent magazine is one which concerns an article on the Pioneer DVL-909 DVD LaserDisc combi player in HFC 180. In this article Alvin Gold (for whom I have the utmost respect as a hi-fi writer) states that "the audio section includes a 24-bit, 96kHz digital converter stage."

Maybe I am misunderstanding something, but, on the face of the same item, you can clearly read the legend "96kHz 20-bit DAC". Besides, the literature issued by Pioneer Europe, about the new releases of both the DV-505 and the DVL-909, affirms that the audio DACs are in both cases 96kHz/20-bit capable. As an owner and collector of PAL LDs, and given the lack of new releases in Europe, I am seriously considering the possibility of buying a Pioneer for reasons of compatibility first, but also I would like to know exactly what its technical capabilities are. Does Mr Gold know something that we have missed?

F Torrubia, Valladolid, Spain

Jason Kennedy replies... In an ideal world all DVD players should achieve 24-bit resolution. In practice few do; most achieve 20 bits or below. What Pioneer says on its front panel is accurate, but Alvin is also correct in suggesting that the Pioneer, like all DVD players, can handle a 24-bit datastream. This is a very complex issue, which is still the subject of political manoeuvring among manufacturers themselves. We hope to elaborate upon it in future issues.

### THE SAME, BUT DIFFERENT

I normally read *What Hi-Fi?*, but came across your Web site. Why are the reviews presented by you and WHF? so completely different on most occasions? For example WHF? gave the Audiolab 8000LX five stars, yet you seem to rate it as unimpressive.

Paul S, via the internet

Jason Kennedy replies... Tastes differ, of course, but at HFC we use unsighted panels of experienced listeners to objectively analyse the quality of like-priced equipment. This eliminates the danger of prejudices. We also use a number of ancillaries to get a comprehensive idea of a component's capabilities. When other pundits offer views opposing ours, we can only assure readers that we have done our homework as thoroughly as possible.

### A ROM WITH A VIEW

I have been interested to read a number of letters concerning the use of computer CD-ROM drives as transports for the replay of music CDs. I understand and agree with all the reasons given for their unsuitability. However, I would be interested to know if computer CD recorders would be suitable for duplicating music CDs onto CD-Rs. This would have two distinct benefits: computer CD recorders are little more than £200 in price, and blank computer CD-Rs are about £1. I have heard CDs copied from computers, and they don't seem to exhibit any obvious flaws.

Is it detrimental to convert digital code into the hard drive's data-storage format and back again? Is a CD-ROM drive lacking

in any respect when it comes to reading or writing music CDs?

Daniel Turner, Bournemouth

The Editor replies... You bring up some interesting points, which we plan to discuss fully in a future issue of HFC. Watch this space.

### WHAT PRICE PROGRESS?

Is the future of hi-fi going to be like computer hardware?

For example, MiniDiscs. Loads of companies make machines which people purchase, thinking that there should be a few years before the next version is produced. Then those same consumers are shocked to find that soon the new product is obsolete.

Why do companies rush to produce hardware, sell it, find flaws, and produce the next one ASAP? It's like the computer industry always rushing to get the next chip out, so as soon as you buy it, it's out of date.

D Murphy via e-mail

**INTERNET USERS**

Why not catch up with the latest gossip on the Hi-Fi Choice web site, [www.hifichoice.co.uk](http://www.hifichoice.co.uk)?



Is a computer CD recorder the future of home hi-fi recording?



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# COMPETITION

## MONITOR AUDIO'S SILVER SERVICE

### A fantastic pair of Monitor Audio Studio 20SE Celebration speakers worth £2,500 must be won!

**M**onitor Audio celebrates 25 years in loudspeaker manufacturing during 1998, and to mark this milestone, the company has launched a very special loudspeaker called the Studio 20SE Celebration.

The limited-edition Celebration model is based on Monitor Audio's successful Studio 20SE design, but with upgraded components and an enclosure sheathed in two special finishes. On offer is a choice of piano-lacquer silver or black, and this month's winner can choose either one for the prize. Each speaker is a true collector's item, with its serial number engraved on an affixed silver plaque.

#### HOW TO ENTER

Answer the questions below by circling the correct answers, then fill in your name, address and daytime telephone number in the spaces given below.

#### The Questions

1) Where does the Celebration's tweeter unit come from?

- a) Warner Bros
- b) Monitor Audio's Studio 20SE
- c) Sylvester
- d) Monitor Audio's Studio 60

2) What anniversary is Monitor Audio celebrating?

- a) Gold
- b) Silver
- c) Ruby
- d) Diamond

Post this entry form to:

Hi-Fi Choice Competition (CHFC811A)

Bradley Pavilions,  
Bradley Stoke North,  
Bristol BS12 0BQ

All entries must arrive by First Post, Thursday November 5th, 1998.

Please remember to tell us whether you are over 18 years of age.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address (inc. postcode) \_\_\_\_\_

Day-time Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick here if you are under 18.

Please tick here if you do not wish to receive further information on other products or services.

Please tick one only of the following:

Are you a current subscriber? OR

Are you a regular reader? OR

Are you an occasional reader?

#### COMPETITION RULES

- 1) The Closing Date for the Monitor Audio competition is First Post, Thursday 5th November 1998.
- 2) Winners of the Monitor Audio Competition will be judged from all correct entries submitted, and drawn at random after the Closing Date given in 1) above.
- 3) All winners will be notified by post.
- 4) The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- 5) The Monitor Audio Competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing Ltd, Monitor Audio plc, nor their suppliers, agents or associates.
- 6) We regret this competition is open to UK residents only.
- 7) No cash alternatives will be offered.
- 8) We reserve the right to substitute alternative prizes with equal value to those shown, in the unlikely event of stock being temporarily unavailable.
- 9) By entering the competition, you agree to be bound by the rules.
- 10) All entries must be on this official entry coupon. If you do not wish to cut your magazine, you may send a photocopy of the page instead. Please note: only one entry form per household.

CHFC 811A

Ultra-refined treble is promised by a unique, gold-anodised, metal-dome tweeter, with a mounting plate milled from cast alloy. Normally this tweeter is the sole preserve of Monitor Audio's flagship speaker, the £6,000 Studio 60! The mid-bass driver, meanwhile, is one of MA's famous spun-aluminium devices.

Inside the cabinet, an upgraded crossover network employs pure silver wiring; externally, the sumptuous finish remains uncluttered by grilles or mounting lugs.

With a claimed sensitivity of 88dB, this speaker can partner amps from 22 Watts output, though maximum power handling is said to be a beefy 120 Watts.

To enter, simply fill in the coupon, answer the questions, post back to us – and may the best entrant win!

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Winner chooses silver (shown) or black piano lacquer finishes

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# HELP!

Having trouble reaching audio Nirvana? Worry no more, Choice has the answers!

## QUERY OF THE MONTH

### SPIKES, WHAT'S THE POINT?

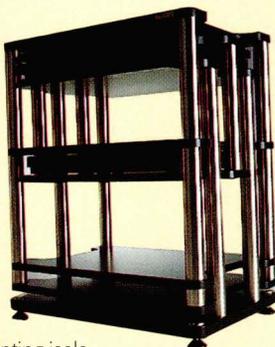
I wonder if you could enlighten a relative newcomer about the reason for using equipment spikes. I can see how spiking loudspeaker cabinets to a soft wooden floor would help to damp vibrations, but what about hard surfaces? How does perching a speaker on a concrete slab help? Similarly, why do equipment racks have spiked shelves when many people use Sorbothane feet? Surely these have opposite effects, one coupling and the other isolating? I realise both approaches work but I'm curious as to the science behind it all.

Thanks for an invariably fascinating magazine.

Bill Buchanan via e-mail

*JK replies...* To an extent science has been replaced by empiricism when it comes to equipment support design. There does seem to be little logic in spiking a rack to floorboards that are absorbing the speaker's energy. But this combination can yield good, even excellent results.

In theory you want the minimum energy getting into your electronics and turntable. But equipment supports have been developed which try to tune out the problematic frequencies rather than attempting isolation. In fact, we only know of one support that does this: the Townshend Seismic Stand (right), which uses air cells as energy insulators.



### GET A JAMO LEATHER CD WALLET!

Every issue, the reader whose letter is our Query of the Month, will receive one of these stylish, leather CD wallets, courtesy of those lovely people at Jamo Loudspeakers.

## THE MISSING LINK

I would be grateful if your team could assist me with the following. My brand-new system consists of: Theta Digital Pro Basic III DAC, Audio Research LS9 preamplifier, Meridian 557 power amplifier and Monitor Audio Studio 50 speakers. Interconnects and speaker cables are all Transparent Audio. Please advise me whether a Meridian 500 Transport will be a good match for the Theta or whether I should only consider a Theta Transport. Any other pertinent comments on the system would be greatly appreciated.

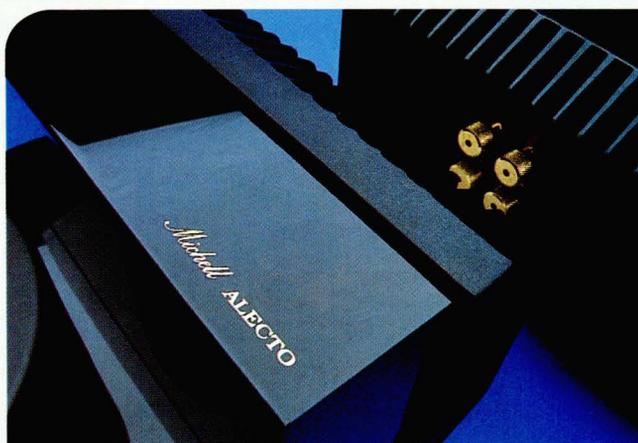
Victor Papadopoulos, Cyprus

*JK replies...* This looks like a very saucy system! However, without a

transport it must be a bit quiet! The transport/DAC interface, we are gradually beginning to appreciate, is a pretty subtle one. As well as the complications of transmitting and receiving the bitstream signal there's the sensitive issue of timing errors or jitter. For best results transports and DAC combinations need a clock link to avoid jitter problems.

However, Theta doesn't go in for clock links. Instead, its approach is to build transports like the Data Basic II which have very low jitter in the first place. As you have a Theta DAC you either need to find an alternative transport with vanishingly low jitter, which is unlikely to be cheaper than the Data Basic II, or stick to the latter fine device.

## SONOLITH RIDES AGAIN?



I have the following system: Sony CDP XE-510 (Cambridge Pacific i/c), Audiolab 8000S/8000PX (Audioquest Topaz 2 i/c), B&W CDM7 (Audioquest Indigo+ bi-wire).

My requirements at the time of purchase were a compromise between conflicting needs: a home system that could double as a sound system for a small-scale dance class.

I was guided by local dealers and auditioned a number of systems. The speakers were rather pleasing for power and tactile qualities and the only pair I heard

### ● Alectos: nice with Sonolith 2.2xi

*JK replies...* Unusual requests here, but you mentioned one of my favourite speakers, Electrofluidics Sonolith 2.2xi, so we'll see what we can do.

Your CD player budget looks a little tight at £400, considering the quality of the rest of the system. Unless you can stretch a further £60 for a Pioneer PD-S505 Precision, there would be little point in getting a new player. Sony's CDP-X3000ES is another alternative option at £500; otherwise your money would be better spent on a Seismic Sink platform.

“ My requirements at the time of purchase were a compromise between conflicting needs. ”

that did not balk at The Upsetters' *Eastwood Rides Again*.

What I want to know is: how to improve upon what I've got with a £400 (max) CD upgrade? What cables would you recommend for speakers like Tannoy Westminster TWs and Electrofluidics Sonolith 2.2xi? Do you have reports on these speakers and recommendations for suitable amplification? My total investment for all this would be from £10-15k.

Steve Wells, Bisley, Glos

As for cables and amps for your choice of big speakers, experience with the Sonolith would suggest something like a Michell Alecto monobloc or Sirius D200, attached via the Electrofluidic's Monolith 20/20 cable. The same cable would also work with the Tannoy Westminster TW, but here you'd probably get more appealing results with a decent tube amp such as the Art Audio Symphony or Border Patrol 300B SE.

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POWER UP YOUR SYSTEM



I have original Linn Kan speakers on Atacama SE24 stands with QED Qudos cable, an Arcam Alpha 7 CD player with a QED Qnect 2 interconnect and a Mission Cyrus One amplifier.

I think that the Cyrus is the weak link in the chain and I would like to replace it with either an Audiolab 8000S, Cyrus III, Audio Analogue Puccini SE, Linn Majik, Naim Nait 3R or any other suggestion you may have. The other option would be to go for the Creek OBH12 preamp with an appropriate power amp. If this is the best route then which power amp would be suitable? My budget is up to £1,000.

Julian Naylor, Teddington, Middlesex

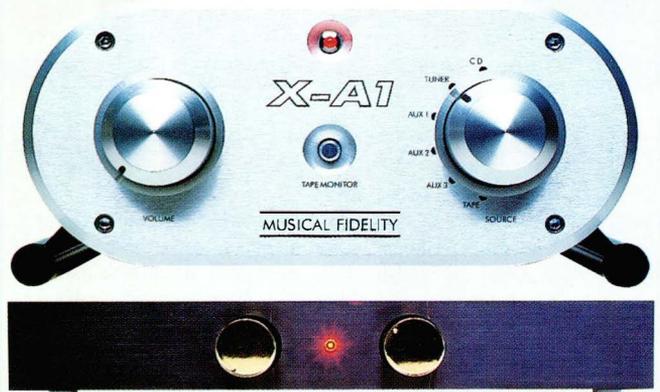
**66** The Cyrus is the weak link in the chain and I would like to replace it.

*JK replies...* We remember the Kan as being an extremely power-hungry Linn speaker and imagine that few of the options you list, possibly apart from the now-superseded 8000S, would be up to the job. What you need is as many decent Watts as your budget will allow. To this end Creek's P52/A52SE might be appropriate but we've not yet tried it. We can recommend: Arcam Alpha 10, AVI S2000MI, Orelle SA-100RX, Quad 77 integrated and Roksan Caspian.

Try AVI's S2000 MI (below) on Kans or, if you fancy, the Roksan Caspian.



WORTHY PARTNERS



I spent the last hour reading the amplifier reviews on your Web site and I cannot seem to find an amplifier that your reviewing staff liked. Please suggest some excellent candidates to partner with Castle Eden speakers.

Dale Yoder via e-mail

Try a Musical Fidelity XA1 (top), or Densen's Beat B100 (middle), or if you're still not happy, the Magnum.

cones and compact nature, would probably like a bit of muscle to give their best. We'd suggest you try an Arcam Alpha 9, Densen Beat B100, Magnum IA170 or Musical Fidelity's X-A1 with the Edens and the source that you intend to complete the system with.

*JK replies...* You must have read the wrong ones, Dale, there are quite a few highly regarded models in the list. However, Castle Edens, with their carbon fibre



HINTS & TIPS



In theory at least, the more power an amplifier has, the louder it will go. However, sound quality plays a part too, and some expensive low-powered valve amplifiers can sound extraordinarily powerful despite the lack of Watts on paper. What's more important than high power is an amplifier which has the electronic wherewithal to partner the loudspeakers of your choice.

Most modern loudspeakers are fairly efficient (sensitive) and easy to drive. So this makes the amplifier's job easier. But if your choice falls on a speaker that's insensitive with a complex crossover, you may need a very big amplifier to maintain sound quality.

Don't forget that the relationship between volume level and power is not linear. Every time you double amplifier power, the sound level increases by just 3dB. To subjectively double loudness, you need to increase output power by a factor of about 10.

JMH



NICE



I read your advice in the first Hungarian *Hi-Fi Choice* and wonder if you can help with my system query. I have a Rega Planar 3 turntable with a Roksan Corus Black cartridge on a Target equipment support and a pair of Spondor SP1 speakers.

I listen mainly to acoustic jazz. Please could you recommend some appropriate amplifiers priced at around £1,000?

Gyula Tolmar, Hungary

*JK replies...* Having looked at our issue 60 (around about the time Noah was building his Ark!) review of the Spondor SP1, it would seem that this speaker, although not particularly sensitive at 87dB, is an easy amp load, which means that some of the less substantial integrated

Electrocompaniet's ECI-2 integrated should suit Spondor SP1s to a tee.

designs would suit the system. However, nearly every appropriate amp we can find is devoid of a phono stage, so budget for an out-board device. Nonetheless, a selection of excellent units are available from Michell, Musical Fidelity and Moth among others, so that shouldn't be a problem.

The amplifiers to use them with include the Electrocompaniet ECI-2 (above), Musical Fidelity's A2, Copland's CSA8, Roksan's Caspian and Primare's A-20 MkII.

There is only one apparently appropriate option with built-in phono circuitry, that is Copland's CSA14 which comes in at £200 over budget, but is a rather nice unit.

BI-AMP MY AMP



My system includes: Marantz 63SE with X-10D, Audiolab 8000A and Mission 752F.

I'm considering bi-amping with either the Audiolab 8000P or two Rotel RB970s, using the 8000A as a preamp. Which option is better? *Thx' from our Web site*

*JK replies...* The Rotels have plenty of cheap Watts, but the P is more refined. If you can find an 8000PX, use it with your 8000A in pre/power guise. Be aware that Audiolab has been superseded by TAG McLaren.

**DIGITAL RECORDING DILEMMA**

**I have a Philips CDR 870 CD recorder and a Sony CDP-X3000ES CD player.**

Recordings made on the analogue inputs are fine but recordings made from either digital input have slight irregular sound dropouts in them, but only when played back on the Sony. Other CD players have no problems!

The Sony plays ordinary CDs perfectly. It only has problems with CD-Rs and less trouble with CD-RWs. To try and remedy this I attached a Cambridge DAC Magic 2 to the Sony. CD-Rs then played perfectly, but I noticed that on the Cambridge the SCMS (Serial Copy Management System) light started flashing rapidly on and off with the tracks that gave a sound dropout, yet it stayed lit with all analogue recordings and two or three digital recordings. I take this to mean that I can 'copy a copy' which you are not supposed to be able to do.

Philips told me that it was not finalising properly and to return it to the shop, which I have done but to no avail, as the second Philips is no different. I have also spoken with Sony and the only answer it had is that the Sony is having problems reading CD-Rs and all X3000ES players may be the same.

This leaves me with a Sony that

plays ordinary CDs and CD-RWs but not CD-Rs and a Philips that won't finalise all digitally recorded tracks, which means I can break the law and make copies from copies! All I want is to make compilation CD-Rs.

*Michael Darrington via e-mail*

**JK replies...** An unusual state of affairs we have to admit, but on re-reading your letter it would seem that when using the DAC you can play back all types of disc and copy copies. Admittedly, however, you have a point and we forwarded your letter to Sony. Technical Marketing Manager Eric Kingdon replied: "The only thing I can tell you is that the X3000ES will play CD-R discs — we used them on the Ramada show. However, I cannot tell you if the unit can handle CD-RWs. If the customer returns it to his Sony dealer we can arrange for it to be checked with a CD-R or two but we have no test CD-RWs. My guess is that it will be probably be OK, which means that the Philips unit will be the problem. At least it will prove if we have a rogue X3000ES."

☉ **Sony's X-3000ES: not CD-R friendly!**

**THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM**

**My system is thus: Arcam Alpha 8SE CD player, Alpha 8/8P amps, KEF RDM1 speakers and a Sony TC-KE500S tape deck.**

I am thinking of buying another recorder, but am not sure of the best format to go for. On the one hand MiniDisc seems the most practical, but how do the latest models compare to a decent tape deck such as the TEAC V-6030S, or even a second-hand Nakamichi model?

Then there's CD-R(W). I guess when you play an MD you hear the

**“ MD is a superior medium to cassette... effects of compression are outweighed by the bandwidth and s/n advantages. ”**

effects of the ATRAC compression and the player's DACs when compared to the original. Also, would CD-RW discs play on my CD player? I heard somewhere that the latest Arcams have a suitable mechanism.

I'm also considering a subwoofer. The bass my system produces is taut, fast and well timed but inevitably limited in extension. Could you suggest a sub that would not be detrimental to the timing quality I currently enjoy?

*Daniel Turner, Bournemouth*



☉ **Sharp MD-R2: Best Buy MiniDisc.**

**JK replies...** It has been established, and is likely to be further reinforced next month in our recorder round-up (December issue), that MD is a superior medium to cassette tape. And while the effects of compression are detectable, they are outweighed by bandwidth and signal-to-noise advantages of the medium.

CD-R is superior to both and at present the software is cheaper than MD blanks, although the recorders themselves are more expensive in the first place. Both Pioneer and Philips have CD-RW machines at £500 now, and if they gain popularity prices should drop.

As for the 8SE's ability to play CD-RWs, Arcam has not come across any problems as yet but is reluctant to give a wholehearted guarantee. So it would seem to be a case of so far, so good.

As for subs, the brands we've found to be effective are REL, M&K and JPW, so try one of these, but remember that you'll only get fully integrated, well-timed results with optimum placement. So take care.

**ANTIQUE UPGRADE**

**I am trying to work out the best way to upgrade my very, very old NAD system.**

It consists of a 5320 CD player, 4225 tuner, 5120 turntable and 6325 tape deck with KEF Coda 7 speakers. Two months ago I replaced the 3020i amp with a Musical Fidelity E10.

The next step I am thinking of is upgrading the CD player, and I want

to pay £300 or less. I am wondering about the Cambridge Audio CD4SE or CD6, or the Musical Fidelity E60 (because of the amplifier, but it has not had good press). Unfortunately it is almost impossible to compare this equipment in one place in Hungary.

*Tibor Nagy, Hungary*

**JK replies...** It's always difficult comparing products from different brands in an appropriate system,

wherever you are. Your best approach would be to listen to some of our Best Buy rated players with similar amplification and speakers and take along a big pile of your discs. The shortlist, given your budget, is reasonably short so it shouldn't take too long to do the research. The players we suggest are the following: Arcam Alpha 7, Denon DCD-635, TEAC CDP-3450SE and the two Cambridge players you mention.

☉ **TEAC CDP-3450SE: a serious budget player.**

**HINTS & TIPS**

Source components — turntables, CD players, radio tuners — play a vital part in determining the final quality of sound. If the source is badly flawed, it's very hard to get a good sound from your system. But what can go wrong?

Take a poor CD player that sounds edgy and tonally thin with subjectively compressed dynamic range. On such a CD player, all discs (to a greater or lesser degree) would exhibit the characteristics outlined. Any recording that already sounded thin or edgy would have its faults emphasised by the complementary faults of the player. If the ideal system lets you play most CDs and enjoy the music, you'd have a long way to go with one like this.

Of course it's possible for weaknesses in other parts of the chain to highlight small shortcomings in the source. So if your system is unusually source-critical, it's possible the fault lies with the amp and speakers!

**JMH**

**AGREE TO DISAGREE**



In agreement with your review (*HFC* 160), I find my system, which

includes GLL Imagio IC130 speakers, gives a dull sound. However, you'd probably agree that having paid only £210 for them in a sale, I purchased something of a bargain. Married to them is a Rotel RCD-965BX source, a Chord Co Cobra interconnect, an ageing Cyrus III amp and Cable Talk cables.

I have tried substituting the interconnect with another, bought direct through an ad in *HFC* a couple of years ago. This has improved the vocals slightly, but the open sound I seek is still missing. Do I need a more powerful (and bi-wirable) amp? Or am I fighting a lost cause with these speakers? *M Canham, Harlow, Essex*

☛ **Tannoy M2 may not be big, but they can cut it with the best of them.**

*JK replies...* I fear that your GLLs may not have been the bargain they first appeared, and although a new amp would introduce a little more clarity into the proceedings, the speaker is the main limitation in this respect. There's a variety of alternatives you could try, but one that you should consider is Tannoy's diminutive M2. While this would appear to be a bit of a budget box for your system, it is an extremely open design that really sings when supported by Heybrook HBS1 stands and Kimber 4TC cable.

If the Tannoy doesn't appeal, have a listen to Rega Kytes and Heybrook Primas.

**POORMAN BLUES**



I've bought myself a set of used Naim

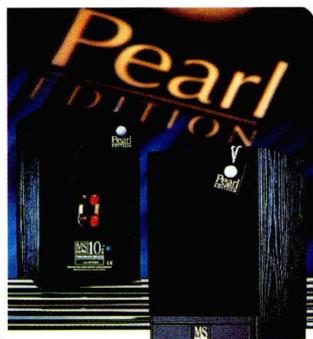
NAC62/NAP140 amps to go with my Marantz CD63SE CD player, Rega Planar 2 turntable, set of Cable Talk 3 wires and a pair of decent stands. My problem lies in choosing a pair of budget speakers that can sit close to the rear wall (due to space constraints). My music preference ranges from pop to vocal and classical.

I've auditioned the Naim Intro (already above my budget), and found it too edgy for comfort. I'm considering the B&W DM302 and Mordaunt-Short MS10i Pearl. Do they match Naim amplification?

Do you have any other buying recommendations that are in this price range?

*Ian Chan via e-mail*

*AS replies...* No, unfortunately you have some problems that will not be solved simply by adding a pair of speakers. Obviously, you do need speakers and either the B&W or MS



will suit your system well, with the B&W being more 'neutral', the MS being more 'fun'. You may also want to consider the Tannoy Mercury M2, which sits somewhere between the two. The MS and Tannoy need supporting on decent

“ **Using cheaper sources with an up-market amp will not produce a good sound; a lesser amp will sound better in the long run.** ”

open-frame stands, while the B&W will work on single pillar-filled types.

Trouble is, unless you improve your sources, this system will sound poor. Your amps are designed to work with high-quality turntables and CD players, far beyond the ken of the Rega and Marantz. Using cheaper sources with an up-market amp will not produce a good sound, and using a lesser amplifier more in line with your system will sound better in the long run. Try swapping the 62/140 for a Marantz PM-66 KI Sig or even an Arcam Alpha 7, which would work well. Otherwise, ditch the Rega for a Linn LP12 and the Marantz for a Meridian and balance the system that way.

☛ **MS10i Pearls will enjoy Naim amps.**

**HINTS & TIPS**



No component in a hi-fi system is more sensitive to positioning and placement than the loudspeakers. Where you place the speakers in a room, what you sit them on, how far apart they're placed, where you sit in relation to them – all these things can profoundly influence the overall sound.

It helps clarity, bass tightness and control if the speakers are mounted solidly, and most enthusiasts use carpet-piercing steel spikes to couple the speaker firmly to the floor. Small speakers should be mounted on rigid spiked stands with the high frequency unit at about ear level.

The further apart the speakers are, the wider the stereo soundstage. But beware the 'hole in the middle' effect, which creates weak central images. Angling the speakers so that their axes cross in front of the listener helps give a more solid centre image, and also reduces treble brightness. **JMH**

**SUB STANDARD**



I have the following set-up: MF The Preamp/Typhoon pre/power amps connected via supplied XLR interconnects, Kenwood DP-3080 mkII CD player passing through an MF X-10D tube stage via QED Qnct2 and LAT International IC-50.

Tannoy Mercury M3 speakers are backed up by a Yamaha YST SW-150 active subwoofer using QED Qudos speaker cables.

My problem is this. I bought the Yamaha sub to bring the lower octaves to life whenever I listen to rock and dance music. However, whenever I shift to subtler types like jazz and classical, I notice a lack of clarity and detail, although mid presentation is OK. On some tracks, percussion and background voices seem to be a little distant, and treble seems a little rolled off. The snare drum on some of my favourite tracks

just doesn't seem to ring right.

Should I replace the floorstanding M3 with a pair of more informative bookshelf types? I can spend up to a maximum of £230.

*Neil O Cabatingan, Riyadh K.S.A.*

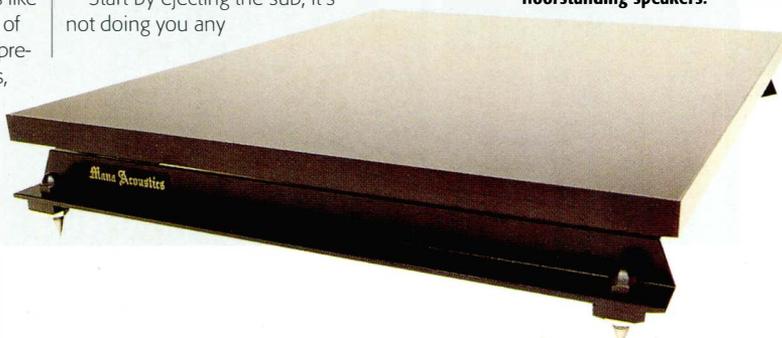
*JK replies...* What we have here is a mis-matched system: the CD player is not really in the same league as the amplification and the subwoofer was designed for movie soundtracks. Your present budget is not really adequate for the source and speaker upgrade that you seek, but with a bit of judicious tweaking you might be able to improve matters.

Start by ejecting the sub, it's not doing you any

favours and you should be able to get decent bass extension (if not drive) out of the Tannoy with a bit of placement experimentation. Mana Soundframes would give it more kick (should be available by mail order); these cost £125 and seem to enliven the floorstanders they support.

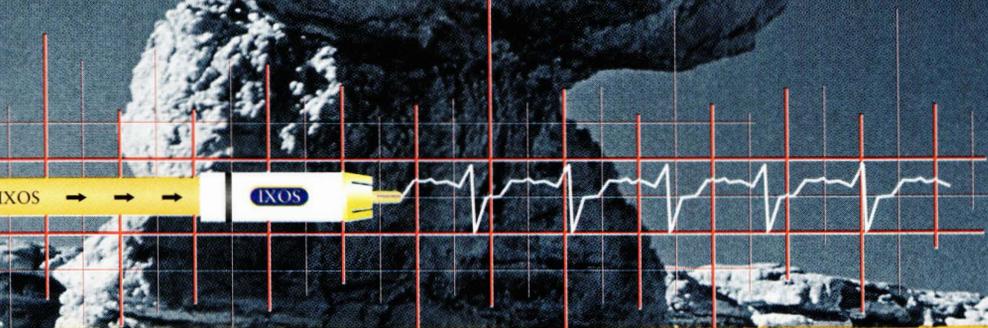
The other thing to do once you've saved a bit more cash is to get a set of Goertz M1 speaker cables. These will give you serious resolution across the band and bring out the detail you seek.

☛ **Mana Soundframes for floorstanding speakers.**

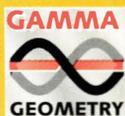


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**GETTING STARTED**

I find myself increasingly confused by the prospect of constructing the optimal



CD/amp/speaker separates system for under



£5,000. I'm positively desperate with the

Herculean task of combining hi-fi components in a meaningful fashion.

Can you offer some suggestions, with a *Hi-Fi Choice* system of choice as well?

*R Malik, NW London*

**JK replies...** When starting from scratch like this, whether your budget is big or small, there's a lot to be said for enlisting the help of a specialist dealer. There is too broad a spectrum of alternatives for the newcomer to consider and a dealer can demonstrate some of the alternatives and give you an idea of how things sound and where your tastes lie. It would pay to visit two or more dealers in an attempt to find one with whom you feel some audio affinity.

Without knowing your situation, tastes and usage patterns it's difficult for us to recommend a set system. Rather we would point you toward the dealer directory section at the rear of the magazine (p140) where you will be able to select a local dealer or three to visit with your favourite music.



I need a new system. My TDL RTL-2s have



been sold (too boomy) and my Pioneer A-402R



relegated to the closet, leaving me with my

(still decent) Pioneer PD-S702 and a pair of cans. Obviously I need

new speakers first, and then an amp before replacing the CD. Being an avid listener of all types of music (from opera to heavy metal), I'm finding it very difficult to find an enjoyable system that doesn't cost more than I make a year (which is quite a lot really). Most systems seem to either sound foot-thumpingly good playing rock or sweetly soar-

ing with classical, but not vice versa, no matter how you mix and match components.

So I need help compiling a suitable short-list. My budget is roughly £2,000 (give or take a hundred) for a CD, amp and speakers. The closest I've come so far is Sony's 3000ES CD and amp paired with Sonus Faber Concertino, but I feel it lacks the ultimate oomph and bass timing to play good rock. The most important quality a system must have, in my opinion, is the ability to make the hairs on the back of my neck rise. Help!

*Martin Eriksson, Stockholm, Sweden*

**JK replies...** Try combining Pioneer's Precision range electronics: A-300R

amplifier and PD-S505 CD player with Acoustic Precision FR1 loudspeakers and connect them with Acoustic Precision Interconnect and Electrofluidics speaker cable. Place the FR1s on 24-inch-plus high speaker stands and support the electronics on Seismic Sink style isolation. AS tried this recipe for his system review in *HFC 174*, and I have used it at home — both parties have been very impressed.

Its only shortcoming, and there will always be one at this level, is that bass grunt is in limited supply, as is loudness if you have a big room. But when it comes to the hairs on your neck, it can't be beat.

● **The Precision system: hairy!**

**BLINDED BY THE LIGHT**

I recently bought a pair of Castle Harlech speakers and need an amp



and CD player to match. I'm thinking of combining



Marantz PM-17 and CD-17 or Arcam Alpha 10 amp and 8SE/9 CD player. A friend of mine

has a Cyrus set and thought that would suit the Harlechs well. Would a Cyrus IIIi/dAD3Q be a good choice or are Audiolabs more appropriate?

Which interconnect and speaker cables should I use, and should I bi-wire? My budget is £1,800 max.

*Johan van der Laan, Utrecht, The Netherlands*

**JK replies...** Questions, questions. Calm down Johan! Didn't you audition the Harlechs with a range of CD players and amps when you bought them? Presumably not, otherwise you might have been able to narrow down your extensive shortlist a little.

The Castle Harlech is a delicate and dynamic speaker that doesn't require a great deal of power and would probably appreciate something with a bit of finesse.

All of the combos you mention are pretty good, though Audiolab has been purchased by TAG McLaren Audio, with new products just being released, and neither the Cyrus IIIi nor the Marantz PM-17 did too well when we tried them.

That leaves the Arcams, or alternatively, a combo that we discovered earlier in the year (*HFC 177*), which matched the Musical Fidelity A2 with a Helios 3 CD player, and employed Hitachi LC-OFC speaker cable with Living Voice interconnect to fine effect.

Try substituting Castle Harlechs for the Auditoriums in this system.

**HINTS & TIPS**

Although it's possible to buy a complete separates hi-fi system from a single maker, most people prefer to assemble their set-up from different manufacturers, cherry-picking the best items from each range. By taking the latter course, you should end up with a combination that gives the best sound for a given price. Sadly, it might not work out that way...

Although magazines do their best to give authoritative and impartial advice about which components sound best, a system put together from 'Best Buys' won't necessarily produce stunning results. When selecting a system, you're building a team that (hopefully) will produce results greater than the sum of the parts.

So take care to listen to the various combinations before you buy, and take advice from your dealer as to what goes best with what. Careful choice of interconnect cables will help to fine-tune the sound to your exact taste, but won't save a mis-matched system. **JMH**

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# But Siriusly, folks

Can an amplifier combine power with speed? Sirius seems to think so; Jason Kennedy investigates.

The Danes are famous for a variety of things. Hamlet, bacon, Bang & Olufsen and loudspeaker manufacture to name a few, but one thing which rarely appears from this leg of northern Europe is a high-end amplifier. There have been Danish amps, notably Wazoos and Primares, and undoubtedly there are plenty that haven't broken the UK market. One that has hit these shores, and appears to be gathering pace, is the Sirius D200.

The brand's claim to fame, if you like, is its dedication to using single pairs of MOSFET output devices per channel — the claimed and fairly acceptable argument being that multiple devices will create distortions by virtue of the inevitable variations in their characteristics. Those who have heard a decent single-ended amplifier will appreciate the 'less is more' approach.



and two sets of speaker terminals: normal and direct. The latter bypasses the coil/resistor network on the former and claims better tweeter damping. The drawback is reduced compatibility with highly capacitive loads. In practice the direct output gave greater high-frequency

## SOUND QUALITY

Initially, I tried to substitute the Sirius for my DNM PA-3 power amp, but the partnership with the DNM 3C preamp was not electrically quiet enough, so I deployed the Control Unit. The result was worth the struggle — from the outset the sound was crisp, beautifully timed, atmospheric and tactile. In a word, snappy. It's rare to come across a high-power amp (the D200 claims 400 Watts into four Ohms) that has a keen sense of timing, but this one does. It portrays the 'life' in a recording with startling vivacity, but without the often attendant glare.

It comes down to the combination of power to drive the lower registers and detail in the higher ones, with a fluid mid-band that's apparently transparent to whatever's coming down the line. The coincidence of having a CD player with adjustable volume and balanced outputs (in the form of the Wadia 830) meant that I could plug into the D200 directly. Inside the amp there is a switch to vary sensitivity, to account for the output voltages of individual sources. Feeding the signal direct yielded different results to those obtained when operating via the Control Unit. But they were pretty electrifying nonetheless.

The arrival of the B&W Nautilus 802 (p36) further opened out the D200: this low-compression speaker proved that the Sirius is at home with

◉ An unlikely looking pair but the Control Unit and D200 deliver the goods.

studio monitor levels. That is its character; it has a degree of transparency that reminds me of the better studios I've visited — effortless and resolute with perhaps a hint more detail than the tube fan would be comfortable with. But I like tubes (see my column, p17) and the combination of the SJS Arcadia tube preamp with the Sirius prompted me to recall Noël Coward's superb line: "Extraordinary how potent cheap music is"; after a fine bit of communication had made its way through the system.

## CONCLUSION

While clearly the creation of a pro-oriented company, this Sirius amplifier combines Naim-style timing with Levinson-style power and resolution. It may not look like much for the money, but it sounds like a bargain.

“The Sirius prompted me to recall Noël Coward's superb line: “Extraordinary how potent cheap music is”.”

The other angle is the more common one of dual mono design. Amps that offer this level of duality, separate mains transformers et al, usually cost more than this. However, the D200 still costs £2,995, a not inconsiderable amount, and the casework doesn't seem too special. But this price seems reasonable once you become accustomed to the D200's potential. Unusual aspects of its interfaces include balanced-only inputs

resolution with all the speakers used, and a sound quality edge that sets the amp apart.

The £895 Sirius Control Unit is a six-input device with balanced output, two tape outputs and a loop for active equalisers. It contains gold-plated selector switches and a 24-step switched-resistor signal level control, from the noted Swiss manufacturer ELMA. The level control is configured so that only three of the one per cent resistors are in the signal path at a time. In operation this proved transparent, if somewhat microphonic.



- ◉ The tiny Sirius Control Unit uses a state-of-the-art stepped attenuator.
- ◉ It looks ordinary but the money's been spent where it counts: inside.



## SPECIFICATIONS

■ Dimensions	43x15x39cm
■ Power Output	200 Watts/8 Ohms
■ Inputs	Balanced only

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★★
PRICE	£2,995.00

Single MOSFET pair per side gives tremendous resolution and timing (balanced inputs only).

■ THREE YEAR GUARANTEE

Sirius, RT Services ☎ (01235) 810455

# 20,000 LEAGUES

B&W has created a hybrid using technology from its top-end Nautilus loudspeaker and the classic Matrix range. **Jason Kennedy** tried out the end result – the beguiling Nautilus 802.

Nearly 10 years ago, a young designer got it into his head to build a loudspeaker that neither added to nor detracted from the signal it was fed. That designer was Laurence Dickie, and as he was employed in B&W's research labs, he had a greater chance than most to achieve his goal. The end result was the B&W Nautilus – a fabulous sonic snail which, with its four actively-driven metal drivers, solved virtually all of the problems that hamper box-based loudspeakers. But there was a catch. The Nautilus ended up costing as much as a half-decent Mercedes, and it needed eight channels of top-notch amplification, which would set you back more than half as much again. But this was sky-reaching stuff.

Having capitalised on the potential of Nautilus to turn heads and bend ears, B&W then concentrated on downscaling the Nautilus know-how into a more affordable product. It did this by integrating Nautilus with existing Matrix technology to produce the Nautilus 800 range. This has replaced

the Matrix 800 range at somewhat greater expense but with the built-in benefit of seriously radical technology.

Why change a long-running legend like the Matrix 800 series? According to B&W, although the flagship Matrix 801 was highly acclaimed in the world of classical recording, it was not making much headway in non-classical studios. It didn't have the power handling or bass character that pop and rock producers needed, and thus, despite its 'accuracy', it was being passed over for more rock-'n'-roll designs. The Nautilus 802 has greater sensitivity and hence power handling than its Matrix predecessors, and combines this with a drier bass characteristic for greater 'slam'. The real changes in the N800 series, however, are those devolved from the original Nautilus, namely the tweeter and midrange 'head' – the latter incorporating the so-called 'surroundless' Kevlar drive unit.

Starting from the top, the 25mm alloy dome tweeter is devoid of a conventional rubber surround. Instead, it terminates in a foam surround which compresses and expands with the movement of the dome. The Nautilus element comes in behind the driver, where the centrally ported

- The 25mm alloy dome tweeter has no conventional rubber surround.
- The bass enclosure is reflex loaded via a gas-flowed port on the base.



magnet allows rearward firing energy to be dissipated by a gently tapering, damped tube that can be seen protruding from the back of the housing. This tube also acts as a heatsink for the drive unit.

The Nautilus head is made of Marlan, a resin which is both self damping and very rigid, not to mention beautifully finished. Its bulbous shape is totally functional – on the outside it provides a non diffractive surface, while on the inside there's a standing-wave-busting spherical enclosure backed up by another tapered tube.

Midrange is produced by a 150mm Kevlar drive unit also with a foam surround; however in this case, the surround has the same impedance as the driver and thus acts as a totally non-reflective termination. To put this into perspective, I don't know of any other cone/surround interface that will do this; all the others cause energy to be reflected back towards the cone centre.

**“ The Nautilus 802 is a fit-and-forget loudspeaker: it'll let you forget about hi-fi and revel in music. ”**

Another unusual element is the use of isolation layers between the head, tweeter body and rest of the speaker, as well as between it and the midrange chassis. The only place B&W hasn't used decoupling is on the bass drivers, which are attached to their birch ply enclosures. The main bass enclosure houses the 802's pairing of 200mm (eight inch) drivers, their resin and Kevlar-impregnated paper cones featuring large Kevlar dust caps which provide a firm link to the 30.6mm diameter coil.

The cabinet itself is made out of two pieces of bent ply which form a horse-shoe shape in section, which is in turn solidified by internal Matrix bracing. The bass enclosure is reflex ported via a

○ The main cabinet is made from birch ply.

gas-flowed port underneath, and supported on an alloy casting which encases the crossover network and sits on bearing-style castors. Spikes are optional.

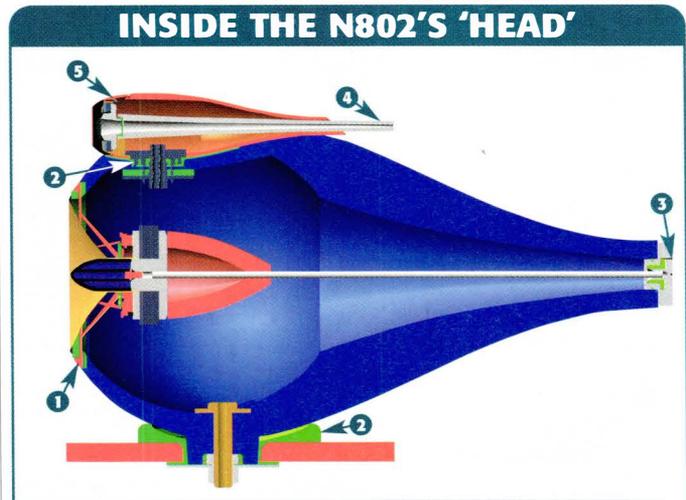
**SOUND QUALITY**

The asking price for this pair of 70kg beauties is a reasonable £6,000. That's a giveaway compared to the £35,000 Nautilus itself, and not at all expensive when compared to the alternatives at the price: the Wilson WATT 5, Wilson benesch ACT1 and Naim DBL all cost more. But it's not about how much technology you get for your money, it's about how much music you can appreciate, and the more characterless a speaker is, the less it gets in the way.

The Nautilus 802 is remarkable in this respect. What character it does have, it hides so well that you'd have to do live-versus-recorded comparisons to find it, and even then you'd blame the recorder. Initially N802 sounds polite, but as you get used to its dearth of coloration it becomes clear that it is devoid of compression, an aspect so common in box loudspeakers that one accepts it as the norm and no longer hears it. But take it away and suddenly you can play as loud as the amplifier (and the neighbours) will let you, without the slightest hint of effort. In effect it means that the term 'dynamics' takes on a new meaning, a meaning that suggests all other uses of the term are describing a form of attractive distortion.

The N802 is extremely capable. It reproduces timbre, timing and imaging with precision and coherence that is addictive. It gives an impression that you're sitting at the mixing desk listening to big wall-mounted monitors – apparently you can hear everything, yet there's no forwardness unless it's on the recording.

Turn the thing up as loud as you dare and it just gets better. When B&W's Steve Roe came up with the speakers and kept turning up the Janis Ian to make sure they sounded OK, I complained that speaker designers always play too loud. His retort was that "speaker designers don't play loud, everyone else plays too quietly". I have come to see his point,



○ The 802's head is made of Marlan; externally, its bulbous shape prevents sound-wave diffraction.

**INSIDE THE NAUTILUS**

- 1 Foam surround and Isopath damping between chassis and Head.
- 2 Isopath damping between Head and treble/bass enclosures.
- 3 Rear fixing for driver is also supported on Isopath damping ring.
- 4 Tube behind tweeter is heatsink and absorbs rearward radiation.
- 5 Centrally vented magnet on tweeter avoids internal reflections.

**SPECIFICATIONS**

■ Dimensions	39x111x55cm
■ Sensitivity	91dB
■ Nominal impedance	8 Ohms
■ Bass From	34Hz

**CONCLUSION**

This loudspeaker shows how to combine electrostatic transparency with horn dynamics and cut out the coloration in the process. Clearly it demands the best ancillaries you can put with it – high amp power is essential despite the decent 91dB sensitivity. And all those lovely colorations, that certain source components specialise in, will be abundantly clear, so you'd better like them.

The Nautilus 802 is a fit-and-forget loudspeaker. It'll let you forget about hi-fi and revel in music. You'll find plenty of character in the pits and grooves of your silver and black discs, but you'd be wasting your time searching for them with the N802s. Only the music counts.

**VERDICT**

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★★
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★★
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★★
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£6,000.00</b>

■ Outstanding example of the high-tech loudspeaker builder's art.

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

■ B&W Loudspeakers ☎ (01903) 750750



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HI-FI WORLD JUNE 97

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REVIEW CASPIAN AMPLIFIER & CD PLAYER  
T3 MAGAZINE JUNE 97

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REVIEW CASPIAN AMPLIFIER & CD PLAYER  
HI-FI CHOICE JUNE 97

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# Wadia know how

Jason Kennedy gets a chance to try out the new 'least expensive' CD player from Wadia.

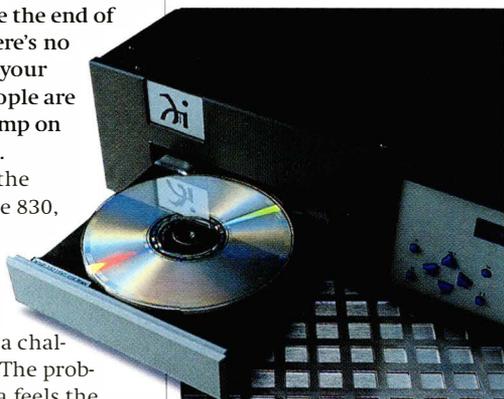
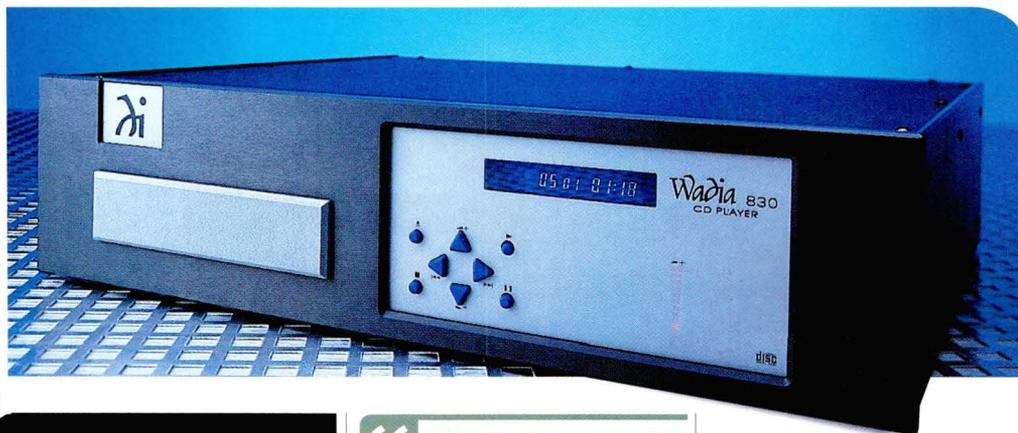
**W**adia is an unusually specialised company – even by high-end standards, where specialisation is in vogue. It builds only digital products, and very few of them at that. The current count is three integrated CD players, a transport and a DAC – almost restrained for a nearly 12-year-old company with an enviable track record. There has been a power amp/DAC in development for several years, and we expect to see surround-sound processors before the end of next year, but there's no sense in holding your breath. These people are in no hurry to jump on any bandwagons.

Which makes the appearance of the 830, the brand's least expensive player at £3,000, quite a novelty for us; and quite a challenge for Wadia. The problem is that Wadia feels the need to incorporate the same key elements in all its players, specifically: disc clamping transports, its Digimaster filter, multiple Burr-Brown 1702K DACs, temperature-stabilised clocking, digital volume control, resonance-controlled cabinets and modular design. While three grand would appear to be sufficient to do this, for a company used to charging at least five big ones for some of the most bomb-proof chassis in the business, three k required some effort.

To its credit Wadia has made the savings where they are least likely to affect sound quality, in the aesthetics and ergonomics. The rubber buttons on the fascia require too much pressure and

## FEATURES

■ Dimensions	43x11x35.5cm
■ Analogue Outputs	Balanced XLR, Single ended RCA
■ Digital Outputs	Optional
■ DAC Type	Multibit



◉ The Wadia uses Pioneer's stable platter transport mechanism.

are obscurely labelled, while those on the remote are nearly as bad, and there's no direct track access, even if you have a Pioneer remote. Why Pioneer? Because the 830 uses that company's Stable Platter transport mechanism. The last aspect to have been approached more economically is the chassis. Given that the 830 is more substantial than most £2,999.99 players, only when compared to sibling 850 or 860 models does it start to look like a 'budget' chassis by Wadia's standards.

So the 830 has all the key Wadia ingredients and contains virtually the same electronics as the 850 for £2,000 less. It uses two pairs of Burr-Brown converters and boasts 21 bits of 'real' resolution, and

◉ Obscurely-labelled rubber buttons are reminiscent of a computer game.

“ Wadia has made savings where they are least likely to affect sound quality, in aesthetics and ergonomics. ”

with its modular construction and options for digital in and outputs, it's ready to act as a DVD-A processor when the format's specifications are set.

## SOUND QUALITY

Two words characterise Wadia's 830: dynamics and muscle. While it may not have the subtlety of my reference Eikos CD, it more than made up for this with vigour. Music received a power boost, imagery expanded into lower registers and developed a firm foundation from which to flow. The 830's solid bass provided the requisite underpinning for the fiery dynamics of the midband. But it's not crude – far from it: there's a calmness and finesse that comes close to the Eikos.

What the dynamic and imaging strengths of the 830 give you is an extraordinary sense of realism. Acoustic instruments are more tactile than you would give the CD medium credit for, with beautiful timbre and full, firm body. It's one to savour.

While one expects serious CD players to have the bass power and control that was on display here, I was still taken aback by the dynamics, one area where turntables nearly always beat their polycarbonate-spinning cousins. And the Wadia's real

strength lies in combining life-giving dynamics with a sense of musical coherence that evades many hi-fi sources. I had the chance to compare the 830 with an older, dearer model, the 21, through the fabulous Air Scout/RW26 'bass-bin' horn speakers. There appeared to be little contest – when it came to musical cohesion the new boy stole the show. Next to the £7.5k 860, however, the advantages of that player's chassis and mech showed through in the form of greater power and depth, but you would expect nothing less for a near doubling of price.

## CONCLUSION

With the 830, Wadia has produced a CD player that betters much of the competition at its price and will undoubtedly trouble more expensive units as well. It's a little powerhouse, and a credit to its maker's ability to squeeze maximum sound quality out of a relatively affordable product. So if you can cope with the 'gameboy' buttons, why not discover what your CDs really sound like? You'll be pleasantly surprised. ■

## VERDICT

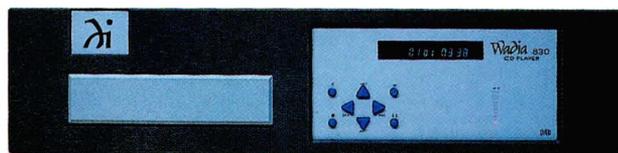
SOUND	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£2,999.99

Envelope-busting dynamics, power and imaging in a rather unexciting case.

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ The Musical Design Co.

☎ (01992) 573030



# THE CODE BREAKER

Micromega's new Premium DVD player claims to offer top-notch video performance, and audiophile sound quality in one box. **Alan Sircom** and **Paul Miller** test its mettle.



**M**icromega's new Premium DVD player, priced at a cool £1,500, claims to be an 'audiophile' DVD player. Should we evaluate it as a DVD-Video player, a CD player, or a device which reproduces the new 24-bit/96kHz sampling-rate Advanced Audio Discs (AADs, designed to effect a quantum leap in stored music replay quality)?

Micromega has long relied on Philips digital components for its CD players, so it comes as no surprise that the Premium's DVD-specific components are from the same Dutch conglomerate. Grundig's DVD player, which also uses the same transport mechanism, has exactly the same menus, graphics, typefaces — even the same distinctive (and intrusive) whine.

The Premium is unique among DVD players in a significant respect. Uniquely, the company has not implemented the 'regional coding' system which splits the world of DVD into several distinct regions, with the idea that movie discs intended for one region will not play in another region's hardware. For example, the US is Region One, while Europe is part of Region Two. There is rumour that in 'Region Zero' players like this one, certain US DVDs will not play; but merely for standing up to the Hollywood corporate bullies, Micromega

deserves praise.

The Premium treads a deft path between hi-fi and AV applications. The AV buff will notice the single S-Video socket (SCART also available) on the rear panel, while hi-fi enthusiasts will home in straight away on the gold phono sockets.

#### IT'S SHOWDOWN TIME

No less than three times did we test the Premium's mettle. First, I played it through my own vaguely Francophile system (a pair of Rehdeko RK115 speakers, connected to Crimson and Meridian electronics using DNM solid-core cable throughout), comparing it directly with a Meridian 508 CD player using only 16-bit CD software.

Through the same system I listened to AAD discs and the appropriate counterparts in conventional CD. Finally, I hooked up the Premium to a complete Dolby Digital 5.1 multi-channel surround-sound rig, and compared it directly against a good (but cheaper) Toshiba 3107 DVD player. In the absence of true AAD players which are expected any day now, I also used the Toshiba 3107 player to compare AAD discs against the Premium in my regular hi-fi system.

Used as a CD player, the Micromega sounds warm and soft and very, very analogue. It sounds like a old

Ⓞ Micromega has chosen not to implement DVD's regional coding — this will play US movies with no hesitation.

record player. This analogue-nature is only skin-deep, however, as the true sound is actually rather spongy and rolled-off in the treble. Some years ago, in the great crossover period from LP to CD, companies like Micromega produced CD players with a deliberate analogue air, as an antithesis to the bright and brash sound of other early iterations of CD hardware.

Today, the modern CD listener has become more familiar with the clean sound of

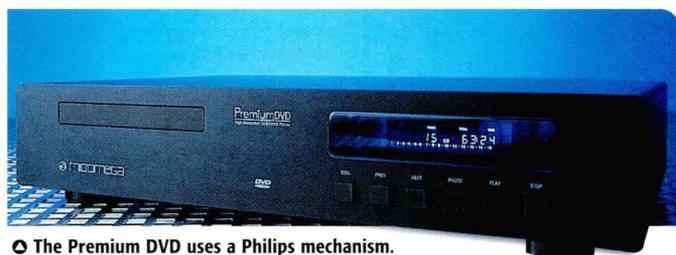
“ 96kHz/24-bit DVD audio discs will not enjoy a frequency response much beyond that of CD when replayed on the Micromega Premium DVD. ”

digital, and may find the Premium's sound just too retro. As its warmth comes at the expense of imagery and focus, it sounds distinctly muffled by comparison with even a £500 CD player. I don't think this is the ultimate convergence player it is cracked up to be.

#### AAD HABIT TO BREAK

On AAD discs, the player fares slightly better, although it does truncate some of the sound quality of the full 24-bit/96kHz datastream. The sound quality is considerably more open and spacious with the superior format, but I am not convinced that we are getting the complete picture with the Micromega (or, in fairness, with the Toshiba either). I have heard AAD discs played through 20/96 Pioneer and prototype 24/96 AAD devices elsewhere and there is a great deal more to reproduce than the CD-plus sound we heard from Micromega or Toshiba.

John Lee Hooker's *Mr Lucky* is one of the first AAD discs that is also a CD in the public domain,



Ⓞ The Premium DVD uses a Philips mechanism.



## LAB REPORT



● The Premium DVD uses a thermometer-style track listing.

and permitted us to perform direct comparisons between the two formats. With AAD, both the Micromega and Toshiba players displayed an increase in space and airiness, top-end detail was smoother, and a layer of background noise seemed to be wiped away. Instrument separation was also better. However, the CD (as played on a CD player) sounded more cohesive and more like a performance – the AAD disc sounded like a collection of session musicians ‘having a go.’ I am convinced this is not a fault of AAD, as I have heard examples of it making the musicians – good musicians, at that – seem to be in the room with you.

### DEVOLVED TO THE REGIONS

Finally, speaking as the Reviews Editor of *Home Entertainment* magazine, the Premium's DVD-Video performance is pretty much on par with other players out there. We have yet to see the results from other high-end DVD players such as the Theta DaViD, or Meridian's 500 and 800 series players, but here the colours are clear, the artefacts are minimal and the visual sharpness sets a standard that is difficult to better. And there's the added bonus of all-region disc playback.

Unfortunately, apart from its unique independence from the regional coding system, I can see little to justify the exalted price of this DVD player over a model costing half as much – the differences are just too small. **AS**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £1,500

Unique lack of regional coding, but both CD and DVD replay are compromised.

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

■ Surrey Sounds ☎ (01932) 254297

There are two facets to the audio performance of every DVD player. In the first instance, all DVD players will replay silver CD software (not CD-R material) so their quality – or otherwise – may be compared directly with conventional CD machines. In this instance, Micromega's player does rather better than expected because the original DAC board with its TDA1305 hybrid converter (as supplied by Philips) has been replaced by a circuit of Micromega's own design. Not only does this include the DAC and analogue stage, but also the power supplies, which are considerably improved in the DVD.

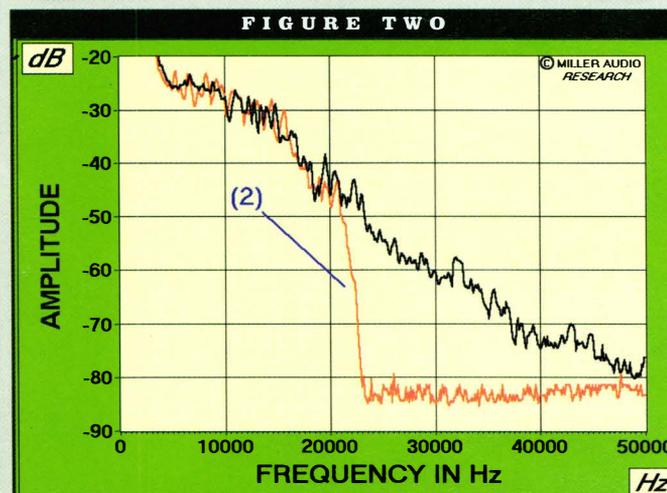
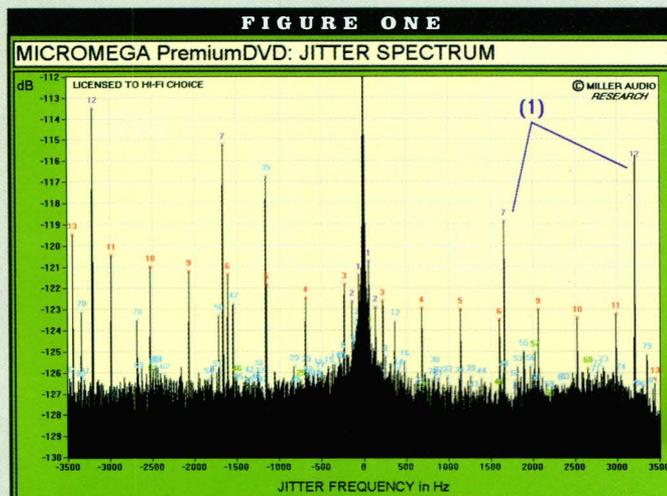
Unlike the Philips DVD unit upon which it is based, the Premium DVD uses a D/A converter that's found in Meridian's 508.24 and Talk's Thunder 3 CD players. This is the CS4390 from Crystal, a bitstream converter with built-in oversampling that provides an excellent >105dB suppression of digital images and low, low distortion (typically 0.001 per cent at peak output). Errors in low-level linearity are kept within tight +0.2/-0.1dB limits over a full 100dB dynamic range while the practical S/N ratio works out at about 104-105dB or between 17-18 bits. Importantly, Micromega's analogue stage adheres strictly to the 2V standard while its very low 1 Ohm source impedance helps eliminate any variability from different interconnect.

### JITTER YE NOT

Most importantly of all, the low 201psec of jitter puts the DVD in the top class for CD replay. Using the highly magnified scale in Fig. 1, we see that jitter comes in the form of very low-level data-induced peaks (all red-coloured markers) along with two characteristic peaks (1) which, at this low amplitude, are unlikely to exert any subjective impact.

That brings us onto the second facet of the DVD player: its ability to replay DVD PCM audio at an elevated 96kHz sample rate. Theoretically, such material will have a very extended frequency response, capturing musical harmonics and other information well beyond the 20kHz limit imposed by CD. Material recorded at 96kHz (at up to 24-bit resolution) can be replayed on all current DVD machines, although a definitive audio standard for the DVD format has yet to be fully ratified. There's also the fact that though a number of D/A converters are specified to run at an elevated 96kHz, their performance – particularly distortion and noise – has been known to suffer.

As a consequence, Micromega, or



more accurately, Philips, has opted to downsample all incoming 96kHz audio data to a more manageable 48kHz. After all, the CS4390 DAC will not handle sample rates beyond 50kHz although it will accept data up to a 24-bit wordlength. This means that 96kHz/24bit DVD audio discs will not enjoy a frequency response much beyond that of CD when replayed on the Micromega Premium DVD.

### CUT SHORT IN ITS PRIME

This is most easily demonstrated by using music from a pukka 96k/24-bit DVD audio disc, in this case *A Time Remembered* by Art Davis (Classic 24/96 DAD, DAD1001). The black trace (Fig. 2) shows a peak average of one minute from the first track and clearly shows ‘real’ information stretching out to 45kHz or so. Toshiba's SD-3107B was used here, though any other (non-Philips) DVD player would give the same result. In the Micromega, however, the DSP chip that handles Dolby Digital decoding also downsamples the 96kHz digital audio to 48kHz before passing it to the CS4390 DAC. Hence its

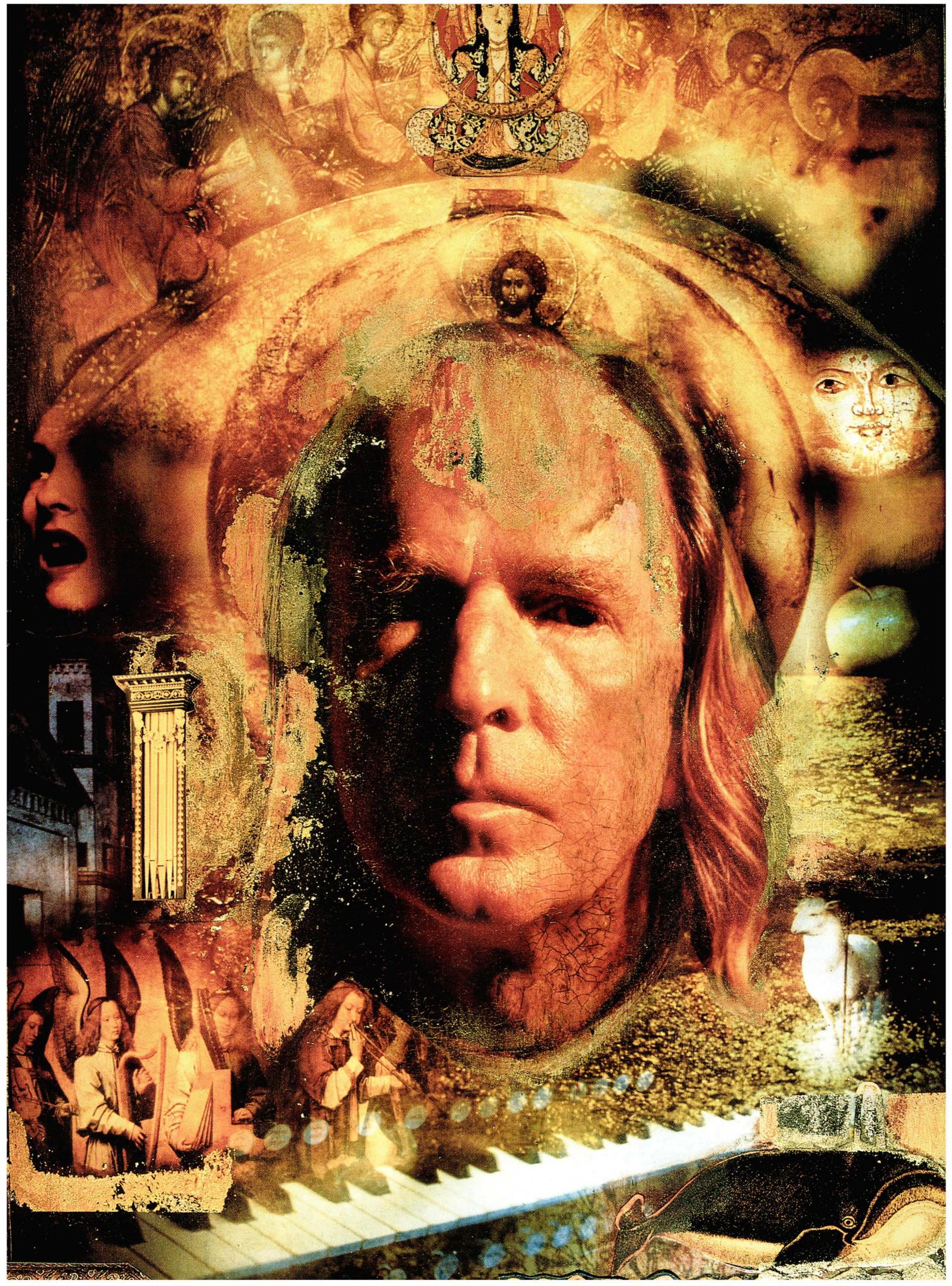
response is limited to 22kHz or so (2), cutting-off any ultra high frequency information (red trace).

Downsampling from 96kHz to a 48kHz sample rate also causes sporadic increases in distortion and jitter. For example, THD at 20Hz (bass) and 20kHz (treble) is a low 0.001 and 0.006 per cent respectively. But at 1kHz it jumps to 0.06 per cent just as its linearity drifts alarmingly below -100dB (24 bit data has a theoretical 144dB range). So, the PremiumDVD may well play 96kHz discs, but any advantage therein is lost. **PMI**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** All listening tests on this player were performed prior to and wholly independently of the lab tests, and Alan's conclusion was based purely on his judgment of the Premium's sound quality. Paul Miller's laboratory tests reinforce Alan's impression of ‘something missing’ in the Premium DVD's reproduction of 24-bit, 96kHz software.

### FEATURES

- Dimensions 43x8.7x27.6cm
- Outputs RCA analogue/digital, S-Video
- Dolby Digital decoding no



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# MEGA TEST!

## SPEAKER CABLES

To complement this month's loudspeaker test, **Richard Black** takes on the role of the Cable Guy with wires up to £10 per metre. Have we got the ideal cable for you?

### THE CAST LIST

ALR/Jordan	£5/m	p41
AQ Type 6+	£9/m	p41
Kimber 4VS	£94/3m pair(+plugs)	p42
Linn K20	£4/m	p42
Ortofon SPK200	£4.99/m	p43
Precious Metals SL102	£10/m	p43
QED Silver Anniversary	£5/m	p45
SonicLink AST150	£3.95/m	p45
Straight Wire Quartet	£8/m	p47
Supra Ply 3.4	£6.95/m	p47
Tara Labs Prism Klara	£2.95/m	p49
vdH The Gold Water	£6.99/m	p49

**W**e've stressed the need many times of purchasing some 'real' cables in order to get the best from a system. In fact, what's more interesting is what a good cable can do for your system. Or perhaps that should be: what a bad cable can do to spoil your system. That, I think, is the essential point and one which a lot of manufacturers would probably have us overlook. 'Smoother sound', 'richer bass' etc — all the usual sales puff promising great

improvements, but over what? Over another cable, basically, which does its job even less well than the original one on offer. This kind of thinking does clarify things and should lead to a lot less care-less buying, which after all costs money.

Part of the problem with cables is that according to simple electrical theory even a chunk of three-Amp mains cable could serve as a speaker cable, at least over moderate lengths. We simply don't know exactly what is at work, electrically and psychoacoustically, to make cables the villains they can be so demonstrably. What we do know, from a vast amount of admittedly anecdotal evidence, is what you can expect to suffer at the hands of poor-quality cables: loss of bass, grainy treble, poor imaging (and particularly front-to-back imaging, a hard trick to achieve at the best of times). Perhaps most insidious of all, is loss of musical detail.

The human brain

can do a lot to 'listen into' compromised hi-fi and winkle out the salient facts, but this takes a lot of effort and basically you don't buy a hi-fi in order to make an effort, you buy it to relax. What's needed is a system that preserves the detail in a good recording and allows you to hear as much, or as little, as you want.

To put it even more simply, the best cable is the one that allows you to relax your hearing apparatus most completely without missing anything. Now it's well known that people hear slightly differently, so flaws that seem irrelevant to one person may irritate another, and for this reason alone there is no 'perfect' hi-fi. What's more, cable sound is to an extent a function of the equipment at either end of it, so ideally a speaker cable should be matched to the particular amplifier and speaker in use.

### GLOSSARY

**BI-WIRING:** If the speaker has separate terminals for woofer and tweeter, remove the link between these and run a cable to each from the amplifier output. Can be beneficial — at a price!

**CAPACITANCE, INDUCTANCE, RESISTANCE:** Electrical parameters of a cable. Low resistance is good.

Capacitance and inductance are in roughly inverse proportion and their importance for sound quality is subject to debate. A very few amps (notably some Naim models) object to very high capacitance cables.

**DIELECTRIC:** Another word for the insulator that surrounds the conductors.

**LITZ:** A type of cable in which separately insulated 'hot' and 'cold' conductors are braided together, giving high capacitance/low inductance. Usually solid core.

**SOLID-CORE:** A cable in which each strand of conductor is separately insulated, though there may be several conductors per 'side'.

**STRANDED CABLE:** Several conductors laid together under a common insulator. More practical than solid-core.

Insert Audio

### HINTS & TIPS



Some cables are only sold pre-terminated with 'banana' (4mm) plugs, but if a cable is available

straight off the roll there's nothing wrong with baring the ends and using the screw-down terminals fitted to most amps and speakers. Do, however, be meticulous in avoiding short circuits!

Check terminals for tightness as they can 'relax' and lose their grip. If you have separate pre- and power amplifiers you may be better off putting the power amp near to the speakers and using long interconnects and short speaker cables. Cost will be similar but the performance is often improved — as long as the preamp has low output impedance.

# ALR/JORDAN QMM

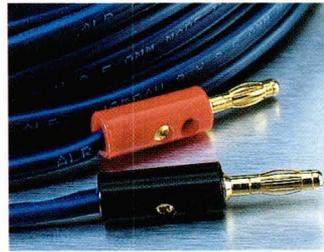


The ALR/Jordan got off to a shaky start on auditioning when it turned out that the end of one cable had red and black plugs reversed, leading to a rather obvious out-of-phase system. In design, this is a typical spaced figure-8 cable, as exemplified over the years by various Naim, Cable Talk and other designs. Two plain-copper stranded conductors of 2.5sq mm overall size are insulated in blue PVC and terminated — not amazingly neatly — with clamp-fit banana plugs.

## SOUND QUALITY

This cable might have wished to start the audition with something other than solo voice plus orchestra, which showed up a distinct tendency to dryness.

Unfortunately, the trend continued through a variety of material, removing some of the 'bloom' from sounds as diverse as Grover Washington's sax and Ronald Stevenson's piano. Probably related to the dryness, the



ambience enveloping the musicians was slightly curtailed, reducing the apparent size of the recording venue.

Tonally the cable seemed neutral, with no obvious colorations. Bass was extended but became rather shy in dense textures, an effect for some reason more marked with the hamam/kardon amp than the EARs. Imaging was slightly 'ping-pong' and lacking in depth, and in passages involving opposed bodies of sound — particularly chorus and orchestra — things became rather homogenised and difficult to follow. None of which made the

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: spaced figure-8
- Conductor: stranded 'Long Crystal Copper'
- Dielectric: PVC

ⓘ This spaced figure-8 cable came fitted with clamped-on plugs; soldered alternatives could also be used.

sound offensive, but it was never the most communicative.

## CONCLUSION

The electrical characteristics of the cable are typical of the type — very low capacitance, high inductance (not high enough, probably, to cause audible rolloff) and quite low-series resistance. All of which makes for a cable that should be compatible with any amp and speaker. In view of its modest sonic attainments, however, these attributes are less impressive.

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£5/m

ⓘ Generally neutral, if sometimes bass-shy, and not very communicative.

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Picture the Sound, 13 Weston Road, Guildford GU2 6AU  
☎ (07000) 443426

# AUDIOQUEST Type 6

Audioquest prints plenty of pseudo-science about the technical merits of its cables, but concludes its puffs honestly by reporting that the cable is 'the result of 16 years of empirically-driven evolution'. In other words, they don't really know why it works, but it seems to.

Nevertheless, this cable matches Audioquest's other 'Hyperlitz' designs in being an enthusiast's cable: it's thick and inflexible and therefore not in the running if you want a wire that can be hidden. Both features are consequences of the design, which employs several, quite thick, individually insulated solid conductors wound together under an overall sheath. These are brought out into four-inch tails at the ends and fitted (in this case) with nickel-plated banana plugs, immaculately soldered. Other terminations are available.

## SOUND QUALITY

If you nurture any preconceptions about fat cables and fat bass, this one will only strengthen them. Actually, on the whole the bass was



ⓘ The Audioquest wires are fitted here with nickel-plated banana plugs, but other terminations are available.

full bodied in the best sense, with just the occasional hint of overhang and once or twice (in music involving deep bass) a 'rumbly' effect. The other tonal oddity was a mild coloration on orchestral violins but otherwise this cable is pretty neutral. It tended to push solo voices forward, and its front-to-back imaging was not quite up with the best; side-to-side imaging, however, was good. Climaxes are uncompressed, and ambience was well preserved, losing the last fraction of a second of delay on occasion.



## CONCLUSION

Electrically Audioquest Type 6 is good: capacitance is highish but losses are low. It will be compatible with almost anything. Its only real drawback is its cumbersome size. Unfortunately at the price its sound doesn't quite make the recommendation grade.

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: 'Hyperlitz'
- Conductor: solid 'Long Grain Copper'
- Dielectric: PTFE, polyurethane

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£9/m

ⓘ A very inflexible cable in which the sonic ends don't quite justify the means.

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ A&R Cambridge Ltd, Pembroke Ave, Denny Ind. Centre, Waterbeach, Cambs CB5 9PB  
☎ (01223) 203203

# KIMBER 4VS



**Y**ou can spot a Kimber cable, or Kable as the company has it, a mile off — they're the ones with several conductors plaited together in an open weave. It's a formula which has served Kimber well, in terms of both sales and critical acclaim, and it makes for a cable which is easy to handle and robust too. The grey and black colour scheme of this version disappears tolerably well against a variety of decors, unlike some of the more garish options.

## SOUND QUALITY

It's not at first obvious what the differences are between 4VS and the more expensive 4TC (see *HFC* 168): they measure almost identically and sonically they are quite alike. A major similarity is in the bass, which is generally a Kimber strong point: deep and full but always controlled. In the main listening sequence, 4VS followed the Supra cable and exhibited better controlled bass but also slightly

Kimber Kable is not sold by the metre but pre-cut with or without plugs.

less resonance, one of those choices which really comes down to taste as neither seemed obviously right or wrong. In the course of a typically virtuoso Miles Davis solo, the Kimber gave the cleanest and sweetest trumpet sound of the batch, never getting it mixed up with the accompanying lines.

Things became slightly compromised in the area of imaging, which seemed rather behind the standard of 4TC. In the opera excerpts, the chorus was hard to place precisely and the depth of image seemed decidedly lacking (although by the standards of this particular cable group it was good). Loud and busy passages were uncompressed but affected by just a hint of grain.

Like other Kimber cables, 4VS has highish capacitance and low inductance, together with quite low resistance, a mix likely to give

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: pseudo-Litz open weave
- Conductor: vari-stranded copper
- Dielectric: polythene composite



good results in a variety of systems without upsetting amplifiers. A good all-round performer and definitely Recommended.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £58/3m pr

Generally neutral, if sometimes bassy, but not very communicative.

■ LIFE TIME GUARANTEE

✉ Russ Andrews Accessories Ltd, Edge Bank House, Skelsmergh, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 9AS  
☎ (01539) 823247

# LINN K20



**O**f all the cables reviewed here — perhaps make that 'of all cables' — this one is probably the most system-based. Linn is the system brand par excellence: if you like what one of the company's products can do, the thinking goes, you'll love a complete system. Still, plenty of folks use a part-Linn system and so perhaps they'll forgive us for reviewing this cable in an otherwise Linn-free

comparison!

K20 is an unpretentious spaced-figure-8 cable, generally very similar to the ALR/Jordan cable but rather thicker and broader. It's not all that flexible but will stay where it's put. Finish is a little rough, with standard banana plugs (nickel-plated) soldered, sans body, to the cable ends and insulated with heatshrink. It's pretty tough, though.

Linn's K20 is the base model in a range of Linn system oriented cables.

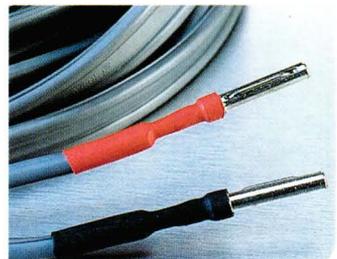
## SOUND QUALITY

The strongest impression made by this cable was of a strong but coloured and unobtrusive bass. As long as the bass action is vigorous this can be fun, but when something more restrained is required it becomes apparent that the bass is not well integrated with the rest of the sound. In addition, true bass extension is limited, the impact coming from frequencies above the bottom octave.

Higher up the spectrum a feeling of dryness persists, noticeably in music recorded with a good deal of ambience, which can get quite brutally cut off. Full-on climaxes are handled with aplomb, but the crescendo leading to them can be edgy and coarse. Strangely, unlike the majority of cables, this one fared less well in the more expensive (EAR/ATC) system,

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: spaced figure-8
- Conductor: stranded copper
- Dielectric: PVC



seeming to suit the hk/JBL better.

## CONCLUSION

Electrical parameters are as expected — low capacitance and resistance, highish inductance: no problem there. Try it in a Linn system, and/or with energetic music.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £4/m

Seems to work best with lively, unobtrusive music — can be dry and edgy

■ ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Linn Products Ltd, Floors Road, Waterfoot, Eaglesham, Glasgow G76 0EP  
☎ (0500) 888909



# ORTOFON SPK200



**W**ith its four flat conductors this cable offers options of bi-wiring or parallel configuration. It also allows under-carpet use as it is only 2mm thick, and its high degree of flexibility facilitates neat cable runs. The review samples came terminated with banana plugs from Insert Audio, which on close inspection showed evidence of some slightly below-par soldering, more critical in this case

because there's no cable clamp or strain relief.

### SOUND QUALITY

Several of the cables in this group seemed to 'do bass' particularly gleefully, this being one. It may be a little too resonant for some, to the point of ringing and overhang (more noticeable, oddly, with the sealed-box ATCs than the reflex-loaded JBLs), but there's no deny-



ing that SPK200 can go low and stay tuneful. It's got real extension, too, as witness the subtlety achieved with quiet double bass or piano, and what's more the bass doesn't suffer in reaction to busy midrange and treble. Higher up the spectrum there's still much to praise, though with a few qualifications. Solo voice suffered a little dryness, and also seemed to move forward in the mix. Full chorus on the other hand came across well, with perhaps a little front-back image compression but excellent tone and communication. In very busy passages it was still possible to follow the

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: flat quad
- Conductor: stranded copper
- Dielectric: PVC

● SPK200 is ideal for laying under carpets thanks to a thickness of 2mm.

inner lines, albeit with some conscious effort, and ambience was quite well portrayed.

### CONCLUSION

The connector chosen for the sample gives moderate capacitance and inductance: resistance is quite low. Other connectors, with the same resistance but different inductance and capacitance, might well alter the sound — tune-to-taste cable! Be that as it may, this is a practical cable and deserves Recommendation.

### VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£4.99/m

■ Good strong bass and fair detail, only slightly marred by a little dryness.

#### ■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Henley Designs Ltd, The Old Coach House, The Street, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 8EH

☎ (01491) 834700

# PRECIOUS METALS SL102



**T**his cable consists of two separate conductors, quite thin, tightly twisted together and terminated with clamp-fit banana plugs. In fact each conductor is actually a miniature coaxial cable (apparently an industry-standard type) in which a very thin centre conductor is insulated with Teflon and surrounded with a braided screen. The outer insulation seems to be PVC. Core and screen are con-

nected together and the overall effect should be that of a normal stranded conductor, though distributor Picture the Sound claims otherwise.

### SOUND QUALITY

Starting at the bottom, bass is well defined but lacks extension. It also tended to become coarse when driven hard. Pizzicato double bass sounded tuneful but

● The Precious Metals combines the conductor and screen of a coax cable.

again lacked weight and somehow stood out against the rest of the band, rather than quietly underpinning it. The operatic baritone excerpt made a world-class singer sound more like a struggling student, straining to produce more sound than he knows how.

Up in the treble, orchestral violins sounded distinctly coloured, and a prominent triangle in one excerpt sounded far less pure and resonant than with better cables. Loud climaxes became coarse and congested and an extended passage for chorus was distinctly undramatic. It's not all completely doom and gloom — a quick spin of Claire Martin, with her characteristically spare accompaniment, was more companionable and immediate, but not more so than several of the other cables here could manage.

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: twisted pair
- Conductor: stranded 'silver alloy'
- Dielectric: PVC



### CONCLUSION

Electrical tests showed nothing unusual except high resistance, although this doesn't infer poor sound per se. An oddball cable: it must have some natural application; we just couldn't find it!

### VERDICT

SOUND	★★★☆☆
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★☆☆
PRICE	£10/m

■ Unusual construction gives rather strained sound, only really cheering up with simple musical textures

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✉ Picture the Sound, 13 Weston Road, Guildford GU2 6AU

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## QED Qudos Silver



**Q**ED has launched this cable to mark the firm's 25th anniversary. Considering the price and that the conductor is indeed silver-plated copper, it's one of the best material value cables going. It's based on the standard Qudos, itself a refined descendant of the QED79. Construction is basic figure-8, with each conductor consisting of many rope-laid strands of silver-plated OFHPC (Oxygen Free High Purity Copper), insulated in translucent hard poly-

thene and terminated in crimp-fit banana plugs. It's moderately flexible and about as small as the amount of copper (2.5sq mm) will allow.

### SOUND QUALITY

The sound quality question here hinges not only on how Qudos Silver compares with the rest of the world at the price, but how much better it is than the basic Qudos version. Imaging, perhaps the most obvious weak area for so



Q Qudos Silver uses silver plated copper conductors, the only example of this desirable stuff in the group.

many cables, was moderate to good both front-back and side-side, and detail in busy passages of music was reasonably easy to follow. Rather disappointing was a degree of roughness in loud and complex music, but in simpler and/or quieter moments the overall quality was detailed and smooth. Bass seemed to lack some extension but made up for this by being easy to follow and to

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: figure-8
- Conductor: stranded silver-plated copper
- Dielectric: polythene

pitch, and generally well integrated with higher sounds. Vocals communicated well but perhaps could have been more exciting at times.

### CONCLUSION

Test results show moderate resistance and the usual quite low capacitance/moderate inductance of figure-8 cables, with low dielectric loss. It's a perfectly competent cable, though not outstanding and the financially challenged may wish to compare it carefully with basic Qudos, itself a decent option. Nonetheless, Qudos Silver firmly deserves Recommendation.

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £5/m

Basic figure-8 cable adds value with silver plating, to generally smooth and detailed effect.

#### ■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

QED Audio Products Ltd, Ridgeway House, Ridgeway Close, Lightwater, Surrey GU18 5XU

(01276) 451166

## SONIC LINK AST150



**A**ST stands for Aero Space Technology, inferring the presence of materials similar to those for aerospace applications. Actually, this cable is relatively modest technologically, using tinned copper conductors insulated in silicone rubber — a Sonic Link favourite. It's basically a figure-8 design with an outer sheath giving a circular overall cross section. The cable's brown colour is a lot more appealing than some of Sonic Link's more garish offerings!

Although it's quite thick, the cable is very flexible.

### SOUND QUALITY

Sonic Link's designs don't resemble anyone else's, and they seldom sound like any others. Starting with a fairly bassy bit of music (the opera *Ambrosio*), the first impression was of a bass which lacked low extension but was surprisingly plummy in the mid-bass area, an effect notice-



Q A Curate's Egg cable whose strengths should outweigh its weaknesses.

able in both systems used. By contrast, male voices sounded slightly higher in timbre, which was not unpleasant but probably isn't very accurate. The strength of this cable, though, was its ability to hold everything together through thick and thin, regardless of loudness or complexity. The bass stayed constant too, which meant that once one had adjusted it was still possible to follow the low parts in densely orchestrated tex-

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: figure-8
- Conductor: stranded tinned copper
- Dielectric: silicone rubber

tures. Imaging was fair though not precise. Reverberation was quite well served, though some sounds had a tendency to decay naturally to a point and then just disappear.

### CONCLUSION

Electrically, Sonic Link AST150 behaves like many another figure-8, although its resistance is a little higher than most. The dielectric has low loss. Like so many other Sonic Link cables it's a Curate's egg and as such seems to deserve Recommendation, if only to encourage you to try its strengths and see if you can live with its weaknesses!

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £3.95/m

Slightly plummy bass and a useful way of holding musical strands together.

#### ■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

Sonic Link, Derwent Business Centre, Clark St, Derby DE1 2BU

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 AVI S2000MI (line) Amp ..... £999.00  
 Linn Majik (line level) ..... £650.00  
 Marantz PM66KI amplifier ..... £399.00  
 Naim Nait 3 Amplifier ..... £590.00  
 Pioneer A300R Precision ..... £399.00  
 Rotel RA 931ax Amplifier ..... £149.00  
 Rega Brio Amplifier (NEW!) ..... £298.00

**am/fm - TUNERS**  
 Arcam Alpha 7 Tuner ..... £229.00  
 Naim NAT 03 FM Tuner ..... £615.00  
 Rega Radio Tuner (NEW!) ..... £298.00

**selected - RECORDERS**  
 Denon DRM 550 Cassette ..... £159.00  
 Pioneer CT-830S Cassette ..... £499.00  
 Pioneer PDR-05 CD-R (NOW) .. £749.00  
 Pioneer PDR-04 CD-R (NOW) .. £499.00  
 Pioneer CTW806 Double ..... £299.00  
 Yamaha KX393 Cassette ..... £129.00  
 Yamaha KX580se Cassette .... £249.00

**loud - SPEAKERS**  
 B&W DM 302 ..... £149.00  
 B&W DM 601 ..... £199.00  
 B&W CDM 2se ..... £400.00  
 B&W P4 Speakers ..... £675.00  
 Epos ES12 (NEW!) ..... £499.00  
 Linn Tukan Mini Monitor ..... £550.00  
 Linn Keilidh Speakers ..... £750.00  
 Mission 701 (NEW!) ..... £129.00  
 Mission 702 (NEW!) ..... £159.00  
 Mordaunt Short MS10i Pearl .. £149.00  
 Naim INTRO ..... £660.00  
 Naim CREDO ..... £1060.00  
 ProAc Response 2.5 ..... £2700.00  
 Rega Jura speakers ..... £449.00

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Arcam Delta 280 Tuner (As new) (WOW!) ..... (349.00)	<b>£199.00</b>	Marantz CD 80 Player S/H (boxed) ..... (599.00)	<b>£275.00</b>
Denon AVC 1530 AV Amplifier (WOW!) ..... (479.00)	<b>£199.00</b>	Mordaunt Short MS10i Classic (WOW!) ..... (279.00)	<b>£179.00</b>
Epos ES12 Speakers ..... (499.00)	<b>£299.00</b>	Mordaunt Short MS20i Pearl ..... (199.00)	<b>£139.00</b>
Arcam Xeta 1 AV Amplifier (Boxed 2Yr G/tee) (449.00)	<b>£299.00</b>	Mission 751 Freedom Spkrs (WOW!) ..... (348.00)	<b>£229.00</b>
AVI Integrated Amplifier 100w (WOW!) ..... (999.00)	<b>£599.00</b>	Naim NAC 82 Pre Amp S/H ..... (2225.00)	<b>£1495.00</b>
Linn Kudos (Sneaky) Module Tuner S/H ..... (500.00)	<b>£295.00</b>	Naim NAP 180 Power Amp S/H ..... (1090.00)	<b>£695.00</b>
Linn Keilidh (black) ..... (875.00)	<b>£575.00</b>	Pioneer CLD 2950 Laser Player S/H ..... (600.00)	<b>£345.00</b>
Linn Kairn (phono) Pre Amp S/H boxed ..... (1700.00)	<b>£1115.00</b>	REL Senter 2 Sub Woofer (WOW!) ..... (1800.00)	<b>£1195.00</b>
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Linn Wakonda (phono) Pre Amp S/H boxed ... (900.00)	<b>£679.00</b>	Rega Brio Amp (small case) ..... (229.00)	<b>£159.00</b>
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# STRAIGHT WIRE Quartet

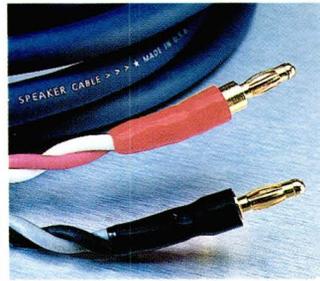


**S**econd only to the Audioquest in the chunkiness stakes (though a lot more flexible), Quartet also bears a conceptual similarity to the latter in having separately insulated conductors – four, in this case – twisted together inside a common sheath. The conductors are of plain stranded copper and are insulated in ‘hybrid foam’ – it actually feels like natural rubber. Crimp-fit bananas were fitted to the review

sample, perfectly decent connectors but with a soft plastic sleeve which can come adrift when you try to pull the plug out of a socket.

## SOUND QUALITY

Quartet went down well on audition. If it had a consistent flaw it was its lack of bass weight in the presence of complex textures, something shared by many cables. When there’s not so much



happening the bass can be gratifyingly extended and full, which leads to excellent results with jazz trio or passages of organ music using only the pedals, but can slightly reduce the impact of an orchestra or a full rock band. With the operatic excerpts this cable was as successful as any in the group, ensuring that voices were always full in tone and communicative, though they sometimes seemed a little too ‘forward’. Ambience was well preserved and detail easy to hear through any amount of complication. This

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: pseudo-Litz twisted quad
- Conductor: stranded ‘Oxygen-Free High Conductivity Copper’
- Dielectric: ‘Hybrid Foam’

◉ **Straightwire Quartet: a chunky American cable with a good attitude.**

cable seemed to show more of its ‘character’ in the less expensive amplifier/speaker system, making it a very attractive and appropriate proposition in such a case.

## CONCLUSION

Electrically it’s not unusual, with moderate capacitance (slightly lossy, though) and inductance, and below-average resistance. The Straightwire Quartet is good all-round choice, in fact, and given its fairly modest price, good sound and practicality, it seems more deserving than most of a Best Buy.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £8/m

■ A good all-rounder with full tone, clear detail and natural ambience.

### ■ LIFE TIME GUARANTEE

✉ CSE, Unit 9, Centre Park Holdings, The Airfield, Tockwith, York YO5 8QF

☎ (01423) 359054

# SUPRA PLY 3.4



**S**upra has been making cables for a while; in fact the company’s brochure appears to imply that Supra 2.5 was the ‘original’ dedicated speaker cable in 1976: I can’t argue. Supra Ply 3.4 is more recent, and the brochure makes great play of its ‘logical and scientific design’. It’s a modified figure-8 cable in which two conductors of rectangular cross-section are placed face-to-face in an overall sheath. The idea is to minimise

inductance, hence maximising bandwidth. Supra’s brochure makes several mistakes, such as claiming that fat cables have high inductance – certainly untrue. Still, the basic idea of low inductance is sound enough and Supra’s approach is arguably a lot more practical than that of Goertz and Electrofluidics. The conductors are of multi-strand tin-plated copper, Supra claiming that this has several advantages over silver plat-



ing, including long-term reliability. The review cables came with commercial gold-plated banana plugs, well fitted.

## SOUND QUALITY

Ply 3.4 put up a good case for Supra’s construction, with a pleasing tonal balance and good detail. It offered a deep, resonant bass, perhaps slightly ‘fat’ but not the worse for it; clean and effortless midband and just a hint of restriction on the treble – not so much

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: Modified figure-8
- Conductor: stranded tinned 5N Oxygen-Free Copper
- Dielectric: ion-stabilised PVC

◉ **Supra’s Scandinavian maker claims to have started this whole cable thing.**

lack of treble as a lack of freedom. However, imaging was convincing with quite decent front-back too, and the sound stayed clean up to high levels.

## CONCLUSION

As mentioned, the inductance of Ply 3.4 is only slightly lower than most figure-8 cables, although capacitance is a little higher. Resistance is low and it should be a good match to most amps and speakers. Recommended.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £6.95/m

■ Clean sound which stays together well at high levels, with full bass – perhaps a touch of treble restriction.

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## TARA LABS Klara



Tara is an American firm which includes some frighteningly expensive cables in its product line, but Klara is a budget buy by any standards. It's a simple figure-8 design, although it has a couple of subtleties: apparently the insulator is a double-layer affair with an inner layer of polythene and an outer of PVC, and the stranded copper conductors are 'Pressure-Stranded' to increase the contact between them along the length. It's a very flexible cable,

and arrived for review with good-quality banana plugs fitted. It's worth noting that the review sample was only 3m long (all other cables except the van den Hul were between 4.5 and 5.5m).

### SOUND QUALITY

Considering this was the cheapest cable in this survey, it put up a creditable fight. In more rarefied areas of hi-fi it would be damning with faint praise to say there were



no obvious flaws, but in a case like this that's generally something to be grateful for. The weakest area was probably imaging, but even there performance was no worse than average. Bass extends a fair way down and is always tuneful and well balanced with the upper registers, and treble is generally clean and tidy, though occasionally very bright instruments like trumpet seemed to be a bit out on a limb and separated from the rest

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: figure-8
- Conductor: stranded 'Oxygen-Free High Purity Copper'
- Dielectric: polythene

With models priced up to hundreds of pounds per metre, Tara has done some serious belt tightening with Klara.

of the band. Voice was well served, singly and en masse, and ambience seemed a little dry. Individual lines in dense music were quite easy to follow – a good result at this price.

### CONCLUSION

This cable has slightly higher resistance and inductance than average, and low capacitance: it should suit budget amps and speakers especially well. Good value, and Recommended.

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £2.95/m

■ A good budget cable with an even spread of virtues – and very minor vices – across the board.

#### LIFE TIME GUARANTEE

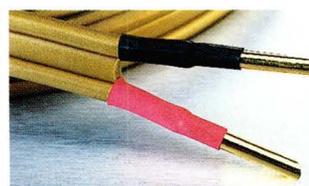
✉ Sound Image UK Ltd, 52 Milton Rd, London SW14 8JR  
☎ (0181) 255 6868

## VAN DEN HUL Gold Water



Apart from the unusual and attractive colour, this cable is externally a dead ringer for various other speaker cables. Van den Hul is king of the non-metallic cables, but at this price you get good ol' copper, stranded beneath an insulation material that looks like polyurethane but is described as

Hulliflex. The insulation is quite thick but soft, and as a result the cable is flexible. Plugs fitted to the review sample were of the 'O-Z' type which give a good grip on the socket. Unfortunately the length supplied was only 2.4m, making strict comparisons with other cables slightly unfair in vdH's favour.



### SOUND QUALITY

Gold Water suffered from a shyness in the bass when there's a lot going on. Give it a simple bass line and it's happy, allowing the full weight through unhindered, but add some drums, a guitar and a sax and the balance definitely shifts upwards. Again, some dryness on reverberant decay accompanies this, and there was a slight haze or graininess over overtone-rich sounds such as violin or trumpet. That said, this cable managed the test of choir well, with only a slight lack of imaging precision to compromise things. Detail was not its strongest point and it was sometimes hard to follow, for instance, the solo piano in the

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Topology: spaced figure-8
- Conductor: stranded copper
- Dielectric: Hulliflex

Despite its lovely Hulliflex coating Gold Water is neither glittery nor wet.

louder moments of a piano concerto. Climaxes could become rather coarse at times and this seemed to reduce the dynamic impact of music.

### CONCLUSION

The results for this cable show unusually low capacitance and correspondingly high inductance (though still not enough to cause directly audible treble loss unless you're driving Apogee ribbons through 10m of cable!). No great cause for excitement overall.

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

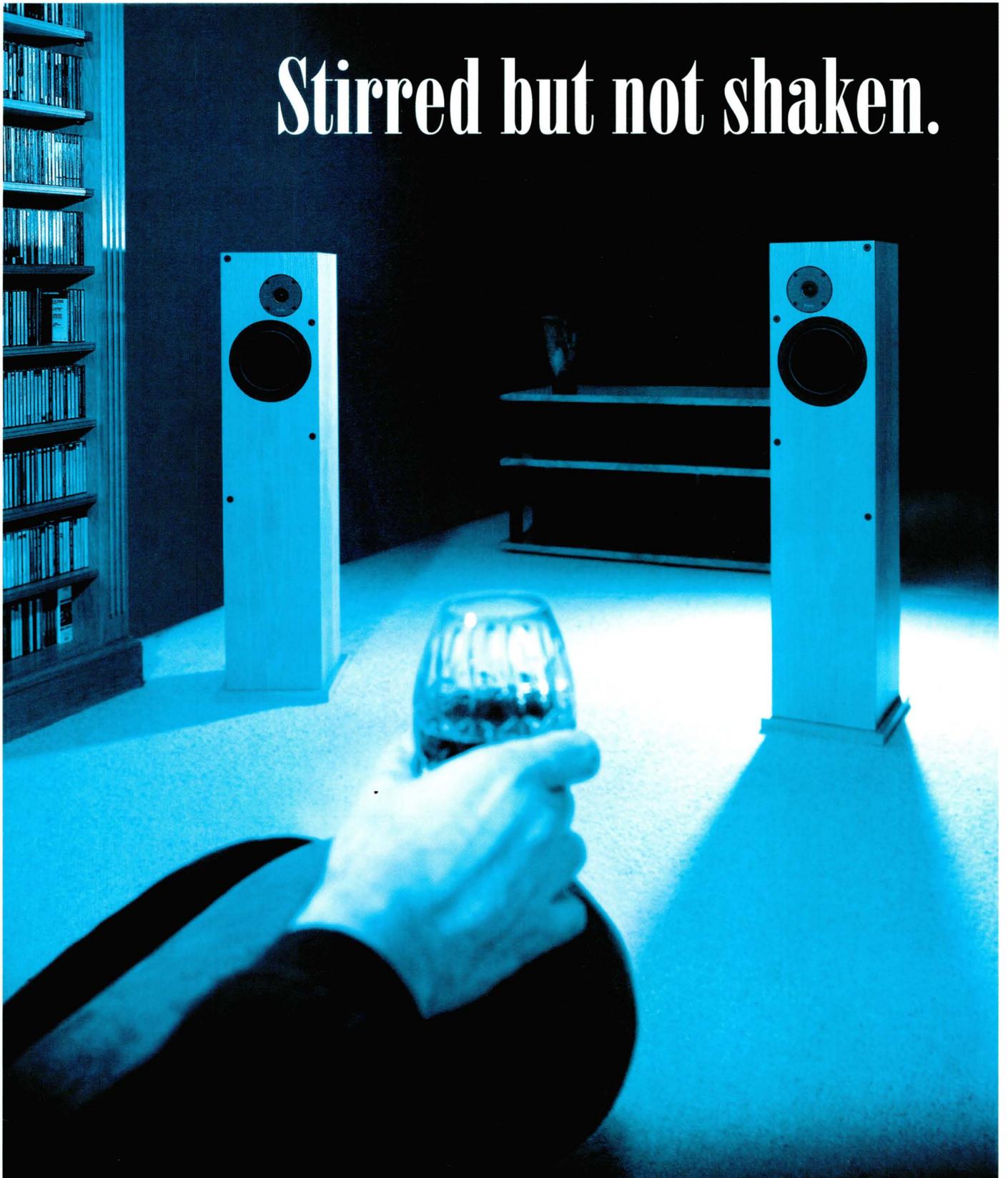
**PRICE** £6.99

■ Generally neutral, if sometimes bass-shy, but not very communicative.

#### LIFE TIME GUARANTEE

✉ van den Hul UK, Unit 12, Imex Ho., 6 Wadsworth Rd, Perivale, Middx UB3 7JS  
☎ (0181) 997 4280

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# SPEAKER CABLES

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite the protestations of many manufacturers, it still seems plausible, on examination of the evidence, that a cable's 'sound' is largely determined by the basic parameters of resistance, inductance and capacitance. Still, no two cables here had anything like identical values for all three parameters, so there's nothing if not room for variety.

I passed over five of the 12 cables for official accolades. The Precious Metals was rather odd in concept and sound, but it probably suits some systems down to the ground. Linn cable is so much allied to Linn systems that perhaps testing outside one is unfair: then again if its merits don't extend to more general application it fails the recommendation test anyway. Audioquest only just missed its swing tag, but as one of the dearer cables, it just failed to better some cheaper designs. The other two likewise failed to offer anything in particular not found elsewhere for the same or less money, and seemed to have specific drawbacks that limit their appeal.

Straight Wire Quartet attracted a

smattering of criticism on the subject of bass, so why did it end up as the solitary Best Buy? Largely because in this price range it would be unreasonable to expect perfection (the 'reference' Goertz cable is over twice the price and carries a penalty in practicality too): what's more, the complaints levelled were minor and more than offset by the general feeling of ease which the cable managed to impart with the widest variety of musical material. Its construction also makes it totally practical — compatible with any amp and flexible enough not to break easily in use.

### HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

Two amp/speaker combinations were used in the course of this test: my usual setup of EAR 519 power amps and ATC SCM20 speakers, and the considerably less expensive partnership of harman/kardon HK3500 integrated amp and JBL LX20 speakers, the latter probably nearer the general league of the cables being tested. Sources were both CD (modified Marantz) and LP (Pink Triangle, Highphonic, EAR pre), and listening included both quick-fire comparisons (2-3 minutes per cable, one track at a time) and longer sessions with a variety of musical excerpts in each. Music varied widely, but included extracts from the following via all the cables:

### THE TEST MUSIC

**VERDI:** *Rigoletto*

Domingo/Cotrubas/Cappuccilli, VPO, Giulini on DG 415 288

**MAREK:** *Triptych* Ronald Stevenson (piano) on Altarus AIR-CD-9043

**GROVER WASHINGTON JR.:**

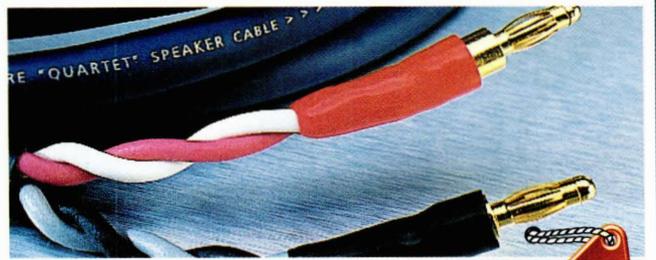
*Mister Magic* on Motown 530 103-2

**CLAIRE MARTIN:** *Old Boyfriends* on Linn AKD 028

### HINTS & TIPS

Some cables are only sold pre-terminated with plugs or spades, but if a cable is available straight off the roll there's nothing wrong with simply barring the ends and using the screw-down terminals fitted to most amps and speakers. Do, however, be meticulous in avoiding short circuits (+ to - terminals)! Check terminals for tightness every few months as they can 'relax' and lose their grip.

### THE BEST IN THE TEST



#### STRAIGHT WIRE Quartet

£8/m

Offers a good all-round performance combined with practicality and decent construction, and should go down well in a wide variety of budget-to-moderate systems. Use it with confidence.



#### KIMBER 4VS

£58/3m pair

A fine all-rounder, likely to perform well in all kinds of systems. It's on the dear side but it seems good value.



#### SONIC LINK AST150

£3.95/m

Seemed to have enough positive features to make it worthy of Recommendation, but do try it first.



#### ORTOFON SPK200

£4.99/m

Worked well across the board and is a highly practical cable too, at a perfectly reasonable price.



#### SUPRA PLY 3.4

£6.95/m

An interesting concept, not ideally executed but still sonically justified and at a decent enough price.



#### QED Qudos Silver

£5/m

Scraped its Recommendation: if you try this one, check out also QED's basic Qudos and the even cheaper Qudos Micro.



#### TARA LABS Klara

£2.95/m

This is what a decent budget cable should be — at least 80 per cent of the real thing in most areas and duff in none.

### SPEAKER CABLES COMPARISON TABLE

MAKE	ALR/JORDAN	AUDIOQUEST	KIMBER	LINN	ORTOFON	PRECIOUS METALS
MODEL	QMM	TY E 6	4VS	K20	SPK200	SL102
PRICE	£5/m	£9/m	£58/3m pair	£4/m	£4.99/m	£10/m
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
MAKE	QED	SONIC LINK	STRAIGHT WIRE	SUPRA	TARA LABS	VAN DEN HUL
MODEL	QUDOS SILVER	AST 150	QUARTET	PLY 3.4	KLARA	GOLD WATER
PRICE	£5/m	£3.95/m	£8/m	£6.95/m	£2.95/m	£6.99/m
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆

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<b>ACCRINGTON</b> Cryers 01254 391440	Suttons 01202 555512	<b>CHELTENHAM</b> Audio T 01242 583960	Hi-Fi Corner 0131 556 7901	<b>HULL</b> The Audio Room 01482 896166	Audio Concept 0181 567 8703	Central Radio 0161 834 6700	Oxford Audio 01865 790879	Sevenoaks Hi-Fi 01732 459555	<b>TEWKESBURY</b> Sight & Sound 01684 298109
<b>AYLESBURY</b> Northwood Audio 01296 428790	<b>BRACKNELL</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01344 424556	Richer Sounds 0131 226 3544	Richer Sounds 0131 556 7901	A Fanthorpe 01482 223096	Audio T 0171 794 7848	Practical Hi-Fi 0161 839 8869	Sevenoaks Hi-Fi 01865 241773	<b>SHEFFIELD</b> Audio Images 0114 273 7893	<b>THAME</b> Thame Audio 01844 215431
<b>BANBURY</b> Blinkhorns 01295 259859	<b>BRADFORD</b> Erricks 01274 309266	Sevenoaks Hi-Fi 01242 241171	Superfi 0181 367 3132	<b>ENFIELD</b> Audio T 01482 587171	Bartletts Hi-Fi 0171 607 2148	Superfi 0161 835 1156	Superfi 01738 64274	Moorgate Acoustics 0114 275 6048	<b>THORNTON HEATH</b> AWE 0181 653 3657
<b>BANGOR</b> I & H Griffiths 01248 370655	<b>BRENTWOOD</b> Audio T 01277 264730	CHESTER Audio Excellence 01244 345576	Electra 0181 342 2333	Superfi 01482 324051	Chelsea A.V. 0171 352 2596	The Hi-Fi Room 0161 832 0888	Techniques 01738 634809	Richer Sounds 0114 266 1616	<b>TORQUAY</b> Upton Electronics 01803 551329
<b>BARKING</b> Hyper-Fi 0181 591 6961	Hi-Spek Electronics 01277 226303	Peter's Hi-Fi 01244 319392	Chew & Osborne 01992 574242	Zen Audio 01482 587397	Francis of Streamham 0181 769 0466	<b>MANSFIELD</b> Techniques 01623 26315	<b>PETERBOROUGH</b> Audiovision 01733 352752	Sevenoaks Hi-Fi 0114 272 3768	<b>TRURO</b> E.T.S. 01872 79809
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<b>BATH</b> Moss of Bath 01225 465085	The Powerplant 01273 775978	<b>COVENTRY</b> Frank Harvey Hi-Fi 01203 525200	<b>FALKIRK</b> Hi-Fi Corner 01324 629011	IPSWICH Eastern Audio 01473 212171	Hi-Fi Care 0171 637 8911	<b>MILTON KEYNES</b> Technosound 01908 604949	<b>PLYMOUTH</b> The Hi-Fi Attic 01752 689511	<b>SLOUGH</b> Fraser's Hi-Fi 01753 520244	<b>TUXFORD</b> nr. Newark Chantry Audio 01777 870372
Paul Green Hi-Fi 01225 316197	BRISTOL Audio Excellence 0117 926 4975	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	<b>GATESHEAD</b> Lintone Audio 0191 460 0999	KETERING Classic Hi-Fi 01536 310855	Hi-Fi Confidential 0171 233 7225	<b>NELSON</b> Wilkinson's Hi-Fi 01282 612901	Richer Sounds 01908 604949	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>UXBRIDGE</b> Uxbridge Audio 01895 465444
<b>BECKENHAM</b> Musical Images 0181 663 3777	Paul Roberts Hi-Fi 0117 942 9370	<b>CROYDON</b> Audio Tech 0181 680 1177	Lintone Audio 0191 460 0999	<b>KIDDERMINSTER</b> MAX 01562 822236	Hi-Fi Surplus Store 0171 323 6712	<b>NEW MALDEN</b> Grandix 0181 336 0012	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
<b>BEDFORD</b> Richard's A.V. 01234 365165	Richer Sounds 0117 973 4397	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Lintone Audio 0191 460 0999	<b>KINGS LYNN</b> Martins Hi-Fi 01533 761683	Hi-Spek Electronics 0181 349 1166	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Sevenoaks Hi-Fi 01234 272779	Sevenoaks Hi-Fi 0117 974 3727	<b>CROYDON</b> Audio Tech 0181 680 1177	Lintone Audio 0191 460 0999	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Kamla Electronics 0171 323 2747	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
<b>BELFAST</b> Audio Times 01232 249117	Richer Sounds 01232 321332	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Hi-Fi Corner 0141 248 2840	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	M. O'Brien Hi-Fi 0181 946 1528	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Richer Sounds 01232 321332	<b>BIDEFORD</b> J & A Cameras 01237 421791	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Myers Audio 0181 520 7277	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b> Music Matters 0121 429 2811	Spains 0181 688 2093	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Oranges & Lemons 0171 924 2040	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Music Matters 0121 742 0254	<b>DARLINGTON</b> Hi-Fi Experience 01252 481418	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	PRC Hi-Fi & Video 0181 470 3489	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Norman H. Field 0121 622 2323	<b>DERBY</b> Superfi 01332 360303	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 352 8496	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Richer Sounds 0121 643 1516	<b>DUBLIN</b> Hi-Fi Corner 01671 4343	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Sevenoaks Hi-Fi 0121 233 2977	<b>DUNDEE</b> J.D. Brown 01382 226591	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Superfi 0121 631 2875	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
<b>BISHOP'S STORTFORD</b> The Audio File 01279 506576	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
<b>BLACKBURN</b> Cryers 01245 51842	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Romans Hi-Fi 01254 887799	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
<b>BLACKPOOL</b> Practical Hi-Fi 01253 300599	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
<b>BLOXWICH</b> Sound Academy 01922 473499	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
<b>BODMIN</b> E.T.S. 01208 75579	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
<b>BOLTON</b> Cleartone 01204 531423	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Practical Hi-Fi 01204 395789	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305
Sound & Vision 01204 701711	<b>DUNDEE</b> W.M. Coupar 01382 229588	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	Richer Sounds 0141 226 5711	<b>KINGSTON UPON THAMES</b> Infidelity 0181 943 3530	Richer Sounds 0171 403 1201	<b>NEWBURY</b> B&B Hi-Fi 01635 32474	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Bill Hutchinson 0191 230 3600	<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b> Richer Sounds 01703 231311	<b>WALLINGFORD</b> Astley Audio 01491 839305

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# One of Life's affordable luxuries . . .



## Hi-Fi Choice

(December '96)

Cable Talk Studio 2  
Sound \*\*\*\*\*

## THE VERDICT

▲ Tonally, dynamically and rhythmically a truly first-class cable

▼ Very little to criticise.

Price: £65 (1m pair)

## Home Entertainment

(August '98)

Cable Talk Studio 2  
Verdict \*\*\*\*\*

▲ . . . handles music & video sound with equal aplomb . . .

▼ . . . the cable is excellent & can be used almost anywhere.



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Quoting HFC 11/98

# MEGA TEST!



## ADD ON POWER AMPS

If your integrated amp has pre-out sockets, and your speakers are bi-wirable, you can upgrade by bi-amping with an add-on power amp. **David Vivian** rates six popular combos.

### THE CAST LIST

<b>Arcam Alpha 10/10P</b> £799.90/£599.90	p59
<b>Cyrus IIIi/Cyrus Power</b> £598.00/£498.00	p60
<b>Densen Beat B100/B300</b> £800.00/£650.00	p61
<b>Musical Fidelity A2/X-A50 (x2)</b> £500.00/£500.00 pair	p62
<b>Quad 77 Integrated/77 Power</b> £699.95/£599.95	p63
<b>Roksan Caspian/Caspian Power</b> £795.00/£595.00	p64

Once upon a time, it was sufficient to have a single run of cable between amp and speaker. Then some bright spark had the idea of permitting separate runs of cable to each drive-unit in a speaker — the process of bi-wiring, for a two-way speaker. This can result in better sound than single-wiring, but how much better depends on the physical layout of the speaker's frequency dividing (crossover) network. However, bi-wiring opens up an ideal upgrade for many hi-fi users: bi-amping. When you can afford it, have a separate channel for each drive unit!

To the uninitiated, bi-amping might appear a ridiculous extravagance. Why on earth use a powerful integrated amp (say, 100 Watts

per channel) to drive a couple of tweeters that will never call on more than a tiny fraction of the available power? Bit of a waste, eh? But look at it this way: if you want better amplification than your current integrated (one-box) amp can provide, you have two options. You could sell your integrated amp and trade up (at a premium) to a shiny new pre-power combo. All well and good, but the bi-amping route still won't be an option.

Alternatively, if the integrated amp has preamp output sockets, you could hang onto it and just buy the power amp. Not only do you save yourself a few bob, you end up with a dynamic duo that, some say, will show a very clean pair of heels to comparably-priced pre-power rigs.

That's the beauty of a good integrated amp — it's a decent pre and power amp in one box. If it

**“ Not only do you save yourself a few bob, you end up with a dynamic duo that, some say, will show a clean pair of heels to comparably-priced pre-power rigs. ”**

also has pre-out sockets, you're in bi-amping business. Note that a preamp output is not the same as a tape output, for example. The latter stays at a fixed level no matter how much you've cranked the volume control. A preamp output will be ideal in level and impedance for a power-amp input, and will vary in step with the main volume knob — an essential prerequisite for bi-amping operation. Consult your operating manual or dealer for further details.

All of this month's integrated amps have earned their spurs in *Hi-Fi Choice* group tests over the years, so we won't devote much space to detailed technical descriptions. Often the outboard power amps will be based on the same modules fitted within the integrated designs, so it goes without saying to check the original reviews for more info.

Instead, we've devoted more space than usual to a blow by blow account of what these components actually sound like, when reproducing a wide range of music styles (from Joni Mitchell to Motorhead, actually), both in single and bi-amp guise. We have attempted to answer two main questions: does bi-amping really work? And, if so, which is the best kit for applying it in your system?

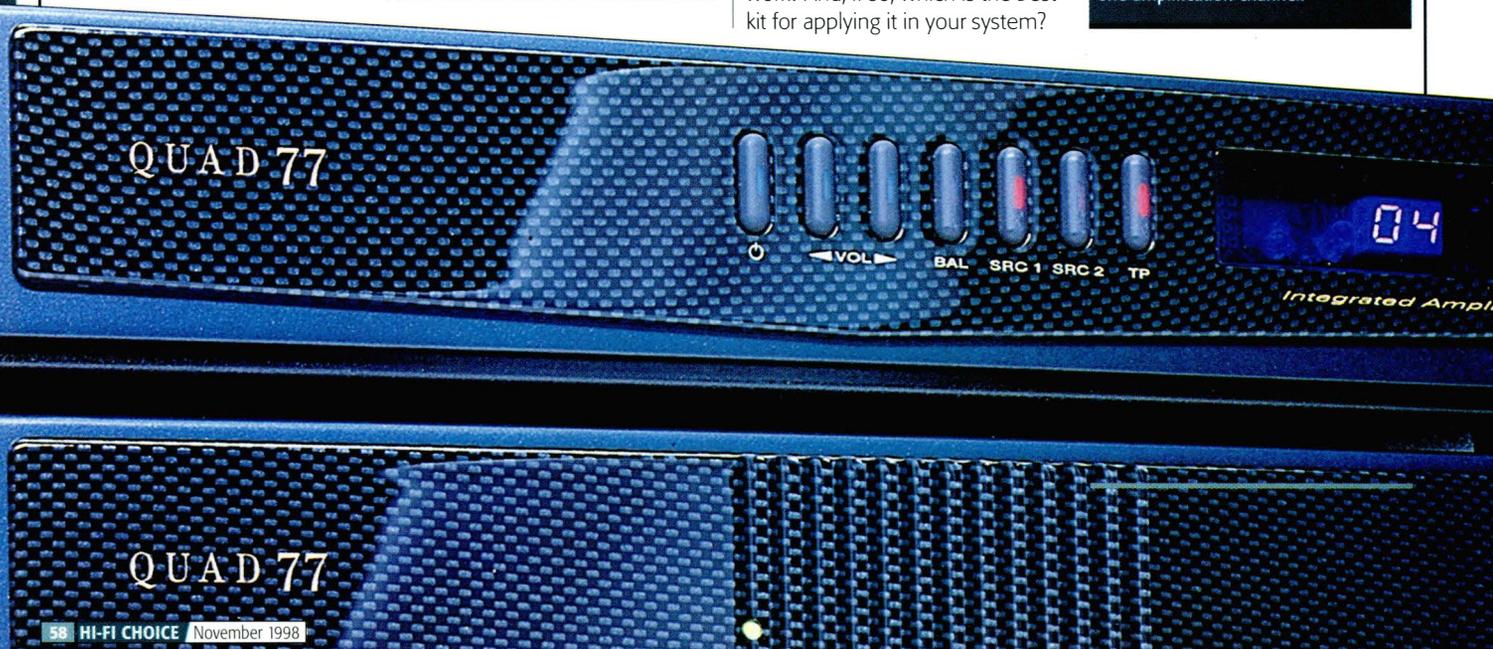
### GLOSSARY

**CLASS A** The way of using an amplification device with the minimum of distortion. However, an output circuit operating in Class A yields only about 20 per cent efficiency; it dissipates the other 80 per cent as heat. This is why Class A transistor amps run warm and offer relatively low power.

**POWER SUPPLY (PSU)** Alternating current (AC) from the mains swings between large positive and negative Voltages. A hi-fi amplifier needs a few tens of Volts at an unvarying level, ie direct current (DC). In crude terms, the hi-fi amplifier steps down the mains, 'rectifies' the positive and negative alternating current to give fixed voltages, and finally smooths everything to be as clean as possible. The cleaner the power input, the better the sound!

**WATTS PER CHANNEL (WPC)** In electrical terms one Watt is the result of multiplying one Amp of current with one Volt. An amp's power rating in Wpc thus describes how much electrical energy it can dissipate into a loudspeaker for each channel of output. Always look for an RMS (Root Mean Square) power rating.

**MONOBLOCKS** Stereo amplifiers have two channels of amplification within them, for left and right speakers. Monoblocks have only one amplification channel.



# ARCAM Alpha 10/10P

**D**on't be fooled by the familiar Arcam house styling. Under the bonnet of the 10 there are modular boards and microprocessor-based control systems which are significantly more advanced than any seen in previous Arcam amps. The 10, Recommended in *HFC* 181 and voted European Amplifier of the Year '98-'99 by EISA, is a flexible piece of kit that can grow into a full-blown home cinema rig. It delivers a conservatively-rated 100 Watts per channel into eight Ohms. The matching £600 10P stereo power amp shares the same circuit topology and identical power stages.

## SOUND QUALITY

Listening first to Joni Mitchell's *Edith and the Kingpin* from *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*, we were struck by the strong, well-shaped bass and naturalness of Joni's voice. When we hooked up the 10P, there was a subtle but significant increase in presence and focus which contributed to believability.

Brian Wilson's *Your Imagination* from the album *Imagination* had a happy, sing-along quality. It sounded forthright and colourful, but the improvement with the 10P *in situ* wasn't hard to hear. Treble sounded more open and detailed with crisper leading edges and a pleasingly unstrained quality.

Motorhead's remarkable *Snake Bite Love* album is a severe test for any amp. The indicator light on the Arcam Alpha 8SE CD player says it's an HDCD recording but it sounds like a car crash played half-speed and mixed down through a transistor radio. It's reassuringly easy on the Alpha 10. The muscular Arcam even seeks to invest the track with some bass and dynam-

o The 10 can work with the 10P as a Dolby Digital surround-sound system.



“ The modular construction and micro processor-based systems are more advanced than any seen in previous Arcam amps. ”

ics. It motors, but there was no change of gear when the 10P kicked in. If anything, the absence of bass was more obvious.

At the start of Aimee Mann's version of *Nobody Does It Better* from David Arnold's *Shaken And Stirred* 007 tribute, there's a great big bass-drum kick with masses of reverb. Through the Arcam it's huge. It digs up plenty of detail and bite and, for the most part, delivers a clean, lean and coherent performance. Adding the 10P helped smooth things out while improving dynamics still further.

Madonna's ballad *This Used To Be My Playground* was treated sympathetically by the Arcam, which gave plenty of presence centre stage and a big, wrap-

around acoustic. Bi-amped with the 10P, though, the bass became simply awesome. It would have been hard to imagine a bigger sound. The Arcam combo clearly takes broad brush strokes like this and handles them with aplomb.

There are some astonishing sonic fireworks on *Hate U* from *The Gold Experience* by squiggle (Prince). The 10 brings considerable muscle and headroom to the party but, at really high volumes, its tonal character hardens. Its grip tightens, though, with the 10P on side. Not so impressive is the way the treble becomes a bit obvious and there seems to be a small loss of subtlety.

Less convincing was the integrated's handling of Diana Krall's *They Can't Take That Away From Me* on the album *Love Scenes*. This is a beautifully-judged recording, but here the whole thing was somewhat airless and matter-of-fact. Things improved hand over fist with the 10P in place — Krall's voice acquired better diction, her piano a firmer tone, and the double bass a richer balance.

The late Jeff Buckley's *So Real* from his debut album *Grace* has

o Arcam's 10/10P combo packs a rated power of 400 Watts.

tripped up many an amp. Almost painfully beautiful with a piercing vocal and melancholy lilt, it doesn't have much bass welly or top-end sparkle, and can sound thin and flat. Not a criticism that could be levelled of the Arcam's rendition, but neither did it really draw you into the music. It lacked that crucial tingle factor. Some emotional electricity was restored by the 10P, along with an extra helping of meat and dynamics.

Lee Ritenour's immaculately-produced slice of easy-going jazz-funk *This Is Love*, from the album of the same name, sounded spacious and relaxed but although the bass was well extended, there was a hint of upper-bass boom, too. This remained with the 10P even though, generally, the power amp added freedom and control. But while it made the track sound more explicit, it didn't really make it any more enjoyable.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £799.90/£599.90

o Solid improvements when bi-amped make the flexible, versatile and largely future-proof Alpha 10 an even more attractive proposition. But there are better-sounding combos for less money.

### ■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ A&R Cambridge Ltd, Pembroke Avenue, Denny Industrial Centre, Waterbeach, Cambridge CB5 9PB

☎ (01223) 203203

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Rated power into 8 Ohms (WPC) 100Wx2
- Number of inputs 5
- Phono input? optional



# CYRUS IIII/Power

The £598 Cyrus IIII is the most recent update to Mission's range of popular shoebox-shaped amplifiers. It's compact, unobtrusive and a delight to use with tidy fascia ergonomics and a simple yet fully-featured remote. Technically, it's a bang up-to-date design with surface-mount components and current feedback technology, all configured in a state-of-the-art lightweight die-cast alloy chassis. Its 50 Watts-per-channel output is an exact match for the £498 Cyrus Power which, like the IIII (and, come to that, the Arcam models) uses BFA-approved speaker terminals which require special connectors — supplied by Mission — or hollow 4mm plugs. Unfortunately the IIII flopped on audition at its last outing with us (*HFC 162*). The competition's just as tough this time round.

## SOUND QUALITY

If we had to define the Cyrus's sound in one word, that word would be 'refined'. Maybe too refined for its own good. As expected, both Joni Mitchell tracks sounded smooth, ungrainy and inviting, with excellent bass pitch, articulation and tonality. But, oddly, imagery was quite small and the soundstage very much between rather than beyond the boundary of the speakers. That said, presence and detail were very good at its edges. Adding the Cyrus Power tidied things up more or less everywhere. Bass gained agility and articulation, treble definition and extension. Overall, the sound firmed up without losing its poise and refinement.

Certainly, by itself, the Cyrus IIII sounded thinner and less gutsy when tackling Brian Wilson than the big-boned Arcam or Quad, but there seemed to be more going on. Wilson's vocals weren't quite as well focused as they had been with the Arcam, and carried quite a sibilant sting. But the Cyrus produced a comfortable, unfatiguing, sophisticated sound. The Cyrus Power's influence, in this case, was to make the overall sound bolder, brighter and more vivacious with heaps of inner detail and notably snappy drums.

And it was only with the power amp in play that the Motorhead tracks made any sense at all. On its own, the Cyrus just couldn't come to terms with *Dead or Alive* which



**“The Cyrus Power ushered in an altogether tighter, clearer, more enjoyable sound with remarkable resolution.”**

suffered from splashy treble, poor intelligibility and a lack of grip and discrimination. The even more chaotic *Screamer* sounded pinched, lightweight and generally unpleasant. If there is an open and shut case for bi-amping, this is surely it. Connecting the Cyrus Power ushered in an altogether tighter, clearer, more enjoyable sound with remarkable resolution and analysis.

Aimee Mann and Madonna both enjoyed fine midband clarity and treble definition, Diane Krall a lovely smoky (if rather diffuse)

quality to her voice and well-rounded piano sound, though with somewhat softened leading edges. All, to some extent, experienced less than inspiring bass — amorphous and one-note (Mann), loose and boomy (Madonna), soft and rubbery (Krall). The Cyrus Power made what was already good even better, but didn't do much to whip the slow, flabby bass into shape which, frankly, was a big disappointment.

The power amp's contribution transformed the Prince track, though. Without it, the Cyrus IIII struggled to achieve any worthwhile impact, even with the wick turned up. The rather bloated bass lacked power, the drums snap and drive. Despite the good midband separation, the music sounded unusually processed and shut in. Introducing the Cyrus Power was

**○ The Cyruses each deliver 50 Watts per channel. Both models use BFA approved speaker terminals.**



**○ Quality sound in two shoeboxes: the Cyrus Power completes this combo.**

like unlocking a door. Treble gained striking energy and definition — almost too much — the drumkit more whack, thwack and drive. The whole thing took on a forceful, good-time demeanour.

Jeff Buckley was clearly to the Cyrus integrated's liking, sounding appropriately expressive and melancholy with a natural timbre and fine midband resolution. More so than the Lee Ritenour cut which, although benefiting from the Cyrus's by-now-expected midrange lucidity, wasn't helped by the soft, sluggish bass. In both cases, adding the power amp wrought improvements: still deeper, warts'n'all insight for Buckley, greater projection, crisper timing together with a firmer bass for Ritenour.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £598.00/£498.00

Good at cruising along with a loose, relaxed feel. Clear midband with bags of detail. But although Cyrus Power adds a little life and excitement, it doesn't cure soft bass and narrow soundstage.

### FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

Centralforce Ltd, Stonehill, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6ED  
(01480) 451777

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Rated power into 8 Ohms (WPC) 50Wx2
- Number of inputs 5
- Phono input? moving-magnet

# DENSEN Beat B100/B300

ALR/JORDAN QMM  
Visit Our Website: www.hifichoice.co.uk



**D**ensen's £800 B-300 power amp claims 100 Watts a side, despite having identical casework to the distinctively minimalist Beat B-100 mk II integrated (£650), rated at a more modest 65 Watts. A certain brawn in output is suggested by the strength needed to heave these heavyweight slabs of Danish audiophilia onto an equipment table. As previous experience with the B-100 has shown (Rec, HFC 175), a rather quirky set of specs and dislike of difficult speaker loads hardly qualifies it as a pile-driver. In fact, it's a lot fussier than its stark brushed-alloy fascia sporting those now famous oversized brass knobs. But get the partnering equipment right, and the B-100 knows how to rock. The B-300's contribution should be interesting.

### SOUND QUALITY

The Beat B-100's rendition of Joni Mitchell's *Edith and the Kingpin* was the smoothest and most mellifluous of all. And absolutely gorgeous. Bass, in particular, had a strong and rich flavour with beautifully-rendered note shaping. On *Shades of Scarlett Conquering*, though, Joni's vocal chords were almost too caramel-coated to be

“ After a period of listening it became obvious that together the amps had a hold on your attention like little else. ”

true, and as a result sounded a bit veiled. The song stayed achingly beautiful nonetheless. Adding the B-300 diluted the sweetness a little but improved clarity and focus. Both tracks remained effortlessly tuneful, lush and natural with fabulous string tone, even so.

Brian Wilson's *Your Imagination* wasn't as explicitly detailed as it had been on the Arcam, Cyrus or Musical Fidelity, but it didn't seem to matter. The B-100 majored on the music and sounded beguilingly natural and unforced, playing down the chromium-plated edge to the track. With the B-300 splitting the workload the song sounded just as natural but less flabby with tighter bass, sharper transients and a cleaner treble.

Even on its own, the Densen integrated injected some welcome energy and fun into Motorhead. Drumming was fast and rhythmically compelling,

Lemmy's voice a cement-mixer growl. With the B-300 on side, the treble hash that had proved all but unbearable on some of the other combos virtually disappeared, yet intelligibility remained high. The track steamed along and sounded vastly better on the Densen combo than anything else.

Aimee Mann sounded sexier through this amp, while Madonna basked in a sumptuous, wide-open soundstage underpinned by a deep, solid and even bass. Diane Krall's piano-jazz attitude was smoochier, the double bass creamier, guitar warmer-bodied. With the B-300 pulling its weight, qualitative leaps included a clearer, fresher midband, more tonal colour and a certain richness.

The Prince track sounded remarkably convincing on the Densen: coherent, all-of-a-piece, radically un-hi-fi and so organic it was almost chewy. Easier to play loud and enjoy, even if — in terms of decibels — the Beat's maximum volume fell some way short of the Arcam's and Quad's. This was fixed, to a certain extent, by the bi-amping régime.

We've already established that *Real* from Jeff Buckley's *Grace* isn't an easy recording to get right.

○ The minimalist Densen duo, with the B100's trademark gold knobs, provides 165 Watts per channel.

○ These hefty Densen slabs take some strength to lift!

It meant something on the Densen, though, which cut through to the heart of the music and brought out its beauty with an almost valve-like felicity. Throwing the B-300 into the equation made little cosmetic difference to the sound but, after a period of listening, it became obvious that together the amps had a hold on your attention like little else.

Finally, after Lee Ritenour's west-coast fusion had massaged away all remnants of stress, it was hard not to conclude that the Beat is simply superior to your everyday £650 integrated amp. As a solo act, the Densen manages to combine transparency with a warm, organic feel. With the B-300 in place, it became even easier to latch onto different strands of Ritenour's Bob Marley tribute, *This Is Love*. Smooth but not smothering, the B-100 is undoubtedly an amp with 'a character' but, like an oaky Australian red, it's big, generous and extremely more-ish.

### VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£800.00/£650.00

Already an amp for music lovers, the Beat gains stature and control with the muscular B-300 taking care of business in the basement. A combination to boogie on down with.

#### ■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Densen Audio Technologies, Randersvej 28, DK-6700 Esbjerg, Denmark  
☎ (07000) 443426, or (01582) 561227  
(UK number, links direct to Denmark)

### SPECIFICATIONS

■ Rated pwr into 8 Ohms (WPC)	60W/100W
■ Number of inputs	5
■ Phono input?	optional



# MUSICAL FIDELITY A2/X-A50 (x2)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A2/X-A50 (X2)

Visit Our Website: www.hifichoice.co.uk

Visually, Musical Fidelity's £500 A2 integrated (Rec, HFC 162) and identically-priced X-A50 monoblocks (HFC 169) are an odd couple. The conventional shape of the A2, with its glossy black facia, and the ribbed canister appearance of the X-A50s, are fine in their own right but they form an uneasy aesthetic alliance. Technically, the match is much better. A beefier version of MF's giant-killing A1, the A2 runs mostly in Class A and therefore gives off a lot of heat, needing plenty of ventilation space. You might wonder if it's worth the trouble given the amp's modest 25 Watts per channel output. But remember these are quality Class A Watts and that the X-A50s (also biased towards Class A) pump out 50 Watts each. The A2's shortfall is of little consequence in bi-amp guise.

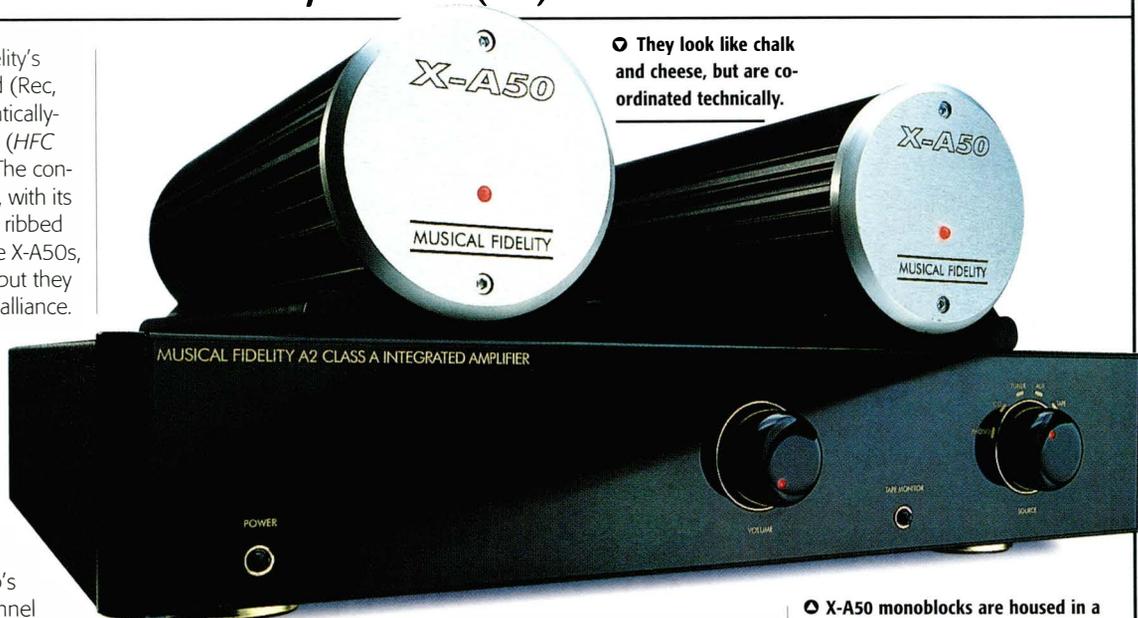
## SOUND QUALITY

It was clear the A2 is an amp with outstanding midband transparency and insight. On the Joni Mitchell tracks it sounded a little undernourished in comparison with the Arcam, Quad and Densen, but it had them all licked for sheer hear-through clarity. *Shades of Scarlett Conquering*, in particular, was gorgeously fluid, fluent and articulate.

Plumbing in the X-A50 monoblocks, if anything, made the overall balance even leaner but the sense of air and space in the soundstage was dramatically enhanced. Treble detail was now so explicit and the bass so clean and well-shaped, *The Hissing of Summer Lawns* might as well have been a brand new digital recording. But somewhere in the detail, part of the emotional content had gone missing.

Back to the straight A2 for Brian Wilson, and an unusually revealing nature was evident. The A2 was as bright as the recording and that's all there was

☛ The A2's 25 Watts are quality – they're class A! The X-A50s provide 50 Watts each.



☛ They look like chalk and cheese, but are co-ordinated technically.

“ Plumbing in the X-A50s made the overall balance even leaner, but the sense of air and space was dramatically enhanced. ”

to it; although tuneful, the track's harsh edge was hard to ignore. Predictably, perhaps, things got worse with the X-A50s. The amazing stereo and separation set out to impress but both tracks sounded even brighter and harsher than before – and with accentuated sibilance for good measure.

On Motorhead's *Snake Bite Love*, even with the solo A2, the intelligibility of Lemmy's singing was the best of the lot and both speed and timing were excellent. It would have been wrong-headed to hope that the X-A50s could inject the muscle the tracks need to work. In fact, they did the opposite, exposing even more of Lemmy's gruff vocal styling and

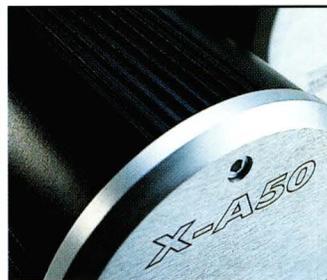
making the balance sound still thinner – albeit with superbly taut, lean and fast drums.

An easier ride was on the cards with the more glamorously produced CDs featuring Aimee Mann, Madonna and Diane Krall. By itself, the A2 was at the top of its form with Madonna and Krall, creating deep, spacious soundstages with big, show-off bass and snuggle-up vocals. The Mann track was vivid and vibrant, too, but with a slightly brittle treble. That improved with the monoblocks doing their stuff and stereo images acquired an almost reach-out-and-touch tangibility. Madonna's voice was set in a massive acoustic with sweeping stereo perspectives while Krall's performance took on an enthrallingly 'live' quality.

Prince's extravagant production values came across equally well on the A2. But although the bass was solid and tuneful, it didn't seem to integrate properly with the rest of the audio band and the effect was rather disjointed. Using the monoblocks did draw your attention away from this by spotlighting parts of the mix that were previously hidden and presenting them in a more structured fashion.

By now a pattern had been established. If the A2 liked a track, the X-A50s would improve it. If it didn't, they'd exacerbate the problems. Both Jeff Buckley and

☛ X-A50 monoblocks are housed in a tubular aluminium extrusion.



Lee Ritenour, though vastly different performers, fell into the first category. Despite a rather obvious treble, Buckley's *So Real* was raw and emotional with fine focus and control while Ritenour's *This Is Love* was suitably chilled, laid back and effortlessly detailed. Plugging in the monoblocks brought about the anticipated improvements. More atmosphere, pinpoint imaging and exceptional low level detail for Buckley and jazz-funk that positively gleamed for Ritenour.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £500.00/£500.00

☛ Fine transparency becomes startling in bi-amp form. A combo that bubbles with detail, strong on timing and bass articulation. But can sound harsh and aggressive with bright recordings.

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

☒ Musical Fidelity Ltd, 15/16 Olympic Trading Estate, Fulton Rd, Wembley HA9 0TF  
☎ (0181) 900 2999

## SPECIFICATIONS

■ Rated pwr into 8 Ohms (WPC) 25W/50W

■ Number of inputs 5

■ Phono input? moving magnet





# QUAD 77 integrated/77 Power

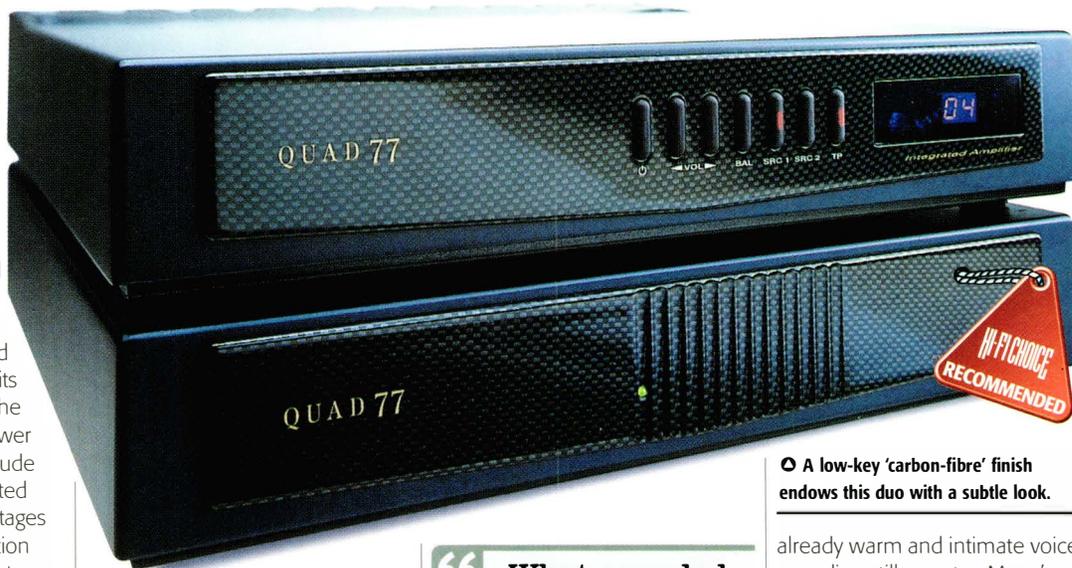
The Quad 77 integrated's 84 Watts per channel are more than ample. That so much brawn can be contained in a box so slim and stylish is always a surprise when we get to use a 77. Quite apart from the high level of connectivity and user friendliness it offers when used with other 77 series components, the Quad packs plenty of goodies into its compact casing. Along with the identically-sized £599 77 Power amp, technical highlights include multiple independent regulated power supplies and output stages that claim to yield less distortion than typical Class AB output stages. Quad's 77s have impressed before both in integrated (*HFC 168*) and pre-power (*HFC 165*) forms, so we had high expectations of the bi-amped pairing.

## SOUND QUALITY

The Joni Mitchell tracks sounded warm, natural and undemonstrative. No spatial fireworks, no stereo FX, just an easy, inviting listen with fine bass weight and shaping. *Shades of Scarlet* *Conquering* simply sounded 'right' on the Quad; not unlike the Densen but less manipulative, slightly clearer and cooler, more muscular. Bringing the 77 Power amp into play didn't change the character of the Quad's delivery, it just made more of it. Although retrieval of fine detail wasn't tops, listenability moved onto a higher plane with luscious bass and sublime musicality.

The 'same-only-better' effect of bi-amping with the Quads was even more evident on the Brian Wilson tracks. *Your Imagination*

❖ The Quad partnership has output stages claiming to yield less distortion than typical Class AB devices.



❖ A low-key 'carbon-fibre' finish endows this duo with a subtle look.

kicked along with great verve but no harshness or hardness through the 77 integrated. This was a big, happy sound with bags of drive and sparkle — as good as any in the test. *Cry*, a slower and more reflective track, came across with bags of feel-good factor — big and spacious, packing serious wallop behind the drums and a great mix of delicacy and grunt. But working together, the Quads became even better 'big picture' amplification — more physical and palpable with tonal textures you could really sink your teeth into.

Exactly what was needed with Motorhead's problem child CD. The 77 integrated got just about everything right with *Dead or Alive*. For once, the track had balls and drive, some much needed meat on the bones. Similarly, *Screamer* possessed speed, spirit and slashing guitars. As much Motorhead as anyone could reasonably ask for.

Except with the 77 power taking care of business downstairs, you got more. More body, less hash (much less than the Cyrus or Musical Fidelity). What sounded like gross tonal balance aberrations with some of the more analytical combos, seemed just about spot on with the Quads. A case of losing one battle to win the war?

“ What sounded like tonal balance aberrations with some of the more analytical combos sounded spot on with the Quads. ”

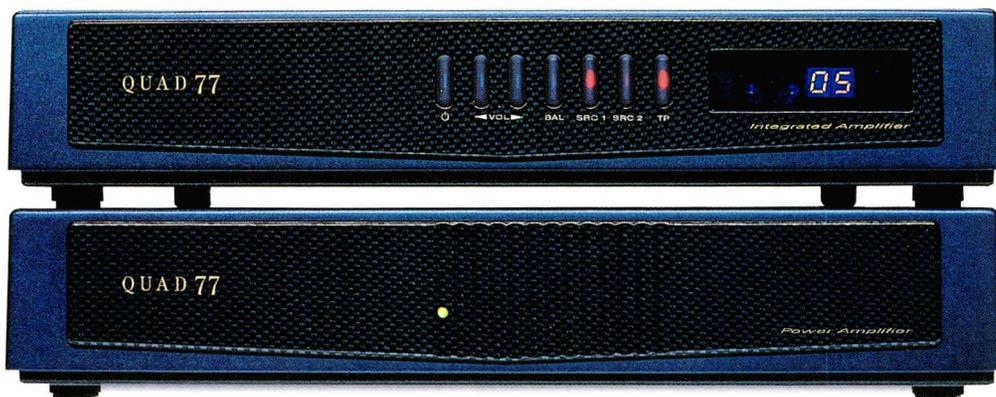
Girl power as defined by Mann, Madonna and Krall was given full reign by the 77 integrated. Bass lines were easy to follow on the Aimee Mann track, a strength mirrored with Madonna's *This Used To Be My Playground*. Both performers had plenty of presence and big, lush enveloping soundstages. Krall sounded a more talented performer on the 77, singing with greater colour and expression, playing piano with renewed precision and feeling.

But her appeal took another step in the right direction with the Quads in bi-amp configuration. The improvement wasn't dramatic but you were aware of the double bass moving more air and Krall's

already warm and intimate voice sounding still sweeter. Mann's set was bigger and weightier, Madonna's magically airy with smooth, sexy vocals.

Switching back to the 77 integrated, Prince was explicit without being in-your-face. *Hate U* sounded more musical than it had on some of the other amps, yet hit amazingly hard considering the Quad's compact dimensions. This continued with the 77 fired up. Only now it played loud even more comfortably.

Excellent ambience and separation were features of Jeff Buckley's *So Real* played through the 77 integrated. The track was strong in emotion and eminently listenable. But Lee Ritenour didn't really come alive. The track was focused and full bodied with a less boomy bass than most, but rather two-dimensional. It perked up with the 77 power amp in place, though, becoming bigger, bouncier and more vivid. Buckley's was a grittier, harder performance, too.



## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £699.95/£599.95

■ The 77 integrated's musical appeal grows with familiarity. Sounds natural, bold and confident, though it doesn't ram detail down your throat. Bi-amping improves what's already good.

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Quad Electroacoustics Ltd, 30 St Peters Road, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 7DB

☎ (01480) 433777

## SPECIFICATIONS

■ Rated power into 8 Ohms (WPC) 84Wx2

■ Number of inputs 2

■ Phono input? n/a

# ROKSAN Caspian/Caspian Power

Completing the group is the Caspian collective from Roksan, now part of the Verity empire. The style and technical philosophy of the good-looking Caspian duo, though, very much belongs to the Roksan tradition. Both are purist, straight-line designs using quality materials and components, and a simple, elegant interface that includes powered volume and input selection. Power outputs are nothing to write home about – 70 Watts per channel for the integrated and the recently introduced Power – but as a current Best Buy (HFC 168), the £695 Caspian is one of the best sub-£700 integrat-eds we know. If the £595 power amp is anything like as good, this will be a tough act to follow.

## SOUND QUALITY

If any amp hit the ground running, it was the Roksan Caspian integrated. The Joni Mitchell tracks were sensationally natural and musical – yet not in a romantic, rose-tinted way. *Shades of Scarlet* *Conquering* was almost impossibly gorgeous through the Caspian, with a massed string sound to die for. Intriguingly (but not disas- trously) the bi-amped rig sounded a bit more literal. More hi-fi, less soul. In this case, we preferred the Caspian on its own.

And it was hard to see how the elegant Roksan's treatment of Brian Wilson could be bettered. *Your Imagination* sparked without sounding brittle, clanky or harsh. It was all very hummable and tune- ful without any damping down of the frequency extremes. However, on this track, the Caspian Power's influence did reap significant rewards: notably a cleaner, more brilliant treble, crisper transients

Power outputs are 70 Watts per channel for the two Roksans; but the quality makes up for the quantity.



“ The Caspian is one of the best sub-£700 integrat-eds we know. If the power amp is good, this will be a tough act to follow. ”

and better separation. These were all subtle effects but, in the end, they made for a more believable performance.

Motorhead wasn't the awkward customer for the Roksan inte- grated it had been for some. Lemmy's buzz-saw voice was treated to terrific intelligibility and, although the upper-mid-treble hash wasn't as subdued as it has been with the Densen or Quad, neither was it a real disincentive to break out the air-Strat. What really clicked, though, was the drum- ming, which seemed tauter, faster and harder-hitting than it had done on any other amp. With the power amp in play, Lemmy's vocals became even clearer, but the overriding effect was as if the gas pedal had been squeezed all

the way to the floor. With the Roksan bi-amp combo in charge, Motorhead was really moving.

But the best was yet to come. Given some high-gloss produc- tions to play with, the Caspian found yet another gear. In short, Aimee Mann, Madonna and Diane Krall sounded just that bit classier through the Roksan. With Krall there was a natural, rich, sumptu- ous acoustic, crisp yet resonant piano runs and the nagging feeling you wanted this woman's tele- phone number. Madonna had a broad soundstage and lovely string tone. Aimee Mann gloried in great stereo and a thudding bassline that, for once, actually played a tune.

The effect of bi-amping, in this instance, wasn't entirely consis- tent. It made the Aimee Mann track sound more tactile, focused and sharply etched; new details emerged from the mix. With Madonna, the improvement was smaller but mainly physical in nature, embracing a more muscu- lar bass and smoother, cleaner backing vocals. Diane Krall gained vocal power and presence and a richer, deeper bass backing. This is simple music, but the extra amp did make a difference.

The Roksan's clear interface includes powered volume and input selectors.

It did with Prince, too. With the straight Caspian integrated, *Hate U* came over with oodles of power and authority. Drums didn't have quite the killer impact they did with the Arcam, but actually sounded more like wood hitting skins. The potential for this track to sound overblown wasn't enter- tained by the Roksan which gave it full reign but stayed masterfully in control. Nothing sounded better, except the two Caspians working together. Impact, coherence, sep- aration, detail, solidity and cruising ability all took a notch up. Arguably there was too much going on already. This time, we were too blown away to notice.

Jeff Buckley's simple, dark tune was captivating through the Caspian integrated, but more tense and dramatic bi-amped. Lee Ritenour sounded relaxed but vaguely synthetic with one, less electronic and more human with two. Bi-amping wins again.

## VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★

BUILD ★★★★★

VALUE ★★★★★

PRICE **£795.00/£595.00**

By itself, the Caspian is a superb amp, capable of drawing the best out of all types of music. The matching power amp elevates its performance into the low high-end. Enthralling.

### TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

Roksan Audio Ltd, Unit 15B, Atlas Business Centre, Oxgate Lane, London NW2 7HJ  
(0181) 830 7733

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Rated power into 8 Ohms (WPC) 70W
- Number of inputs 5
- Phono input? n/a



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# ADD ON POWER AMPS

# CONCLUSIONS

**B**i-amping isn't new but it is becoming more fashionable. That's because it works. It would be wrong to think of it as a poor man's pre-power combination, even though it's a more cost-effective upgrading route. Out of interest, we compared a conventional Quad 77 pre/power with the 77 integrated/power from this test. As it turned out the pre-power sounded more refined, the bi-amp pairing slightly clearer and more controlled.

Bottom of a tall pile in this comparison is the Mission Cyrus duo. The Cyrus IIIi integrated is an amp with some outstanding qualities that don't quite gel. Its main strength is its lovely midband; its principal weakness a rather soggy bass. The Cyrus Power is a real wake-up call for the integrated, adding muscle and definition where it's most needed, though the bass still doesn't quite cut it.

The Arcam Alpha 10 is clearly a more capable amp. Not as cuddly as previous Arcams, but leaner and clearer. It has masses of power and a full-on bass. The overall character of its sound is solid and architectural and its up-front hi-fi attributes serve it well. In league with the Alpha 10P, it makes a

fairly persuasive case for bi-amping with worthwhile increases in authority, control and insight.

Sweeter-sounding but fussier is the A2/X-A50 combo from Musical Fidelity. The strong Class A aspect of the A2 gives it a very lucid, see-through quality that's hard to resist. Its midband is strikingly clear and detailed; bass is full and agile, too. Yet the treble is a bit obvious, there isn't much power and the amp can sometimes sound a little lightweight. The X-A50s add power and control but make the combination even more unsympathetic towards edgy recordings. On the other hand, it's an outstanding package; with careful system matching it could work a treat.

### HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

**E**ach integrated amp was auditioned individually and then in bi-amped configuration before moving on to the next. Partnering CD players included Arcam Alpha 8SE, Quad 77, Denon DCD-835 and Denon DVD-3000. Pioneer's A-300 Precision and AVI's S2000 pre-monoblocs were chosen as reference amps, and speakers included the Quad 77 10L and AVI Positron. Cables were supplied by Audioquest, van den Hul, Straightwire and Kimber.

### THE MUSIC WE USED

**PRINCE:** *Hate U from The Gold Experience*, Warner Bros 9362-45999-2  
**JONI MITCHELL:** *Edith and the Kingpin from The Hissing of Summer Lawns*, Asylum 7759-60332-2  
**JEFF BUCKLEY:** *So Real from Grace*, Columbia 475928-2  
**MADONNA:** *This Used To Be My Playground from Something To Remember*, Warner Bros 9362 46100-2  
**MOTORHEAD:** *Dead Or Alive and Screamer from Snake Bite Love*, Steamhammer SPV 085-18892-P

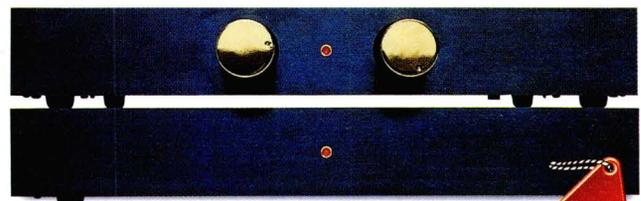
### HINTS & TIPS

Interconnect cables are the umbilical cords of music. And whatever brand of cable you are using, you can ensure they remain on top form by keeping their contacts free from dirt and oxide. RCA phono plugs and sockets can be cleaned by plugging and unplugging a few times, using a proprietary cleaning solution to remove oxide. To avoid damage, remember to turn the amp(s) off before doing this.



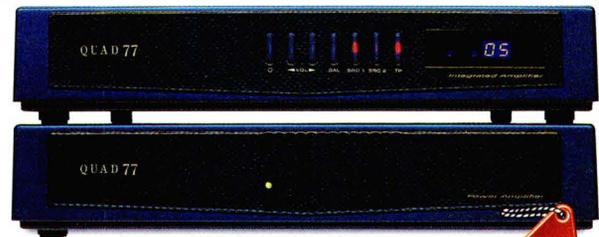
### ROKSAN Caspian/power

If not quite the best argument for bi-amping, this duo is clearly the best-sounding package here. The Caspian is a terrific amp — a real class act. It combines strong technical ability with a rare, addictive feel for music making. It's subtle but colourful, analytical but sympathetic, powerful but not pushy. And a real pain to assess because, to be honest, once you've heard it you don't want to move on. It gets an A+ for music and will charm the CD collection from your shelves. To be brutally honest, the integrated amp is superior to most of the bi-amp combos here. Two Caspian's are dynamite — they could end your amp wanderlust for good.



### DENSEN BEAT B100/B300

It may not be the most powerful or "technically correct" of amps, but the Densen Beat B100 is a superbly musical device that plays tunes, keeps time and doesn't insult its listeners with crass hi-fi artefacts. And, the good news gets better when it's teamed with the B300. Amplification for people who are more interested in music than the niceties of hi-fi.



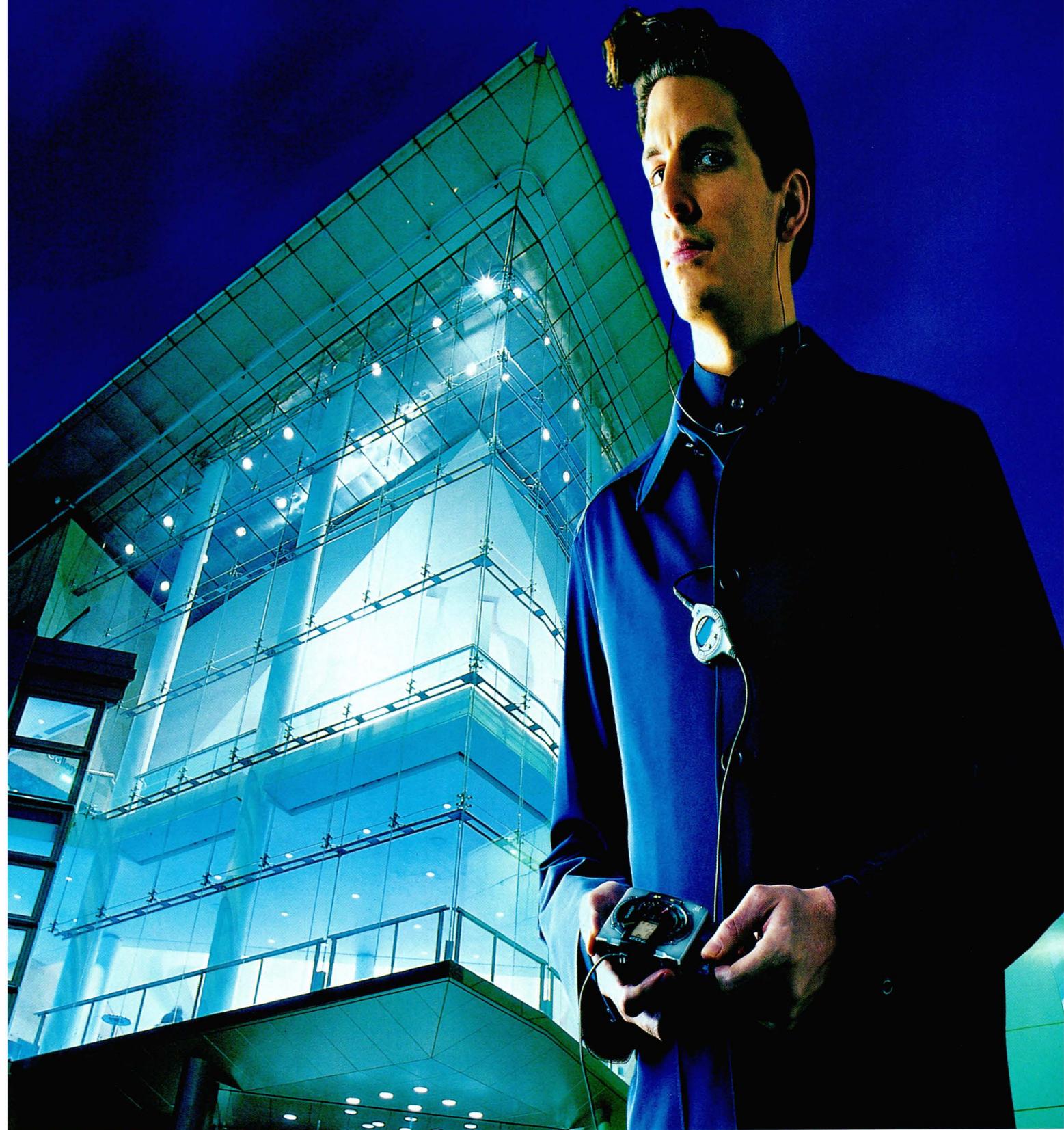
### QUAD 77 integrated/power

The 77 integrated has power with composure, an open, generous sound that goes loud without strain. It's equally at home with all types of music; it was one of the few amps to make some sense of Motorhead. The 77 power provided a straightforward but very worthwhile reinforcement of the integrated's already fine sound.

## AMPLIFIER COMPARISON TABLE

MAKE	ARCAM	CYRUS	DENSEN	MUSICAL FIDELITY	QUAD	ROKSAN
MODEL	ALPHA 10/10P	IIIi/POWER	BEAT B100/B300	A2/X-A50 (X2)	77 INT/77 POWER	CASPIAN/POWER
PRICE	£799.90/£599.90	£598.00/£498.00	£800.00/£650.00	£500.00/£500.00 Pair	£699.95/£599.95	£795.00/£595.00
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
GUARANTEE	2 years	1 year	5 years	5 years	2 years	2 years
RATED POWER (8 OHMS)	100W	50W	60W/100W	25W/50W	85W	70W
NUMBER OF INPUTS	5	5	5	5	5	5
PHONO INPUT	Optional	MM	Optional	MM	No	No

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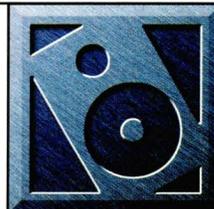


MD-X8H MD/CD  
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## ON TEST!



## SPEAKERS

Is it possible to get quality bass from a budget loudspeaker? **Paul Messenger** and **Paul Miller** put 14 models through the rigorous *Hi-Fi Choice* testing mill.

## THE CAST LIST

B&W CDM2SE	£399.95	p73
Infinity Delta 60	£699.95	p95
Jamo Cornet 195	£350.00	p75
JBL XL70	£549.99	p96
JMLab Tantal 515	£495.00	p81
JPW ML910	£329.98	p77
Kelly KT2	£700.00	p97
Magnat Vector 77	£449.00	p83
Mission 774	£499.90	p85
Mus Tech PM15	£475.00	p87
Neat Critique	£445.00	p89
Ruark Epilogue	£239.00	p79
System Audio 1130	£499.95	p91
TDL CF100 Chiltern	£449.95	p93

For audiophiles, the concept of 'real bass' can mean different things to different listeners. A loudspeaker has to do much more than generate high-quality bass to deserve a *Hi-Fi Choice* Recommendation! Nonetheless, as part of the brief for this month's test, we took more than a passing interest in each speaker's bass-generating abilities. Each review includes a measured figure of the lowest effective frequency each speaker will generate.

Though low frequencies inspire the most superficially 'exciting' hi-fi experience, it is short-sighted to focus only on a loudspeaker's bass performance. Treble quality is at least as important, while the midband is the most important of all, by a significant margin. (Most musical-instrument flavours are determined in the midband.)

So that guy cruisin' up and down in his XR3i, annoying the neighbourhood with a loud thump-thump, he is confusing quantity with quality. They're not the same thing at all. In fact, our experience suggests that quantity of bass is almost always mutually incompatible with quality. The best-quality bass is not 'heavy' and does not 'thump'.

It's an inevitable consequence of physical laws, that to reproduce

really deep bass, say down to 20Hz, you would require a horn-loaded speaker 20ft long, with a mouth area of 20 square feet (for just one channel!). Designers of more practical speakers usually rely on some sort of resonator — a reflex-loading port, for example, in which a column of air vibrates.

This is less than ideal for music reproduction. Musical instruments work by generating and manipulating tuned resonances of various kinds. So in theory, the ideal speaker should be as free from resonance as possible, to avoid colouring the instrumental resonances themselves. Even the listening room contributes its own low-frequency resonances, making it almost impossible to a pre-

dict how a given speaker will perform in a given room. Low-frequency output will also be affected by an enclosure's proximity to a wall or floor.

Given so many imponderables, some speaker designers deliberately avoid the lowest octave of frequencies from 20 to 40Hz. Even the smallest of the speakers assembled for our test can deliver practical in-room bass down to 50Hz. The art of successful speaker design is in balancing the myriad compromises inflicted on any system, and for true hi-fi applications, it would be inappropriate to pursue huge slabs of bass output if this means compromising higher-frequency reproduction. A little bass goes a long way!

“ That guy in his XR3i, annoying the neighbourhood with a thump-thump, is confusing quantity with quality. ”



## GLOSSARY

**BALANCE:** Most loudspeakers have a characteristic frequency balance which results from emphasising some parts of the audio range and/or de-emphasising others.

**BASS:** The lowest three octaves of the audio band — hence 'low bass' refers to the bottom octave (20-40Hz); 'mid-bass' the middle octave (40-80Hz) and 'upper bass' the 80-160Hz octave.

**BI-AMP (sometimes tri-amp):** Loudspeakers equipped with separate access terminals to each drive-unit can be driven by separate (matching) power amplifiers for each driver.

**BI-WIRE (sometimes tri-wire):** Loudspeakers equipped with separate access terminals to each driver can be driven by separate cable runs between power amplifier and each driver.

**CROSSOVER:** A simple electrical network which divides the full bandwidth signal received from the power amplifier, apportioning appropriate parts of the spectrum to the various drive units.

**DRIVE UNIT/DRIVER:** A transducer which converts electrical energy into acoustic energy, eg main driver, tweeter.

**FREQUENCY RESPONSE:** The range of frequencies, from low to high, which a loudspeaker will reproduce.

**IMPEDANCE:** The complex load which a loudspeaker presents to the amplifier which is driving it.

**MAIN DRIVER:** A drive unit which reproduces both bass and midrange frequencies.

**MIDRANGE:** The middle three-or-so octaves of the audio band, where the ear is most sensitive, covering the approximate frequency span from 160Hz up to 1.5kHz.

**NETWORK:** see Crossover.

**PRESENCE:** Critical section of the band between midrange and treble.

**SENSITIVITY:** The relative loudness generated for a specific voltage input.

**TREBLE:** The top end of the audio band, eg above 3kHz.

**TWEETER:** Treble driver

**WOOFER:** Bass driver





- |                       |
|-----------------------|
| 1) B&W CDM2SE         |
| 2) Infinity Delta 60  |
| 3) Jamo Cornet 195    |
| 4) JBL XL70           |
| 5) JMLab Tantal 515   |
| 6) JPW ML910          |
| 7) Kelly KT2          |
| 8) Magnat Vector 77   |
| 9) Mission 774        |
| 10) Mus Tech PM15     |
| 11) Neat Critique     |
| 12) Ruark Epilogue    |
| 13) System Audio 1130 |
| 14) TDL CF100         |

**GROUP A** BELOW £400

**GROUP B** £400-£500

**GROUP C** OVER £500

### THE PRICE BANDS

We divide our candidates into groups based on price (see right). Each band is colour-coded as above.



### HINTS & TIPS

Speakers are unlike other hi-fi components: they need to be positioned with care. As they come closer to a wall or floor, bass output increases – see individual reviews for specific advice. You may also see advice to ‘toe-in’ a speaker to adjust its tonal balance. This means rotating speakers inwards, towards each other. They need to be placed roughly as far apart as they are from the listener. PLUS: A good speaker needs quality cable for hook-up to amps. Don't miss our cable test on p44!

### SPEAKERS GROUP A

BELOW £400

Our £200-£400 price band comprises a very mixed quartet of models, from the tiny ‘sub-miniature’ Ruark Epilogue, via the slightly larger but still stand-mounted B&W CDM2SE, to two very generously proportioned floorstanders: the Jamo Cornet 195 and JPW ML910. The four have very little in common apart from their prices, and even these will be distorted in practice by the need to provide stands for the smaller models. While the two floorstanders give much larger boxes and more drive units for your money, in loudspeakers size isn't everything, and quantity should not be confused with quality.

B&W CDM2SE	£399.95	p73
Jamo Cornet 195	£350.00	p75
JPW ML910	£329.98	p77
Ruark Epilogue	£289.00	p79

### SPEAKERS GROUP B

£400-£500

Half our total complement of 14 models squeeze into the relatively narrow £400-£500 band, and again the seven contenders tend to show greater disparity than commonality. Price comparisons are distorted by distinctions between the four floorstanders – JMLab, Magnat, Mission and System Audio – and the Musical Technology, Neat and TDL stand-mount models. The asking prices are determined as much by the quality of surface finish as any other factor, which leaves the real-wood Mission standing out.

JMLab Tantal 515	£495.00	p81
Magnat Vector 77	£449.00	p83
Mission 774	£499.90	p85
Mus Tech PM15	£475.00	p87
Neat Critique	£445.00	p89
System Audio 1130	£499.95	p91
TDL CF100	£449.95	p93

### SPEAKERS GROUP C

OVER £500

Just three models fall into our top price band. All are floorstanders, which is much less surprising than the discovery that all are clothed in humble vinyl woodprint, which I daresay some potential customers will find a little disappointing. Each brand justifies its premium price-tag by focusing on exclusive drive unit technology and the alleged benefits derived therefrom. The JBL and Infinity examples are both three-ways, which necessarily complicates the crossover network and cabinet-work, while enclosure size and build quality is pretty substantial throughout. However, models in the two lower price brackets exhibit equally chunky construction.

Infinity Delta 60	£699.95	p95
JBL XL70	£549.99	p96
Kelly KT2	£700.00	p97

## HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

Hi-Fi Choice's product tests are among the most rigorous anywhere on the planet, and a crucial component is the unsighted panel listening sessions. These are so called because the panel of listeners is unaware of the identity or price of each model. Listening tests take place in a room which is slightly larger than average – 5.5x4.2x2.6m (LxWxH).

The speakers are installed one pair at a time, behind an acoustically transparent curtain, and positioned according to the results obtained from a series of sine-wave sweeps taken in the room itself across the listening arc. Each presentation takes roughly half an hour, covering as broad a range of music and speech as possible, and split evenly between vinyl and CD sources.

Care is taken to try and match the relative volume of each loudspeaker, though differences in frequency balance, bass extension and room drive get in the way; grilles are removed if possible to take account of our black net curtaining.

The unsighted listening tests were spread over two days, allowing for a number of repeat presentations.

Extensive hands-on listening was also carried out, spread over a period of about two weeks, allowing ample opportunity for further experimentation in positioning and alternative ancillary components, and in particular to explore the bass performance via a variety of ‘torture tracks’ (see below).

The main reference system used for the unsighted and hands-on work con-

sisted of a collection of Mana-supported Naim and Linn components, viz: Linn LP12 turntable, Naim ARO tonearm, Linn Arkiv 2 cartridge, Naim CDS CD player, Naim NAT01 tuner, Naim NACS2 preamp and Naim NAP135 power amps. Speaker cables were Naim NACA5 and Nordost SPM, and speaker stands were primarily Kudos S100.

### THE LISTENING PANEL

Our thanks to the panellists:

- David Inman (Castle),
- Robin Marshall (Mission),
- Russell Kauffman (Morel, Densen),
- Guy Sergeant (JPW)
- Ken Weller (B&W)

### THE TEST MUSIC

Music used during the testing included excerpts from the following albums.

### ■ MASSIVE ATTACK:

*Mezzanine* on Virgin 7243 8 45599 1 5

### ■ VAN MORRISON:

*Moondance* on WB 46040

■ JONI MITCHELL: *Turbulent Indigo* on Reprise 9362-45786-2

### ■ PRODIGY:

*The Fat of the Land* on XLLP 121

### ■ GRATEFUL DEAD:

*Reckoning* on DARTY9

### ■ JONI MITCHELL:

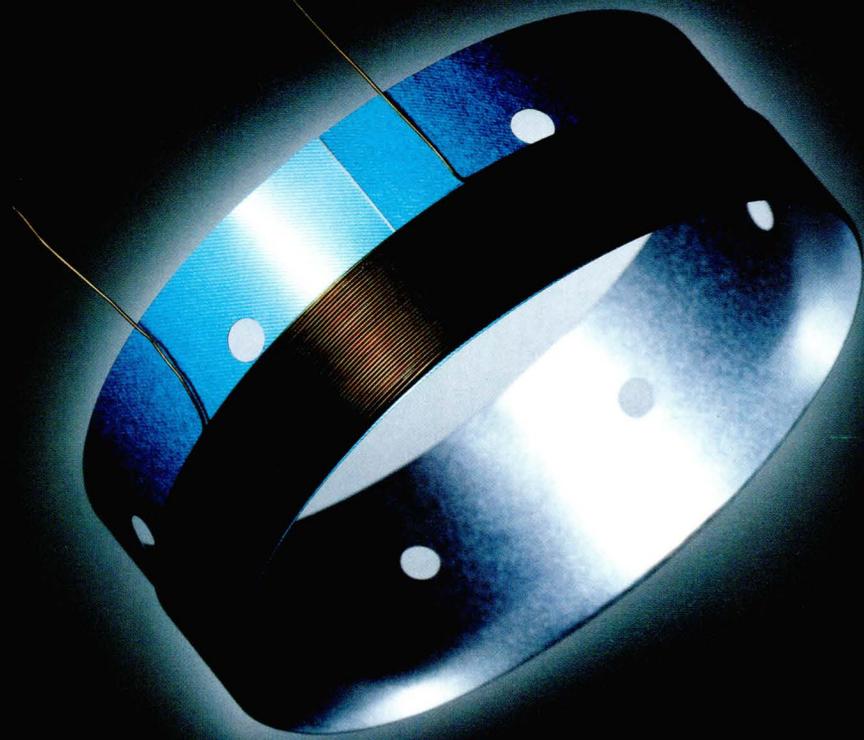
*Mingus* on Asylum AS53 091

■ CHEMICAL BROTHERS: *Dig Your Own Hole* on XDUSTCD2 42950 2 8

### ■ CAMBRIDGE SINGERS:

*There is Sweet Music on* Rutter/Collegium COLCD 104  
BBC Radios 3 & 4 were also used extensively during the hands-on work.

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**DYNAUDIO**  
AUTHENTIC FIDELITY

# B&W CDM2SE

Britain's most successful speaker brand internationally, B&W, has achieved this exalted position without compromising a premium-quality reputation by resorting to large-volume, low-cost products. Now it is vying for the top spot on the wider European stage too.

Among several diverse ranges, the CDM SE range is a 'designer series', with luxury real-wood finish, unusual shapes and comfortably premium price points. The CDM series started with the decidedly cute, multi-award-winning CDM1, and has since evolved to incorporate the SE engineering improvements; there are two more hi-fi stereo models and a dialogue speaker.

**“The B&W CDM SE range is a 'designer series' with luxury real-wood finish and comfortably premium prices.”**

The £400 CDM2SE is the least expensive and smallest of the three. The brochure promises that it “features all the... aesthetic qualities of the CDM Special Edition range”. Shame it doesn't benefit from the clever and attractive slant-baffle-section or external tweeter of the CDMs 1 & 7. What you do get is an altogether more prosaic and conventional rectangular box, albeit with some good detailing. The brochure fails to explain whether the concentric ridges

around the tweeter are functional as well as decorative, but they probably help break up baffle-standing waves. The box has post-formed edges, cleverly combining high-class real-wood-veneered flat surfaces with colour co-ordinated MDF fillets to elegant effect.

The cast-frame main driver has a 120mm Kevlar cone, and is loaded by a 40mm rear port, while the tweeter has a 25mm metal dome. Bi-wire/bi-amp twin terminals are fitted, and foam bungs permit sealed-box operation if preferred. The most visible change with the SE series is a 'phase plug' fixed to the magnet pole-piece, to widen the dispersion in the upper midband. Crossover network modifications put bass and treble sections on physically well-separated boards, the former using extra elements for more precise control, while the latter replaces electrolytic with polypropylene capacitors.

The far-field in-room response shows a relatively 'dry' bass character which will benefit from some wall reinforcement — a foot gap between speaker and wall would seem a good starting point. Elsewhere the trace is rather uneven and gently falling as one progresses up through the midband and treble, with a slight notch centred on 3kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

The listening test results were rather disappointing — surprisingly so, given B&W's historically strong track record under our blind test



conditions. However, the panel displayed some reservations over B&W's CDM7 (HFC 174).

The midband attracted praise: “Very mid-oriented, but classy enough in its way... light, clean, good freedom from box sound and chestiness; nice voicing.”

But the bottom end doesn't seem to provide the necessary coherent foundation, and bass lines aren't easy to follow. Furthermore, there was wide (though not severe) criticism of an edgy, slightly hard treble quality. Dynamics seem somewhat lacking in grip and drive, and leading edges are indifferently delineated.

## CONCLUSION

On the surface this CDM2SE has a lot going for it. It's a good-looking standmount with slicker styling and presentation than some rivals which cost at least 10 per cent more. But the sound is mid-dominant, and while the midband works very well, the per-

◉ B&W CDM2SE: new 'designer series' from one of Britain's famous names.

formance at the frequency extremes lets it down. (However, Kevlar cones are known to have a very long 'run-in' period, so this is one speaker which may repay extended acclimatisation. Regrettably, this is simply unfeasible during group tests in *Hi-Fi Choice*. -Ed) **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** **£399.95**

Beautifully styled and finished compact two-way standmount with a very respectable midband, but lacks definition towards the frequency extremes.

### FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ B&W Loudspeakers Ltd, Marlborough Rd Lancing, W Sussex BN15 8TR  
☎ (01903) 750750

## THE LAB REPORT

As we've discovered with previous B&W speakers, the CDM2SE provides some big phase angles for the amplifier to drive, amounting to +56/-47 degrees through the bass region, -35 degrees @ 530Hz and +41 degrees @ 2.8kHz where distortion increases to 2



per cent. However, the speaker's average load is a mild 12.3 Ohms, its minimum a relatively safe 5.7 Ohms.

B&W's specification is on the money with its claimed 87dB sensitivity measured at precisely 87.1dB. Accurate, but don't expect clean, ear-shattering peaks beyond 103dB. Bass alignment is first class with a low-Q port resonance at 38Hz extending from 25-90Hz (-3dB). The tuning, however,

◉ Good bass alignment but may need to be toed in.

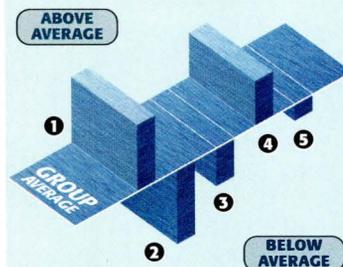
might prove a little excessive for such a small enclosure and, indeed, toeing in the speakers by 20 degrees or so affords a very 'mild' balance, perhaps lacking in bite and attack.

A narrow-band, axial analysis shows a somewhat recessed, U-shaped response with some unexpected peakiness through the 3kHz crossover region. However, the room-averaged 3rd-octave trace indicates that a far smoother and more uniform mid and lower treble will be realised in practice, even if there's some prominence at 16kHz and a potential for 'boominess' in the 100-200Hz bass region. **PMi**

## HOW IT COMPARES

There will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | 45%  |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | -50% |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | -25% |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | 30%  |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | -10% |



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	87.1dB
■ Average Impedance	12.3 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension (-6dB)	40Hz

# TEAC

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T3 Magazine, May 1998

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BEWARE. OBJECTS IN MIRROR  
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## So What!



## The Reference 300 Micro System

DUE TO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL, OTHER MICRO SYSTEMS  
WILL NOT BE DELIVERING THIS LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

Chief Musical Officers' Warning

# JAMO Cornet 195

In a windswept coastal landscape in northern Denmark sits one of the largest and most advanced speaker manufacturing plants in Europe. Jamo produces and sells a vast range of models all around the world, and is one of the biggest and most successful European brands. Indeed, Jamo has more ranges than some rivals have models. One of the secrets of its success has come from identifying new niches in the marketplace, and then coming up with creatively-styled ranges to suit, often before others have realised that the sector exists.

However, the Cornet is a much more mainstream and established affair, aimed fair and square at the budget hi-fi buyer. The first Cornet

“ **The Jamo Cornet 195 has plenty of headroom and loudness capability, so it should go down well at parties.** ”

came in for *Choice* scrutiny way back in 1991, and moved into mk2 mode in 1994, so the arrival of a completely new range for 1998 comes as no surprise. There are four models, codenamed 145, 165, 175 and 195, leaving obvious gaps for the future.

The Cornet 195 is the largest and best endowed in terms of drivers, and looks very good material value for money at its £350 asking price. It's a floorstander of chunky proportions, which is a necessary

consequence of the decision to use two seriously large bass drivers (by current standards), each with 160mm cones and backed up by a rear port. The midband driver uses a 95mm cone (as something of a filler, with stated crossover points at 1.5kHz and 4.5kHz), while the tweeter has a 25mm soft fabric dome.

Vinyl finish is an inevitable consequence of the size and price, though the textured woodprint is certainly better looking than usual. The slight radiusing around the front edge is very neatly accomplished, and integrates very well with the slim moulded-frame grille. The drivers themselves are surface mounted on the front baffle. One minor puzzle is that the brochure lists black and mahogany options, while the sample supplied looked like neither of these.

More serious is the omission of any spike provision for floor-coupling. Cones can be used, but are less satisfactory solution. There's only one set of terminals on the rear too, which is a further sign that this model is aimed more towards markets other than the UK.

The in-room, far-field response traces show a rather bizarre balance which is much stronger through the mid and upper bass than further up the range. One might assume that free space sitting was mandatory, but that doesn't necessarily follow, and in any case achieving a neutral in-room balance looks an impossible task. Further up the band the response looks smooth, but lacking in the central midband and boosted in the presence zone, 1.3-3kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

Given the balance anomalies, it's no surprise that the Cornet 195 ended up least favourite of the listening panel. Though most of the criticisms were directed towards the recessed and distant vocal reproduction, even the overblown bass came in for its fair share of stick, not just for the way it seemed to swamp the rest, but also for a lack of purpose and direction, and a tendency to blur complex figures together. Still, there's plenty of headroom and loudness capability, so this model should go down well at parties.

## CONCLUSION

Much more a tuba than a cornet, the 195 is a speaker for those who don't want all that nasty midrange nonsense getting in the way of their bass-lines. Hi-fi it's not, but the strongly tailored balance is, I suspect, quite deliberate, and will probably find its constituency among those whose cars thump to a disco beat as they pass in the night. Potential purchasers, however, should watch out for the wicked impedance swings in the upper midband. **PM**



● Not short on bass: the Cornet 195 boasts two 160mm LF drivers.

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★
PRICE	£350.00

■ Loads of bass but not much else.

■ Should have yoof-appeal, as it looks the business, and is priced attractively.

■ ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Jamo UK Ltd, 5 Faraday Close, Drayton Fields, Daventry, Northants NN11 5RD  
☎ (01327) 301300

## THE LAB REPORT

For whatever reason, Jamo's two bass drivers tend to overwhelm the midrange 'filler' and treble dome of the Cornet 195. Moreover, the speaker's output is contaminated by a buzzing sound (possibly caused by loose internal connection, crossover board, components or wiring) right around 200Hz. This alone may explain the excessive upper bass and lack of transparency described by Paul's panel.

It isn't aided by an abrupt QB3-like bass alignment: a nearfield analysis showing the drivers peaking at 88Hz followed by a sharp roll-off. The port, too, has a tremendously extended range, right from the driver null at 34Hz to a peak at 83Hz which coincides with

the main drivers. Indeed, an averaged 3rd-octave response shows this 100Hz region up to 10dB above the mean midband output, even though, between 300Hz-8kHz, the speaker's axial response looks smooth. Move off the listening axis, however, and this boominess extends well into the lower midrange.

Otherwise, the 195 offers a good 89.5dB sensitivity, rather high 1.5-2 per cent distortion (re. 96dBA) and a load which might catch some amplifiers napping as an unexpected +50 to -36 degree swing in phase angle and dipto 3.2 Ohms occurs just before the 3kHz crossover frequency. **PM**

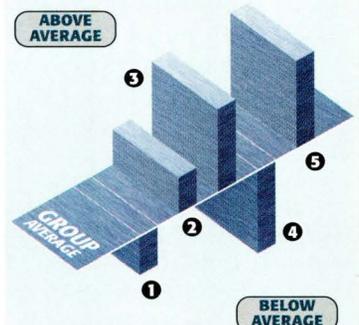
● Keep your filigree percussion for other models – this kicks bass!



## HOW IT COMPARES

There will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

1 EASE OF DRIVE	-25%
2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS	25%
3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	55%
4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	-55%
5 BASS EXTENTION	60%



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	89.5dB
■ Average Impedance	10.2 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	26Hz



# JPW ML910

**J**PW is a major player in British speaker manufacture, and is active in many export markets too. The company has spent much of the past year overseeing its multi-million pound investment in a new factory down in Plymouth.

Although it does not change ranges frequently, JPW launched its Millennium series in 1997, which consists of no fewer than 10 different models squeezed into a relatively narrow price band from £69.99 up to £399.99. Such a profusion of options could become a source of confusion, and surely creates unnecessarily fine distinctions between the various upgrade options. It will take *Choice* some years to work its way right through the whole range, but

**“ On the plus side, the JPW ML910 does sound big and powerful. It’s free from strain with plenty of headroom. ”**

JPW’s strategy has more to do with export markets, where distributors can cherry-pick the ones that best suit local currency price points.

Logically enough, this ML910 sits one rung down from the top-of-the-line ML1010 reviewed (and Recommended) in *HFC* 170, and two rungs above the ML710 which was less well received in *HFC* 177. The 910 costs a very modest £299.99, considering its sizable bulk and weight, though our sample came with an optional plinth

which adds a further £29.99 to make a £329.98 total.

Despite being among the cheapest in the test group, the ML910 is also one of the largest and heaviest, so there’s no denying its perceived material value is high. It remains debatable how important that is to today’s loudspeaker buyer. Speakers which stand four square and over a metre tall are not necessarily welcome in every lounge, especially when the surfaces are not finished in luxurious real wood. The cherry (or black) vinyl woodprints used here are decent enough examples of the type, but vinyl’s negative aesthetic impact is proportional to its surface area, and there’s plenty of that here.

In a true three-way design, the bass driver uses a moulded frame and 120mm doped-paper cone, with additional bass assistance from a large (70mm) rear port. The midband is handled by a 75mm paper cone, and the treble by a small 19mm fabric dome.

JPW deliberately stays with wood-based enclosure materials: a double-thickness front panel aids structural integrity and allows subtle shaping and decoration. The terminal block commits a couple of minor sins, first by fitting twin terminals (where a three-way should surely have triplets), and secondly by residing near the top of the back panel, so that dangly cables are unavoidable.

Even when mounted well clear of walls, the in-room, far-field response shows a strongly exaggerated output at 50Hz, coincident with the port tuning. Further

up the band the balance is uneven through the broad mid-band, though better ordered above 1kHz, with just a slight notch centred on 2.5kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

The ML910 underwent separate presentations on both listening days, and failed to generate much of a following on either. Only one of the seven listeners showed any real enthusiasm, the majority verdict being that the sound was a bit dull and lacking in dynamic drive and transparency.

On the plus side it does sound appropriately big and powerful. It’s free from strain with plenty of headroom, though the bottom end does have ‘one-note’ tendencies, and there’s some lack of agility and coherence.

## CONCLUSION

This is a lot of speaker for the money, no question, but there’s more to a loudspeaker than mere physical presence and material value for money, and the ML910 proved a little disappointing on the vital issue of sound quality. **PMe**



☛ The ML910 offers a lot of speaker for the money – but size isn’t everything...

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £329.98

📄 **Loads of loudspeaker for the money, with plenty of headroom and loudness capability, but sounds dull.**

■ **FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE**

✉ JPW Loudspeakers, Langage Science Park, Plymouth, Devon PL7 5HJ  
☎ (01752) 333800

## THE LAB REPORT

**A**s Paul has said, the ML910 does offer a lot of box for the money and it’s very sensitive too, offering very close to JPW’s rated 91dB at 90.6dB/1m/2.83V. With a 120W amplifier, you should achieve levels approaching 106-107dBA in most rooms. The averaged forward response looks fairly even-handed through mid and treble, and especially so off the main listening axis, though there’s a suggestion of lumpiness from 80Hz-300Hz. Mounting the ML910 clear of walls certainly seems like a good idea.

Box losses are high, but the bass looks pretty clean, with distortion very low at 0.4-0.8 per cent all the way up to 96dBA. Moderate (42 degree) phase angles and low and high fre-

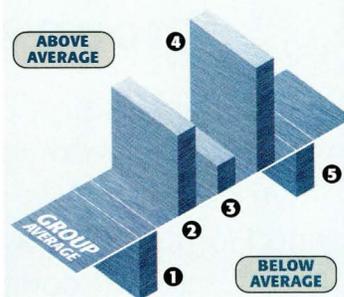
quency minima of 3.9 Ohms will tax some amplifiers. Distortion does increase to around 1 per cent once the midrange filler unit takes over, but then it falls way back to 0.2-0.3 per cent as the treble dome takes control. A nearfield analysis shows the reflex port is accurately tuned to 53Hz though there’s an unusual quarter-wave cancellation visible in both the port and driver outputs at 212Hz. This also shows as a glitch in both phase and impedance spectra. In every other respect, the port contribution is free of spurious resonances and should help stretch its ‘usable’ bass down to 43Hz or so. **PMi**

☛ The ML910 has the potential to reach 106dBA with a 120W amp.

## HOW IT COMPARES

**T**here will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

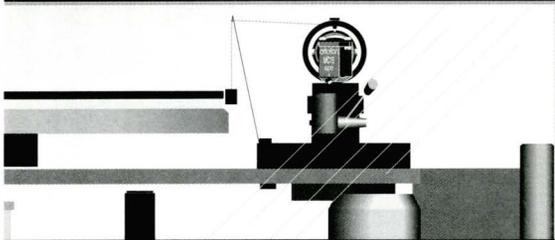
- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | -40% |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | 55%  |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | 20%  |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | 70%  |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | -30% |



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	90.6dB
■ Average Impedance	6.63 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	43Hz

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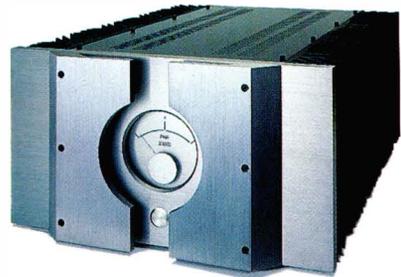
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# RUARK Epilogue

Essex-based speaker specialist Ruark Acoustics might have started out with its prime expertise on the cabinetwork side of loudspeaker manufacture, but that was many years ago. While fine veneer work and high-class joinery remain very much part of the company's stock in trade, it has more than proved its expertise in the art of acoustic design.

Ruark eschews the beer-budget end of the market, preferring to concentrate on producing higher-quality products, where classy woodwork and presentation is essential. The company offers at least three distinct ranges – Classic, Contemporary and the seriously expensive Sterling.

This little Epilogue slots in at the

**“ The bass end works rather well, with good timing and pace, provided the material isn't too heavy or played too loud. ”**

bottom of the Contemporary range, and is the least expensive speaker in the Ruark line-up. The base version, finished in satin black, sells at £239; the 'normal' real-wood veneers (natural cherry, natural oak, walnut and rose-wood) come in at £269, and the yew supplied for our tests is £289.

It's the smallest speaker in our test group by a comfortable margin, which would seem likely to compromise its bass performance to some degree. But it shouldn't

be discounted that the smaller the loudspeaker, the larger its driver-to-total-surface area ratio is likely to be. Add in the fact that small-box panels need little if any extra bracing to maintain high stiffness, and the miniature speaker has quite a lot going for it qualitatively, even if it might not match bigger units in terms of weight, headroom and loudness capability.

Ruark makes a virtue out of the fact that it buys in drive units from OEM suppliers, as this enables it to tap into the know-how of a number of specialists. The main driver here, for instance, has a 140mm moulded plastic frame and 90mm doped-paper cone, which is unusual in having a pentagonal rather than circular edge, the better to avoid edge reflections. The tweeter has a 19mm fabric dome, and part of its front plate is cut away to allow it to be mounted closer to the main driver.

It came as no surprise to discover that such a small loudspeaker needs the assistance of close-to-wall siting to help out in the bass. Elsewhere the balance is impressively flat, if slightly unusual in being a bit stronger through the treble than the midband. However, the most obvious source of 'character' is likely to be a mild but broad forwardness, 900Hz-1.5kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

The Epilogue started off with a bit of a credibility problem. During the review program Ruark paid me a visit to bring down the enormous Excalibur for a future project. After an hour or so of the Excalibur, it



● The Epilogue's pentagon-edged cone aims to avoid edge reflections.

was probably a mistake to put on the tiny Epilogue, as the contrast was altogether too dramatic.

In the group context, however, things went rather better. This is comfortably the smallest speaker in the group, with the smallest main driver area too, so it's no surprise that it does have a somewhat thin and lightweight sound.

However, though overload was never far away in our largish room, the bass end works rather well, with good pace and timing, provided the material isn't too heavy or played too loud. Dynamic contrasts could be stronger, and some felt the forwardness might prove fatiguing over the long term, but others welcomed the openness, liveliness and general freedom from boxiness.

## CONCLUSION

There's no escaping the fact that this is a very small loudspeaker. This is reflected in the strengths

and weaknesses of its performance, and makes it difficult to put the Epilogue into context with the rest of the test group. By miniature standards it's rather good, if a bit lightweight and 'up-front' – maybe too much so for some systems and tastes. But it's also a lively and communicative little thing, and quite a looker too, with more than a touch of class. Recommended, but only for smallish rooms. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £239.00

■ Tiny and beautifully-finished miniature with a lively, up-front balance and plenty of charm; but best suited to smaller rooms.

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Ruark Acoustics Ltd, 59 Tailor's Court, Temple Farm Industrial Est, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5TH  
☎ (01702) 601410

## THE LAB REPORT

As we've said, bass is the topic of interest this month and it's good to see that Ruark, despite employing a modest-sized enclosure, has not been tempted to jack-up its bass alignment with a sharp peak. This technique might give a 'honk' that'll fool some listeners but transients will be seriously compromised. Instead, the Epilogue appears to employ an optimally-flat Butterworth alignment with the bass driver rolling off to a -6dB point of 68Hz and supplemented by a low-Q port resonance at 50Hz. The eventual bass extension might not amount to more than 47Hz in-room, but at least it will retain its dynamic integrity.

The Epilogue's 87.1dB sensitivity is accurately specified but its averaged, axial



○ Toeing-in could help cut down on bright balance.

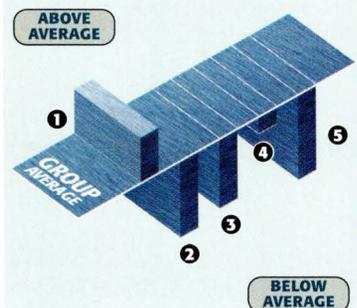
response shows a gradual lift through mid and treble, giving the speaker a bright overall balance. Toeing the speakers inward, however, goes a long way to ameliorating this trend. However, there's

some untidiness around the 3.5kHz crossover frequency where distortion also leaps from the low 0.5 per cent recorded through the bass, to 3-4 per cent. This might also encourage a more 'aggressive' character even though its safe eight Ohm load and mild +/-20 degree mid/treble phase angles are unlikely to prove stressful for the majority of amplifiers. Just avoid those with a hard or forward balance. **PMi**

## HOW IT COMPARES

There will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | 30%  |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | -50% |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | -45% |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | -10% |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | -55% |



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	87.1dB
■ Average Impedance	9.4 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	47Hz

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# JM LAB Tantal 515

Although Focal.JMLab is approaching its 20th anniversary, and has been exporting for more than a decade, this French company's complete loudspeaker systems (the JMLabs, as distinct from Focal's raw drive-units) have only been available in Britain for less than a year.

Choice's first close encounter was with a large luxury floorstander called the Spectral 909.1, which proved a mild disappointment in HFC 180's group test. Although we didn't realise it at the time, the Spectral range was about to be phased out, and in June this year I was invited to see and hear the five new JMLab ranges which were being launched. I left the demo very impressed, and looked forward to a

“ **The dynamic range throughout the bass and mid-band is impressive, allowing details to be distinguished deep in the mix.** ”

chance to try the new models.

I'm still hoping to get my hands on a Mezzo Utopia, but the new 'entry-level' Tantal range arrived in Britain first, and this 515 fits neatly into our test group. JMLab's idea of 'entry-level' is different from most major brands, as this vinyl-clad floorstander carries a £495 price tag — not outrageous, but not exactly beer budget either.

However, the company's main claim to fame is its drive unit technology, and even the Tantals have

versions of the famous 'inverted dome' tweeters, with titanium diaphragms. The 515's bass-only and bass/mid drivers use specially damped paper cones in cast chassis with generous magnets.

Compared to the drivers, the enclosure looks prosaic — neat enough, but sharp-edged and rather monolithic in appearance, especially with the nearly full-length grille in place. Still, the drivers are flush-mounted, so everything looks tidy, and the 'rosewood' vinyl is easy on the eyes.

The in-room far-field response definitely favours free-space siting. There's some upper bass emphasis centred on 100Hz, and the broad midband could be smoother too, though the treble looks well behaved above 2kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

Decent enough overall listening test results disguise the fact that this speaker appealed rather more to some panellists than others. The Tantal 515 has a bright and up-front sort of sound — something of a characteristic of French designs, in my limited experience — and the consequent presentation was much more pleasing and to some tastes than others. What some panellists found open and involving, others considered too clinical and edgy.

Now I like an up-front sound, and over the weeks in which the hands-on work was carried out this Tantal became my firm favourite among the group.

Personal preference comes into this, of course, and while I'll concede that sibilants and vinyl sur-

face noise can sometimes be intrusive, the simple fact that clear diction is maintained even at very low levels is, for me, a major plus.

There's an element of compromise in all loudspeaker designs, and what made Joni Mitchell's *Mingus* sound wonderful, revealed the dire recording quality of Oasis's *Be Here Now* all too clearly. But even the simple fact that the 515 makes these differences very obvious is a point in its favour.

The bass doesn't have quite the same deep grunt and authority as some of the larger three-ways in the group, and there's a touch of upper bass 'honk' too, but the dynamic range throughout the bass and midband is very impressive, allowing details to be distinguished deep down in the mix.

## CONCLUSION

Although the 515's up-front balance won't appeal to all tastes, and the styling might be a bit lacking in flair, to me this is the most effortlessly communicative speaker in the group. It is more capable than most of conveying the dynamic contrasts and tensions that are the essence of musical reproduction, so confident recommendation is mandatory. Best Buy.



◉ The Tantal 515 employs a version of Focal's 'inverted dome' tweeter.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £495.00

☑ Lively and very open if a little bright. Sound is highly entertaining and informative, but physical presentation rather nondescript.

■ THREE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Sound Image UK Ltd, 52 Milton Road, East Sheen, London SW14 8JR

☎ (0181) 255 6868

PMe

## THE LAB REPORT

In many respects, the low frequency characteristics of this Tantal 515 bear a resemblance to those of the Jamo Cornet 195. Sure enough, its bass output is more sensibly integrated with mid and treble, but the lower bass driver shows the same 'peaky' QB3 or Chebyshev-like bass alignment at 90Hz followed by a 3rd/4th-order rolloff. Furthermore, just as the driver null is not very easy to distinguish, the port resonance is similarly ill-defined and offers a broad reinforcement from 28Hz-90Hz. If you are going to avoid any potential boominess, then the '515 is another floorstander that must be kept well clear of walls.

Otherwise, JM's 91.5dB sensitivity rating is spot-on (I measured 91.6dB/

2.83V/1m) and enables sound levels as high as 108dBA to be achieved in the 'average' room with just 125W of power to hand. The speaker is barely taxed at 96dBA where distortion at or below 1 per cent is typical. So,

where's the catch? Well, there's some peakiness in the speaker's response around the 3-4kHz crossover frequency but the tricky load, with its +/-45 degree phase angles and 4-26 Ohm impedance swings might just as likely 'harden' the sound from less-than-capable amplifiers. There's also a clear mis-termination 'glitch' at 156Hz in both phase and impedance spectra. PMi

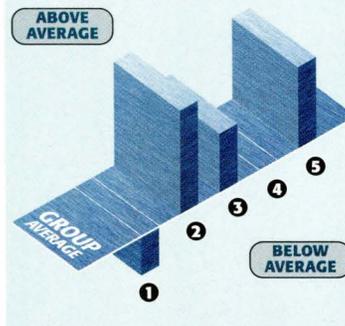
◉ To avoid bass boom, position the Tantal 515 clear of walls.



## HOW IT COMPARES

There will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | -10% |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | 70%  |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | 40%  |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | 0%   |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | 55%  |



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	91.6dB
■ Average Impedance	49.5 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	32Hz

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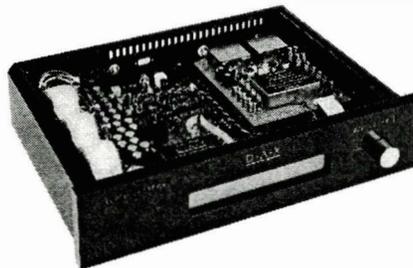


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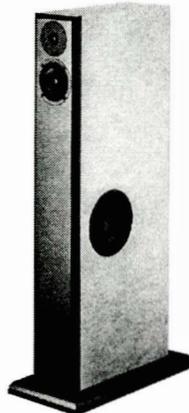
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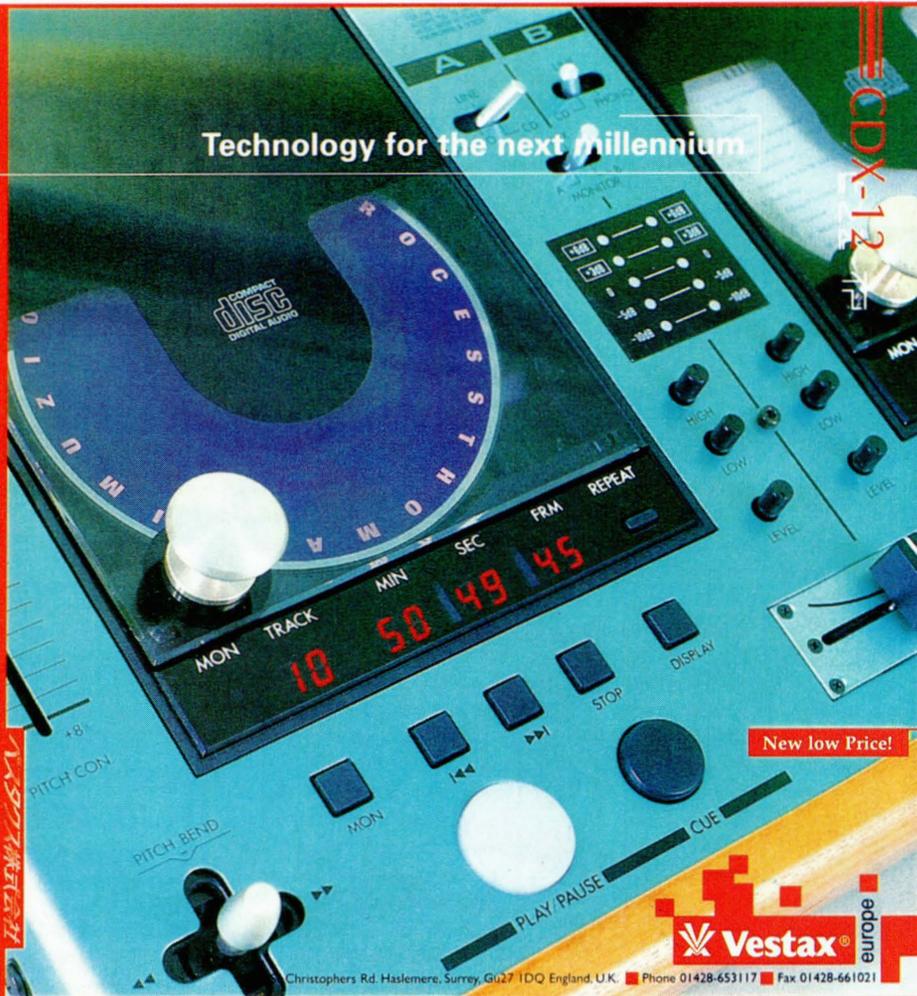
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# MAGNAT Vector 77

Part of the International Jensen Group, Magnat is a long-established German brand that has only recently turned its attention towards the UK market, courtesy of distributor Henley Designs. The brand made an auspicious *Choice* debut with the upmarket Vintage 720, Recommended in *HFC* 180, so now it's time to turn our attention towards one of the company's more cost-effective ranges, the mid-price Vectors.

Tall, dark and in its way quite handsome, the vinyl-clad Vector 77 is a lot of speaker for its £449 asking price, hefty 22kg weight and four-driver line-up. The latter are configured as a three-way system,

**“ The success of the first presentation derived from this speaker's superbly even and natural balance. ”**

tem, rear-port-loaded twin bass drivers keeping the dimensions fashionably slim. However, the overall height of 114cm might prove a little daunting in some lounges. This does ensure that the midrange and tweeter are well off the ground, however.

The bass and midrange drivers look identical to all intents and purposes, and are rebated neatly into a thick MDF front panel with post-formed edges, keeping everything neat and tidy if the grille is not used. These drivers

use moulded ABS plastic frames which ventilate the voice-coil area, and paper-based cones, each 120mm in diameter, while the tweeter diaphragm has a 25mm ceramic dome. Twin terminals permit bi-wiring or bi-amping.

The in-room, far-field response is unusually well balanced, especially for such a large loudspeaker, and not surprisingly it favours siting well clear of walls. It could, however, be smoother, showing slight notches at 550Hz and at 2.8kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

The Vector 77 delivered rather curious listening test results, which needed some careful examination and interpretation. The Magnat was chosen (at random) as the first speaker of the day. This honour can result in ambiguous perceptions among the panellists, as they get used to the room and system. For this reason we have a solid rule that the first model must always make a repeat appearance later in the day.

This Magnat doubly confounded expectations, first by scoring a joint 'top-mark-of-the-day' on that first presentation, and then by faring significantly worse the second time around.

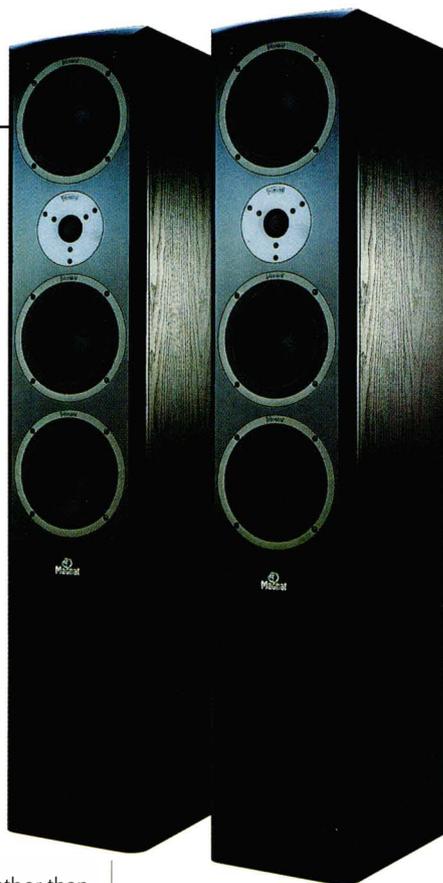
My interpretation of these findings is that the success of the first presentation derived from this speaker's superbly even and neutral balance, which made it a difficult speaker to criticise especially while system, program and room were unfamiliar. Later on, having gone through the learning curve of several other presentations, the panel was more aware of some

rather more insidious weaknesses. For example, there's certainly a touch of hardness and forwardness that can become wearing over time, and the bass could have a bit more drive and enthusiasm.

But the midband is the main problem, sounding rather processed and squashed, giving the music an almost mechanical feel with little in the way of tangibility and transparency. Although all the sounds seem to come out well enough ordered, it's quite difficult to get properly immersed in the musical flow, and one is left feeling rather detached from the proceedings, rather than truly involved.

## CONCLUSION

This tall, handsome speaker will be an imposing sight in any lounge, and is unquestionably fine perceived material value for money. It also delivers a notably neutral and even in-room balance with impressively deep bass extension, all of which are undoubted strengths. The down side, however, is that the music comes through somehow sounding a bit processed, and that in turn weakens its ability to carry the holistic musical message – something which smaller and simpler designs are often better able to deliver.



◊ The four drivers on the Vector 77 give it a purposeful appearance.

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£449.00

■ Tall, dark and a lot of speaker for the money. Beautifully judged overall balance, but rather lacking in subtlety and transparency

### ■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Henley Designs Ltd, The Old Coach House, The Street, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 8EH  
☎ (01491) 834700

PM

## THE LAB REPORT

“Sound mit biss” declares a banner on the rear of this speaker, which is still some 3dB less sensitive than Magnat might have us believe. However, if 89.1dB/1m/2.83V is more realistic than 92dB, the Vector 77's prodigious power handling still enables musical peaks in excess of 107-108dBA to be achieved in the comfort – or otherwise – of your own home. For such a complex design, the Vector 77 also has a well integrated response with a smooth upper bass and midrange that ties into a gently rising treble. Toe the speaker inward by 20 degrees or so, and its response flattens out almost perfectly.

Distortion remains respectably low (increasing to a maximum of 0.6 per cent through the midrange) but

the speaker load is quite tough, with moderate 30 degree shifts from 600Hz-7kHz where the impedance trend reaches a maximum of 10.8 Ohms. Up to 730Hz the impedance is sub-8 Ohms, with minima of 4.8 Ohms at (420Hz) and 4.5 Ohms (15.5kHz).

Magnat's dual-port bass loading offers a broad reinforcement from 35Hz-73Hz and remains free of any midrange interference. There is, however, a small 'blip' at 168Hz that's evident from both ports and a nearfield analysis of the bass driver(s). Either way, bass extension down to 30Hz in-room looks possible.

PM

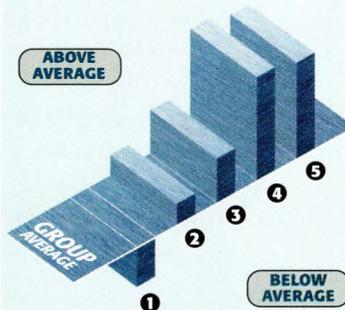
◊ Toeing in should flatten out response almost perfectly.



## HOW IT COMPARES

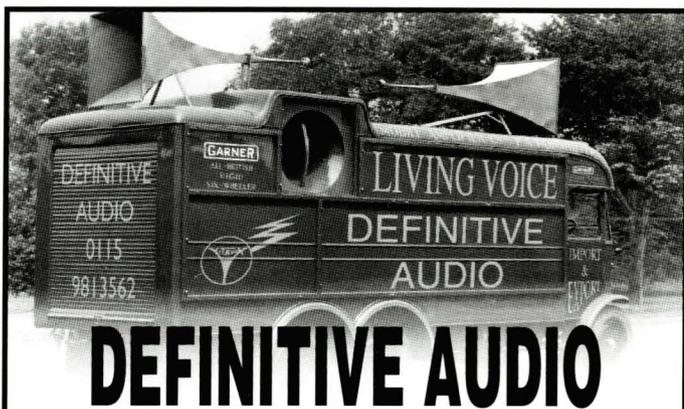
There will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

1 EASE OF DRIVE	-25%
2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS	15%
3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	30%
4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	70%
5 BASS EXTENSION	65%



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	89.1dB
■ Average Impedance	6.9 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	30Hz



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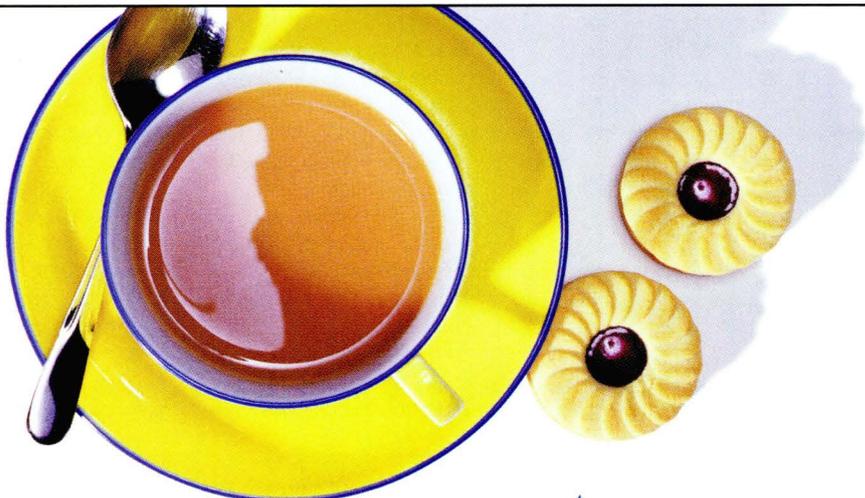
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# MISSION 774

**M**ission's nomenclature is not the most straightforward around, and the company's obsession with the number seven can sometimes cause confusion. Those with memories as long as mine, for example, will doubtless recall a previous 774 – not a loudspeaker, but an ingenious tonearm design which flourished in the late '70s.

The new 77 Series of loudspeakers represents one of two distinct ranges which have just been introduced to succeed the long-standing (and highly successful) 73-series of budget models. The super-slimline 77s are a more upmarket solution. Designed to appeal to Mission's 'traditional customer base', they're better looking,

**“ The whole is somehow more than the sum of the parts: razor sharp timing with good dynamic expression are the keys to its skills. ”**

better finished and altogether neater than the 'rude-boy' 700s.

Those into playing dance/techno type music at high levels should maybe look towards the 700s, which I daresay will at least out-bass the smaller and more delicate 77s. But those giving physical elegance as much priority as high-quality sound should certainly put the 77s on any shortlist.

As top model in its range, this £500 774 is without question the best-looking speaker in the test

group, and an object lesson in what can be achieved by combining professional industrial design with modern manufacturing techniques. Its success has much to do with the front baffle treatment, which cleverly narrows the front panel with heavy chamfering, helped by a combination of real wood and a bonded leatherette finish. It's also 38mm thick, which should ensure good rigidity, while areas behind the drivers are routed away to avoid early reflection of rearward radiation. As Mission puts it: "it's far removed from the usual plank with holes".

Beneath an exceptionally neat grille are two small Aerogel drivers with 90mm cones, mounted above and below a mechanically-decoupled tweeter, and backed up by a port. The slim-but-deep shape ensures good fore-and-aft stability, but to ensure it doesn't get knocked over from the side, a moulded outrigger is fixed to the base at the rear.

The in-room, far-field response would seem to favour free space siting, and is unusual in several respects. The lower midband is rather uneven, there's a pronounced suckout centred on 3.5kHz, and the treble is much brighter than average above 6kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

There are some contradictions to address here. This isn't the most neutral speaker around in balance terms; the 'sucked out' presence and brighter-than-average treble are quite evident subjectively, and the bass tuning tends to favour mid over low bass. But despite

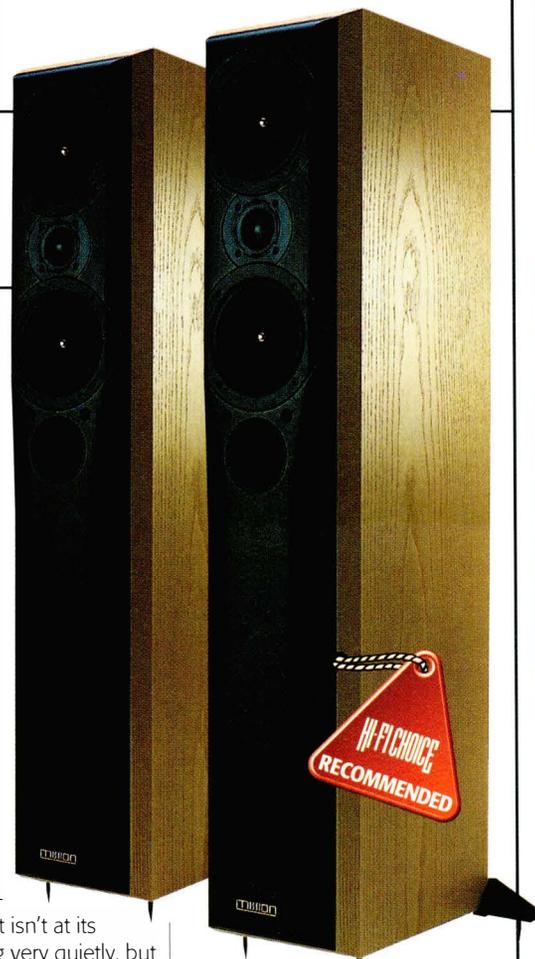
◉ **The slimline 774 has a 38mm thick front baffle – "far removed from the usual plank".**

those criticisms of the cosmetics of the sound presentation, this is a thoroughly entertaining and engaging loudspeaker.

The whole is somehow more than the sum of the parts here, and razor-sharp timing with good dynamic expression are the keys to its fine communication skills. For some the sound will be a little too 'thin', and it isn't at its best when playing very quietly, but those are forgivable quirks in the overall picture.

## CONCLUSION

"Flawed but lots of fun" has to be the overall sound quality verdict; the balance anomalies mitigate against too enthusiastic an endorsement. While I believe the 774 could benefit from some reassessment of the relative treble level, the sensational styling, fine finish at an affordable price, and excellent communication skills all add up to a comfortable Recommendation. **PMe**



## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £399.95

📖 **Gorgeous slimline floorstander is a thoroughly entertaining communicator, despite some balance oddities such as bright treble.**

■ **TWO YEAR GUARANTEE**

✉ Mission Electronics, Stonehill, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6ED

☎ (01480) 451777

## THE LAB REPORT

**A**s expected, the lightweight Aerogel bass/mid drivers and simple 1st/2nd order crossover network confer a high 90dB sensitivity, a full 1dB better than Mission's 89dB specification. There's no free lunch so the slightly uneven midband response and 12kHz treble 'sting' are arguably all part of the trade-off. However, there's a slight shortfall in the speaker's forward response between 3-5kHz (both on and off axis) following the crossover point. This is a problem for the lightweight Aerogel cones that all manufacturers are forced to deal with.

Presumably, because of an air leak around the cone and magnet pole-piece, the speaker's bass alignment is not especially straightforward. For

example, the port Helmholtz frequency matches the Aerogel drivers' null at 48Hz but there's an equally broad, secondary resonance at 140Hz together with a second driver null at 105Hz. Associated with this are additional burdens in both the speaker's phase angle and impedance spectrum that the amplifier must deal with (see *Oasis*, p16).

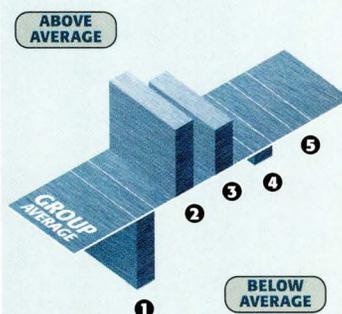
There's also a sharp 665Hz pipe mode escaping the port, which corresponds to a notch in the speaker's frequency response. The chrome-plated phase plug on the pole-piece will also 'ring' unlike the rubber alternative used by Kelly, for example. **PMe**

◉ **High sensitivity is the trade-off for a slightly uneven midband.**

## HOW IT COMPARES

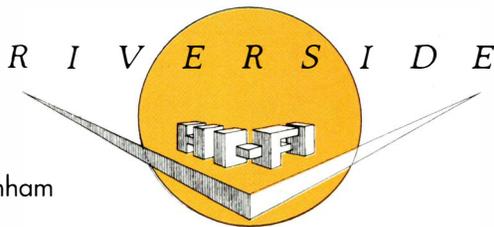
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- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | -45% |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | 45%  |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | 30%  |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | -5%  |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | 0%   |



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	90.4dB
■ Average Impedance	6.65 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	40Hz



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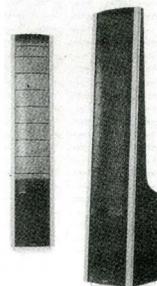
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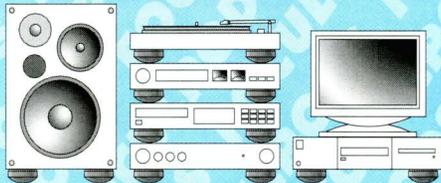


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# MUSICAL TECHNOLOGY PM15

**C**hoice first encountered Musical Technology in 1995, when the Kestrel floorstander scored a Best Buy first time out. Since then we've tried some half-dozen models from this creative company, to good effect. All have been floorstanders, pentagonal in plan section, and all have been based on M-Tech's own particular implementation of metal diaphragm driver technology, which is rather different from the competition.

Compact floorstanders have been the popular choice in the past few years, which is a major reason why M-Tech has been making them. But the company is aware that standmounts have their own advantages, and has

“ **The dynamic range and subtlety through the bass and midband set it clear of the pack – an involving easy listener.** ”

developed two such models as part of its MTp series. These were initially developed for (and sold to) professional users for monitoring, but are now being introduced onto the domestic marketplace.

The £475 PM15 is the less expensive of the two, and follows a classic rectangular 15-litre bookshelf-type format, using drivers based closely on the 19-litre Harrier SE floorstander. Styling is conservative but timeless, with the speaker being well-finished in a

real-wood veneer, with flush-mounted drive units and neat baffle-edge treatment. Given the need for high-quality stands, it's maybe not quite as cost-effective a package as the Harrier SE (which costs from £525 in real-wood finish), but the standmount approach does have certain innate advantages – greater diaphragm to box surface area, for example.

The main driver has a 170mm cast alloy frame, 125mm metal cone, and a high flux magnet. It is loaded by a flared front port. The tweeter has a 25mm black anodised metal dome, and twin terminals are fitted to facilitate bi-wire or bi-amp operation.

The in-room far-field response shows an inherently dry bass alignment that looks well suited to the suggested close-to-wall positioning. The lower midband could be smoother, but above that region the trace looks well behaved, gently tilting downwards above 1kHz, with a slight notch at 2kHz the only feature to disturb the smoothness.

## SOUND QUALITY

The PM15 drew a mixed reaction in the blind listening tests: the panel divided, as the following quotes illustrate: “Fluid and tuneful bass... clarity at high frequencies makes for a ‘shiny’ yet most pleasant performance” would seem to cancel out contrary opinions such as “harsh and steely... the string tone is very synthetic.”

Such inconsistency is irritating but unavoidable when the methodology makes no attempt to force a consensus view, leaving the reviewer to act as referee. And



during the extended hands-on sessions that followed the panel tests, the PM15 repeatedly came up trumps, across a much broader range of programming than is possible in the formal sessions. It does have a touch of ‘character’, with a slightly forward midband and ‘hooded’ presence, but the dynamic range and subtlety through the bass and midband set it comfortably clear of the pack – an easy-listener, but a thoroughly involving one.

## CONCLUSION

The more time I spent listening to the PM15, the more I came to respect this subtle and beautifully-voiced design. The sound might be too cautious and restrained for some, but this can prove a blessing with much modern programming, and few competitors can match its fine focus, transparency and

◉ **The PM15 looks classy, with conservative but timeless styling.**

dynamic range. The solid technical performance further vindicates the virtues of this ‘classic’ loudspeaker configuration. A solid Buy flag is richly deserved. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £475.00

■ **A subtle, understated but very involving example of the ‘classic’ luxury-finish stand-mount.**

■ **TWO YEAR GUARANTEE**

✉ Musical Technology, Unit 1, Penllwyngwent Industrial Estate, Saville Road, Ogmere Vale, Glamorganshire CF32 7AX  
☎ (01656) 842000

## THE LAB REPORT

**T**his looks like a well-constructed box but, as my sample was devoid of any annotation or documentation (Company/model name, serial number, power handling etc), I am bound to suggest that it may not be fully representative of production. Sensitivity is only moderate at 87.6dB/2.83V/1m but the speaker still manages to keep distortion below 1 per cent across the range at 96dBa – a good result. Interestingly, the PM15 has a dominant 2nd harmonic through the bass, not unlike the favoured System Audio 1130.

The PM15's averaged 3rd-octave response has a ‘humped’ appearance with a distinct midrange ‘lift’ from 500Hz to 1.5kHz followed by a shallow depression



◉ **Mild balance off axis, but with a tough 6.3 Ohm load.**

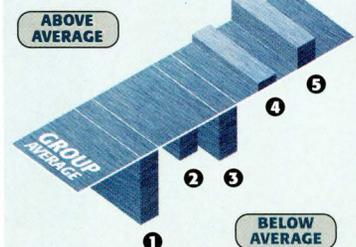
through the presence band. There's an increase in treble energy above 11kHz but, off-axis, the PM15 looks to have a ‘mild’ tonal balance. The average 6.3 Ohm load is quite tough, particularly as there's an additional swing in phase angle and dip to 4.0 Ohms, through what I presume is the 2kHz crossover region.

Not unlike the Infinity Delta 60, the PM15's bass tuning is misaligned with the broad, 55Hz port resonance skewed upward of the 34Hz driver null. The driver roll-off is not heavily peaked, thereby preserving its handling of musical transients. **PMI**

## HOW IT COMPARES

**T**here will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

1 EASE OF DRIVE	-45%
2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS	-15%
3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	-25%
4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	5%
5 BASS EXTENSION	15%



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	87.6dB
■ Average Impedance	6.34 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	38Hz



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# NEAT Critique 2

**H**ailing from Barnard Castle in County Durham, Neat Acoustics is one of Britain's smaller speaker specialists, with a select range of relatively upmarket models which sell through an equally select number of dealers.

The company built its initial reputation on the tiny-but-pricey Petite, creating a recognisable house style which has carried through into the larger but less expensive Mystique II (Best Buy, HFC 177) and Critique models.

The latter is the subject here, and comes to us in its mk2 incarnation — somehow or other we never got around to reviewing the original. For the record, this version uses a fabric-dome tweeter, in place of the titanium-coated plastic

**“ The top end is beautifully judged, giving an open, airy character, though there was the odd complaint of a slight ‘edginess’ . ”**

diaphragm used before, and now has a first-order (rather than second-order) network on the main driver, with heavier gauge inductor wire to boot. The main driver itself has a 120mm doped paper cone in a 160mm frame.

The styling is quite delightful: Neat by name and double-neat by nature, thanks in no small part to the omission of any form of grille and hence unsightly mounting lugs. It's a classic bookshelf-type two-way, with an internal volume

of 10.3 litres, and a small rear port. It's solidly built, available in black or cherry real-wood veneer, and has internal damping pads and offset blocks to break up standing waves. The sharp edges of the box are nicely smoothed and rounded to soften the lines, and the tweeter is off-set from the centre line, helping to distribute baffle-edge standing waves. The speakers are supplied in mirror-imaged pairs, and with the suggestion that they're used with the tweeters towards the inside edge.

The in-room far-field trace shows a very dry bass alignment which would seem well suited to the suggested close-to-wall siting, plus a pretty well ordered trend elsewhere, perturbed by small notches at 33Hz and 2.5kHz, plus a small peak at 5kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

The panel — nay, both panels, on the two separate days — really warmed to the Critique, which makes my own (and one other panellist's) reservations seem almost churlish. There's nothing democratic about this reviewing business, but so fulsome was the praise of its supporters I feel obliged to give them due weight.

The midband attracted most praise, for its voicing and overall naturalness. Good control is another plus, the music coming through with a refreshing lack of



○ **The Critique's lack of a grille means its fascia has no unsightly mounting lugs.**

'overhang', and with a bass delivery that doesn't try to tackle too much, and therefore remains creditably unruffled. The top end is beautifully judged, giving an open, 'airy' character, though there was the odd complaint of a slight 'edginess'.

The minority view is that it errs too much on the side of restraint, especially at the bottom end, which was rather more obvious when exploring the ultimate bass capabilities in line with the brief for this group test. The Critique did prove quite critical of positioning, and while both the instructions and room measurements indicated close-to-wall siting, the hands-on sessions suggested that leaving a little more air around the boxes could be beneficial.

## CONCLUSION

Gorgeous contemporary presentation and sound according to the

majority view make Recommendation mandatory. But the verdict wasn't unanimous — one man's meat etc — and some might find the sound a little too self-controlled for easy communication. Sensitivity is modest, but in other respects the technical performance is largely impressive, and the price realistic for the fine finish and attention to detail. **PM**

## VERDICT

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★☆
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£445.00</b>

■ **Clean, crisp and contemporary stand-mount has a clean, crisp sound with lovely natural midband voicing.**

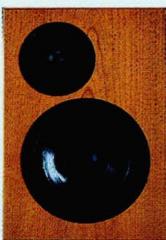
### ■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Neat Acoustics, Unit 1, Stainton Grove Industrial Estate, Barnard Castle, Co Durham, DL12 8UJ

☎ (01833) 631021

## THE LAB REPORT

**T**he Critique is reflex-loaded via a relatively thin rear-facing port which, in practice, behaves more like a controlled leak. The Helmholtz resonant frequency is indistinct, for example, as the port offers a broad reinforcement from 23Hz-140Hz (-3dB). The 160mm



bass/midrange unit, meanwhile, has a decidedly peaky alignment that gives it a maximum output at 130Hz followed by a sharp roll-off. Transient behaviour suffers as a result and there are some sharp swings in phase angle through this band. Otherwise the 8 Ohm load won't cause any amp-related strain but the big 36 Ohm swing around 1-4kHz might reflect changes in the system response depending on the

○ **Healthy power handling will preserve peaks to 103dB.**

amp's output impedance.

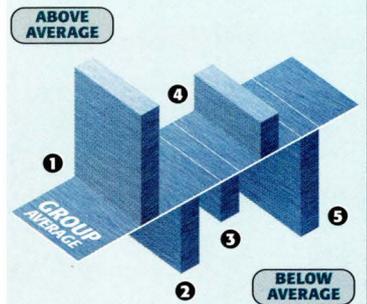
Otherwise, the Critique's response is notable for a generally depressed midband leading to a peak at 5kHz. This is undoubtedly responsible for the 'sizzle' reported on audition though, off-axis, the averaged 3rd-octave trend indicates this might be less apparent.

Sensitivity is second-lowest to the TDL at 86.2dB, but then Neat claims no more. Its healthy power handling will preserve peaks to 103dB though distortion does climb from a low 0.3 per cent through the bass closer to 1 per cent through the midband at just 96dB. **PMi**

## HOW IT COMPARES

**T**here will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

<b>1 EASE OF DRIVE</b>	75%
<b>2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS</b>	-45%
<b>3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS</b>	-25%
<b>4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION</b>	15%
<b>5 BASS EXTENSION</b>	-65%



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	86.2d
■ Average Impedance	15 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	50Hz

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# SYSTEM AUDIO 1130

The relatively small Danish speaker specialist, System Audio, is a well-established operation which was founded in 1984. It made one previous appearance in *Hi-Fi Choice* when British cable specialist The Chord Company brought in the company's tiny 905, which quickly gained a Recommended flag in *HFC* 148, although unfortunately the distribution arrangements eventually came to an end.

Now a rather larger selection of System Audio speakers is becoming available in the UK, courtesy of speaker stand specialist Atacama Audio. And they're not all stand-mounts either. The 1130, the subject of this review, is just one of five floorstanders in the line-up, which includes some of the most elegantly slim examples this reviewer has ever seen.

The 1130 is the slimmest, smallest and least expensive of the floorstanders, with a box that's just 13cm wide — only fractionally wider than a CD jewel case. That fact alone will, I suspect, count far more with buyers than the observation that £499 is a pretty substantial price tag for a vinyl-clad box. It is at least a decent quality woodprint, and the detailing is nicely handled too, with a proper plinth to improve the stability. We haven't quoted the weight, because the review samples arrived with a substantial amount of SoundBytes mass-loading already fitted in the separate lower chamber intended for such a purpose. Since this is strongly recommended in the manufacturer's literature, and certainly ensures



○ The System Audio box is just 13mm wide: about the size of a CD jewel case!

“ Stereo images are exceptionally well formed, and the sound is refreshingly free from unpleasant ‘boxiness’.”

they'll never get knocked over, I guess it's fair enough.

A slim front view might be what the public wants, but, unless you mount a bass driver in a side panel, it does restrict the size of the main drivers. The 1130's minimalist front view provides room for two main drivers with just 70mm cones in 110mm cut-down frames, and these operate d'Appolito-style above and below the 19mm tweeter. Twin terminals permit bi-wiring or bi-amping, while twin ports give those little main drivers an extra helping hand in the bass.

Despite its compact dimensions, the in-room, far-field trace shows the 1130 should give optimum results when placed clear of room boundaries. The frequency balance is very good overall, if slightly uneven, and characterised by a rather pronounced presence suckout centred on 2kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

Although the 1130 is quite obviously no bass excavator, it has very real strengths elsewhere — enough to pick up a 'best-of-the-day' ranking from the listening panel. The bass may lack the weight and loudness capability of

larger rivals, and does show a slight tendency to thump and 'hang on', but it makes up for these limitations with decent drive and timing, and excellent bass-through-mid coherence.

Stereo images are exceptionally well formed and focused, and the sound is refreshingly free from unpleasant 'boxiness'. It's very even-handed and polite — perhaps a little too polite at times, and the presence band is slightly pinched and hooded. In other respects the midband is impressively free from colorations, while the top end is clean and well judged, if a little detached.

## CONCLUSION

It's good to see System Audio back in the UK, not just because the company makes some fine-sounding loudspeakers, but also because they offer a real alternative to the mainstream in style and presentation. The 1130 is not the ideal solution for those who like their Prodigy loud, but for most normal purposes it deserves warm Recommendation. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £499.95

■ Super-slim, super-smooth, and a very involving experience, but not ideal if you like your bass deep and loud.

■ THREE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Atacama Audio, Winstan Avenue, Croft, Leicester LE9 3GQ

☎ (01455) 283251

## THE LAB REPORT

Both System Audio's lightweight 11cm bass/mid drivers work into their own reflex-loaded enclosure and both are precisely aligned. The relatively narrow ports give a high-Q resonance at 61Hz which matches the equally sharp driver null and impedance minimum seen on the load trace. The latter shows a 35 degree shift in phase angle through the 3.4kHz crossover region where the impedance also drops to 5.4 Ohms. Other minima of 3.7 Ohms (250Hz) suggest the 1130 is not a doddle to drive, despite suggestions to the contrary.

The bass, meanwhile, though not the most extended of the group, should indeed sound appropri-

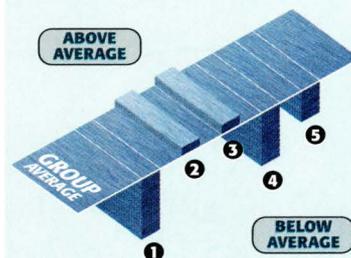
○ Low impedance minima mean the 1130 is not as easy to drive as it looks.

ately 'colourful' thanks to its dominant (1-2 per cent) 2nd-order distortion. I'd also advise against mounting the 1130s close to rear walls to avoid aggravating a 100-300Hz emphasis. The mid and lower treble look very well integrated, particularly through the crossover region (see above) but there is a 'sting' at 16kHz that may or may not be a source of irritation. Certainly, if this sort of peak were at 10kHz and not 16kHz then the 1130 would sound obviously brighter. The 88.6dB sensitivity is close enough to System Audio's 89dB specification while peaks of 105dBA should be possible. **PMi**

## HOW IT COMPARES

There will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

- |                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| 1 EASE OF DRIVE      | -40% |
| 2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | 5%   |
| 3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | 5%   |
| 4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION | -35% |
| 5 BASS EXTENSION     | -20% |



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	88.6dB
■ Average Impedance	7.39 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	43Hz

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# TDL CF100 Chiltern

**T**DL (and its IMF predecessor) must be about the longest-established brand in Britain still operating under the original management. The company built its reputation largely on big floor-standing transmission line-loaded loudspeakers with prodigious bass capabilities (which continue in the Studio series models), but TDL has since diversified to create more lounge-friendly models at more affordable prices.

At the budget end is the vinyl-finished RTL series (the floor-standers combining reflex and transmission line-loading techniques), while real-wood finish was used first for the polypropylene-coned T-lines and now for the new carbon-fibre-coned CF-

**“ Presentation is demure but tidy, with a touch of class in the way the drivers are flush-mounted into a front baffle. ”**

series — the floorstanding CF200 Cotswold (HFC 177) and CF300 Cheviot models, plus this £450 CF100 Chiltern standmount.

The key feature is the use of carbon-fibre composites (CFCs) for the main driver cone. Mounted in a 150mm cast chassis, the 90mm cone follows the same profile as larger examples, and shares the same 25mm black-anodised metal-dome tweeter.

Whether CFCs offer significant benefits over other materials must

be debatable. The leaflet points out that carbon fibres have a strength-to-weight ratio greater than steel, and that the moulded matrix which holds the fibres in place adds self-damping, which is true. But it's not difficult to find counter-arguments — CFCs are much stronger under tension than compression, for example. Still, it's an interesting development, and one already popular with some other manufacturers.

The physical presentation is demure but tidy, with a touch of genuine class in the way the drivers are flush-mounted into a front baffle with neatly post-formed edges. The real-wood veneer of our sample looks a little understated, but there are four options to choose from — oak, cherry, rosewood and mahogany. Twin terminals permit bi-wire/bi-amp options, while the crossover network uses air-cored coils, polypropylene capacitors and oxygen-free copper wiring.

One might have assumed, given its modest dimensions, that the Chiltern was likely to favour close-to-wall siting. The in-room, far-field trace shows that this is not the case: it is definitely a free-space design. The overall balance is well ordered, if not particularly smooth, with a slightly recessed presence region, 1.5-3kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

Belying — or maybe because of — its modest size, the Chiltern came through the listening tests strongly,



Carbon-fibre composites in main driver cone are elegantly flush mounted.

attracting plenty of praise from the panellists: “Very communicative of mood... engaging.” “Big, bold sound without being in your face... doesn't draw unnecessary attention to itself.”

However, there was criticism. One panellist complained “These small speakers aren't breathing in the way the larger ones did... the lack of cabinet colorations seems to be outweighed by the lack of dynamic contrast.” Which seems to sum up the compromises rather well.

The CF100 does indeed sound surprisingly ‘big’, but to be frank, the bass has a rather thickened texture, doesn't go particularly deep, and can get embarrassed by any attempt to play modern dance/techno type of material at decent levels. Timing could be sharper here too, but the midband has a fine understated clarity and

transparency, and a welcome freedom from boxiness.

## CONCLUSION

Modest sensitivity and loudness capability are inevitable consequences of the dimensions. This is not a speaker for bass freaks, but it puts its small dimensions to good effect by delivering a delicate and transparent midband that is its own reward. Recommended. **PM**

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£449.95

**Tiny but classy monitor has a laid-back balance, a fine midband and a surprising bass; needs space around it and plenty of power.**

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

☒ TDL Electronics, PO Box 98, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 9SH

☎ (01628) 850111

## THE LAB REPORT

**D**espite its use of novel driver materials, the technical performance of TDL's Chiltern speaker does look a little dated. At just 85.0dB/2.83V/1m, it's by far the least sensitive boxin our survey and, with its modest power handling, unlikely to realise clean



peaks much in excess of 100dBA in the average room environment. Nevertheless, even at 96dBA, the Chiltern keeps THD below 1 per cent, even through the bass. As a load, the minimum of 6.7 Ohms at 2.4kHz will not put the shivers up any self-respecting amplifier. Neither will the modest swings in phase angle which amount to no more than +/-25 degrees outside of the bass region.

CF100 is the least sensitive design in this month's test.

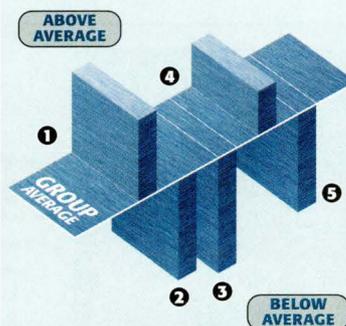
TDL's bass loading is textbook stuff and very well executed. The 15cm bass/mid unit has not been unnecessarily 'peaked' as it rolls off past its 145Hz apex and the sharply-

defined 55Hz null is complemented by an equally high-Q port resonance at 60Hz. It's not unlike the System Audio speaker in this respect. Where the Chiltern really suffers is in the gently declining and very 'mild' tonal balance. To get any hint of sharp treble you'll need to listen directly on-axis because the upper mid/treble droops still further as the speakers are toed inward. **PMI**

## HOW IT COMPARES

**T**here will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

1 EASE OF DRIVE	55%
2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS	-65%
3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	-75%
4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	30%
5 BASS EXTENSION	-65%



## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured
■ Sensitivity	85dB
■ Average Impedance	11.36 Ohms
■ Bass Extension (-6dB)	50Hz

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# INFINITY Delta 60

US brand Infinity is part of the multinational Harman operation, but operates quite autonomously as far as design and technology are concerned. Infinity has scored a number of notable hits during its long 30-year manufacturing history.

The latest range to appear is the Delta: five floorstanding three-way designs plus a matching dialogue speaker, all distinguished from the herd by enclosures which are trapezoidal in plan shape. To quote the brochure: "A delta is... a triangular shape, embodying perfect harmony and balance. What better name could we have chosen for the all-new Infinity Delta range?" Trapezoidal maybe? No, too difficult to spell and pro-

**“ The Delta 60 certainly packs an impressive bottom-end thump, but it lets the side down further up the band. ”**

nounce; simple is beautiful...

This Delta 60 is the fourth most expensive model in its range, one from the top, and hits our price band ceiling at £700. My muscles tensed when I saw the size and felt the weight of the cartons, and contracted still further when I discovered that someone of limited intelligence had packed the spikes at the bottom of the cartons, necessitating laying them on their sides and crawling inside.

It's comfortably the heaviest

speaker in this test, and the largest in every dimension. The trapezoidal shape translates as a back panel that's only 16cm wide, but the front is 28.5cm across, and the taper spreads lateral internal standing wave frequencies. I certainly wouldn't call it the prettiest speaker around, but plenty of care has gone into creating distinctive styling, with an attractive moulded plinth that accommodates tripod spikes, and a curiously protruberant tweeter housing that remains visible with the grille in place.

Under the grille are twin bass drivers with generous 155mm cones, and a midrange cone, all made up from a complex mixture of plastics with mineral and fibre fill. The visible tweeter is a planar/area-drive affair based on Infinity's proprietary Emit technology. Here the 'voice coil' is printed directly onto the 28mm plastic diaphragm of the drive unit.

One would hardly expect such a large and generously-endowed loudspeaker to be short of bass, and even when mounted well clear of walls the sub-100Hz bass delivery comes out rather stronger than the midband on our in-room, far-field traces. Further up the band the midband looks well ordered but there are mild peaks at 1.3kHz and 6kHz, plus a broad, shallow depression 1.5-3kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

"Was that the disco speaker?" enquired one of the panellists innocently during the denouement at the end of the day's proceedings, his notes praising the scale and drama but criticising a

◉ The Delta 60's tweeter housing remains visible with the grille in place.

perceived lack of refinement, coherence and consistency.

The Delta 60 certainly packs an impressive bottom-end thump, but as is all too common with large and relatively complex models, it lets the side down further up the band. Van Morrison seemed to have caught a cold, according to one panel member, and while there was plenty of midband detail and expression, the top-to-bottom coherence which is a key ingredient in creating musical intimacy seemed weak.

The hands-on work highlighted the Delta's 60's ability to deliver plenty of deep, powerful bass with more than ample headroom, but it wasn't the most authoritative or purposeful in the group, and seemed a touch flabby at times. The top end can be a little over-insistent too, perhaps because the midband proper is a little cramped and under-developed.

## CONCLUSION

I can't honestly say this speaker going down that well with the Great British public, if only because such an assertive visual statement will dominate the typical loungescape. It's not a bad performer by any means, but the bass alignment does seem to



have been chosen with more than half an eye on the home cinema scene, while the musically vital midband comes across as a bit of an afterthought. Ultimately, the whole is rather less than the sum of the parts. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** **£699.95**

✉ Striking and massive floorstander is lots of speaker for the price, but seems a victim of its own complexity.

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

Gamepath Ltd, 25 Heathfields, Stacey Bushes, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK12 6HR  
☎ (01908) 317707

## THE LAB REPORT

The combination of Infinity's two 'Acrylic Polymer Graphite' bass drivers, novel EMIT-R planar treble unit and 4-in midrange driver confirm its 90dB sensitivity specification and should also sustain levels to 108dBa in-room. The Delta 60's performance is very dependent on the listening axis. For example, both the narrowband (axial) and averaged, 3rd-octave responses show plenty of energy right from the bass to 1kHz or so, but a 'trough' thereafter until the planar treble unit really begins to kick in above 5kHz.

Distortion also increases from typically 0.6 per cent through bass and treble to 2-3 per cent through this upper midrange region. Off-axis, distortion does not improve but the

midrange unit's 300Hz-3.5kHz band is reinforced, leading to the more familiar 'three-humped' response that's not uncommon with such large, multi-way designs.

Deep bass to 25Hz in-room should not be a problem with Infinity's low-Q bass-reflex alignment, though the port's broad 18-68Hz range (-3dB points) and 25Hz driver null are slightly de-tuned. The former coincides with a +66 degree phase swing which adds to the burden of its sub-6 Ohm impedance (70Hz-1.5kHz). With a minimum of 3.6 Ohms and an average of 4.8 Ohms, the Delta 60 will prove tough for some amps. **PMi**

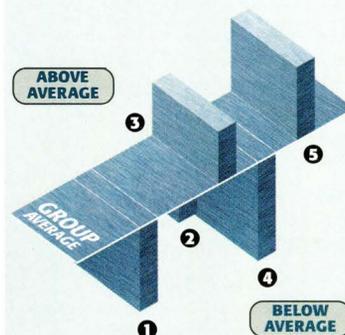
◉ The Delta 60 will present a challenge to flyweight amplifiers.



## HOW IT COMPARES

There will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

1 EASE OF DRIVE	-55%
2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS	-10%
3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	35%
4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	-65%
5 BASS EXTENSION	50%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	MEASURED
Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	90.2dB
Average Impedance	4.82 Ohms
Estimated bass extension (-6dB, in-room)	25Hz

# JBL LX70

JBL is the biggest name in loudspeakers worldwide, and as such carries an enormous catalogue of loudspeaker ranges, several of which are primarily oriented towards the domestic hi-fi listener. The LXs are at least one step up from the entry-level TLX range, and comprise no fewer than nine different models, without counting the home cinema variations.

Such a huge number of models based on a core technology seems like marketing-led madness. Loudspeakers are not shoes or shirt collars, where an exact fit is important, so surely a simple 'small, medium or large' would suffice? When I put this point to another manufacturer who'd just launched a 10-model range, I was

**“The bass is a bit weighty, and inclined to show up male voice ‘chestiness’, but it shows good timing and drive.”**

told that it's all to do with satisfying world markets. Each country has its own loudspeaker peccadilloes and preferred price points, and will pick the models that suit its market best.

This LX70 stands on the sixth rung up the ladder. It costs £549, for which you get a pretty substantial vinyl-finished box, a smart metal-frame grille, separate and quite advanced bass, midrange and treble drive units, a (very) large rear port, an appropriate

crossover network, and a single pair of terminals. It's not bad from a material value-for-money point of view, though it's no steal, as JPW supplies a similar outline spec for only £330. And there's one significant ingredient missing here: a set of spikes and their sockets so that proper floor-coupling can be achieved.

It's a chunky affair, less than a metre tall yet wider than the current fashion, in order to accommodate the 210mm frame of the single bass driver. Both bass and midrange drivers use plastic diaphragms and baskets, measuring 160mm and 95mm in diameter respectively. The latter is housed in its own asymmetric sub-enclosure. The tweeter has a 25mm titanium metal dome with pleated surround.

The far-field, in-room response confirms expectations that the LX70 is best kept well clear of walls, under which circumstances it delivers an impressively even balance through the bass and lower midband. Things become markedly less smooth above 500Hz, however, and while the upper midband presence is quite restrained, the upper treble peaks up rather obviously above 6kHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

The listening tests gave rather disappointing results overall, and while the panel's criticisms were reasonably consistent, their reactions to its failings did vary somewhat. The bass is really rather good. It is a bit on the weighty side, and a little inclined to emphasise male voice 'chestiness', but shows good balance, control, timing and drive, and handles dynamic peaks with aplomb.

○ The LX70 is supplied with three drivers and a large rear port.

ness', but shows good balance, control, timing and drive, and handles dynamic peaks with aplomb.

The problem is that the midrange and treble fall well short of that high standard, the former sounding 'smaller', recessed and boxy, the latter edgy, sizzly and over-exposed. And as seems to be the way with modestly-priced three-way designs, there seems to be less top-to-bottom coherence than that found in simpler configurations.

## CONCLUSION

Very much the proverbial mixed bag, the LX70 does indeed deliver more of the bottom-end goods than any of its competitors in the test group. The trouble is, the midband isn't that great, and the top end has an irritating 'sizzle' which rather detracts from the virtuous bass. Still, it does go satisfyingly loud, with high sensitivity and good 'slam'.

PMe



## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £549.99

■ Bassmeister supreme, but reproduction of other frequencies doesn't quite match up. Fine sensitivity but a scratchy treble.

### ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Gamepath Ltd, 25 Heathfields, Stacey Bushes, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK12 6HR  
☎ (01908) 317707

## THE LAB REPORT

This speaker is very sensitive at 90.7dB/1m and so the 210mm bass unit is barely stretched at our 96dBA reference level where bass distortion is typically just 0.5 per cent. Bass alignment is spot-on, with the low-Q port resonance at 40Hz coinciding precisely with the driver null and impedance minimum. This reinforces the bass driver which has a natural roll-off below 82Hz and a -6dB point of 58Hz. The in-room bass extension is computed to be around 33Hz.

Like the Infinity (which looks to have come from the same factory), the LX70 also features a big +65 degree phase swing through the bass with (bigger) 3.5-28 Ohm swings in impedance. A mistermination glitch



shows in phase and impedance traces at 135Hz with some evident 'unevenness' through the upper bass/midrange (250-550Hz). Some amplifier dependence might be expected, as a result.

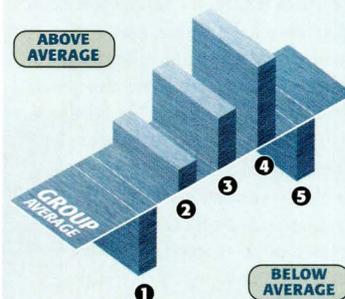
The LX70 has another sting in its tail. At the 3kHz mid/treble crossover point there's a strong peak in the forward response which then sags through the presence band to recover with a powerful slug at 10kHz. Ouch! Indeed, the entire 9kHz-20kHz band is uniformly some 4dB up on the mean midband level and even shows a sharp spike at 19kHz – a possible breakup mode of the treble dome. **PMi**

○ The LX70 displays a big +65 deg phase swing through the bass.

## HOW IT COMPARES

There will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | -40% |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | 15%  |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | 35%  |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | 55%  |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | -35% |



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	MEASURED
Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	90.7dB
Average Impedance	7.0 Ohms
Estimated bass extension (-6dB, in-room)	33Hz

# KELLY KT2

**K**elly Transducers is perhaps best described as a new/old brand on the speaker scene. Now living in retirement, Stan Kelly was one of the founding fathers of British hi-fi, and sold his company name to electronics manufacturer Musical Fidelity a year or so back. MF has since been using its new speaker wing to good effect, creating a strong brand identity by engineering its KT3 model to give an unusually high sensitivity – the better to reproduce ‘microdynamics’, according to the propaganda.

The KT3 certainly went down well with the *Choice* review panel, gaining a Best Buy rating in *HFC* 174, which should bode well for this KT2, since the two models

“ It’s the ‘big picture’ which the Kelly handles so well, and total coherence and believability are what matter. ”

have a great deal in common. Indeed, the only real difference between the two is that this KT2 has a somewhat smaller and less substantial box, finished in vinyl woodprint rather than a real wood veneer, with the net result that the price is a more attractive £700.

Unfortunately, it’s by no means the prettiest vinyl woodprint I’ve seen, and there’s rather a lot of it to look at too, even though the ensemble doesn’t stand particularly tall. Also slightly reprehensible

is that the KT2 arrives fitted with rubber ‘door-stop’ feet, though these may be removed and replaced by 6mm thread spikes.

The key to the high sensitivity is the use of two decent-size (120mm diameter), ultra-light-weight Aerogel diaphragm main drivers, separately port-loaded and mounted d’Appolito-style above and below a horn-loaded tweeter.

The far-field, in-room response shows a dry character when mounted clear of walls, but a well-judged alignment overall. The broad midband is a bit forward, and smooth bar a modest suckout around 500Hz, while there’s a rather abrupt downward ‘step’ of around 4dB at 1.5kHz, and the treble proper is a little uneven.

## SOUND QUALITY

From a normal listening position I can see the top surface of this speaker, and since there’s a large main driver between the top and the tweeter, the latter is several degrees below ear level. Which is probably one reason why the KT2 seems lacking in spaciousness and air. Height is an important and often ignored component in the overall soundstage presentation.

In other respects the KT2 is almost all good news, and certainly delivers the same ‘microdynamic’ communication skills as its bigger brother, registering good scores on the listening tests with unusual unanimity.

The midband dynamics are very involving, though they can sound a bit harsh, despite the presence and top end sounding rather shut in. There are other minor deficiencies

too. The bottom end hangs on in, but does lack some drive and authority (even on cones, which are clearly better than the door-stops supplied), while the top end lacks smoothness, air and delicacy. But it’s the ‘big picture’ which the Kelly handles so well, and total coherence and believability are what really matter, which the Kelly has in spades.

## CONCLUSION

Genuinely high sensitivity even with a current-hungry load would seem to be its own reward, and the Kelly still leads the way. The KT2 represents a largely successful down-grading/-pricing operation from the ‘3’, certainly in performance terms, though it’s a shame that its vinyl woodprint looks so tacky, and that proper spikes aren’t actually supplied along with the door-stops. The cosmetics of the sound have a distinctive character which won’t suit every taste, but few will match its communication skills. **PM**



◉ The KT2 comes fitted with feet which could be replaced with spikes.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £700.00

☐ Chunky floorstander unfortunately has a tacky finish but also boasts whopping sensitivity and a very involving, if characterful, sound.

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

☒ MF House, 15-17 Olympic Trading Estate, Fulton Road, Wembley, Middx, HA9 0TF  
☎ (01903) 750750

## THE LAB REPORT

**M**F’s KT2 is altogether more carefully conceived than the costlier KT3. Sure, there’s a drop of 2dB or so in sensitivity, but at 94.2dB/1m/2.83V, the KT2 is still the ‘liveliest’ speaker in our test and capable of sustaining ear-shattering levels up to 110dBA in the average listening room. Phase angles are moderate but the drive is still reasonably tough with minima of 3.7 Ohms at 225Hz and an average of 6 Ohms.

The dual-port bass-loading technique prompts a broad, low-Q resonance centred on 43Hz and which, ideally, ‘lines up’ alongside the null point of the Aerogel bass/mid drivers. An in-room bass extension of 33Hz, as suggested by MF, looks very practical indeed. A sharp cabinet or



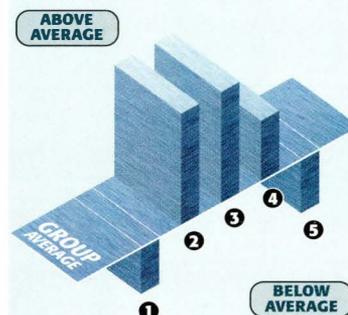
pipe resonance still escapes the KT2 at 640Hz, a high-Q coloration that’s reflected in the speaker’s slightly irregular upper bass/lower midrange response. Nevertheless, this is still tidier than the multiple resonances detected in early samples of the KT3, just as the speaker’s axial response is now stronger and more uniform above the 3kHz crossover region. Off-axis, there’s a noticeable loss in upper-mid/treble energy but on-axis, the KT2 looks remarkably smooth for such a high sensitivity design. Midband distortion, too, is very low at 0.4 per cent (re. 96dBA). **PM**

◉ Kelly KT2: “Altogether more carefully conceived than the KT3”

## HOW IT COMPARES

**T**here will be differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive, so we split our test candidates into two or more price bands. This bargraph data provides an instant visual indication of relative technical abilities within each group.

- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | -30% |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | 75%  |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | 75%  |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | 40%  |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | -35% |



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	MEASURED
Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	94.2dB
Average Impedance	6.0 Ohms
Estimated bass extension (-6dB, in-room)	33Hz

# SPEAKERS

# CONCLUSIONS

## THE BEST IN THE TEST

BB

**1 JMLAB Tantal 515:** This floorstander has a pretty up-front, in-yr face balance, combining lively dynamics with fine coherence.

BB

**2 KELLY KT2:** Owes much to its KT3 big brother, unusually high sensitivity conferring fine dynamic expression alongside a slightly over-cautious balance.

BB

**3 MUSICAL TECHNOLOGY PM15:** A traditional format two-way standmount, modest in sensitivity but offering a fine, laid-back transparency with good dynamic range.

REC

**4 MISSION 774:** Simply one of the most elegant floorstanders ever. Clean lines match clean sound.

REC

**5 NEAT Critique:** Clean, crisp and contemporary, with lovely natural midband voicing. Top end is beautifully judged.

REC

**6 RUARK Epilogue:** The cheeky chappie in the group, full of charm if sometimes a little too forward.

REC

**7 SYSTEM AUDIO 1130:** Super-smooth and super-slim; a very involving experience. Not ideal if you like your bass deep and loud.

REC

**8 TDL CF100:** A classic miniature but one which packs a surprising thump, and therefore demands free-space stand-mounting.



First things first. Which speaker came out as the best for bass? In our measurement summary table at the bottom of this page, on the bottom line, you'll see which model offers the deepest bass. Infinity's Delta 60 is our Captain Nemo at 25Hz, while Jamo's Cornet 195 is Jacques Cousteau at 26Hz. Look a little closer, however, and you'll see that neither of the latter particularly impressed us with their sound overall. By the same token, the third deepest response scored its enclosure a Best Buy flag – the JMLab Tantal 515. It all goes to justify our belief that one must always look at the big picture when it comes to speakers.

Indeed, perhaps it is no less illuminating to examine the links between perceived sound quality and the acoustical configurations of our 14 contenders this month. Five of them were two-way designs with two drive-units (B&W, Ruark, M-Tech, Neat and TDL); four were two-way designs with three-drive-units.

The latter are interesting, because three of them (Mission, System Audio and Kelly Transducers) use a configuration called d'Appolito, in which the mid-bass drivers are mounted above and below the tweeter. The JMLab is a two-and-a-half-way design.

The five remaining designs (Jamo, JPW, Magnat, JBL, Infinity) are full three-way enclosures, and surely it is no surprise that, of the six boxes not warranting any form

SPEAKER COMPARISON TABLE (PART ONE)

MAKE	B&W	INFINITY	JAMO	JBL	JMLAB	JPW	KELLY
MODEL	CDM2SE	DELTA 60	CORNET 195	LX70	TANTAL 515	ML910	KT2
PRICE	£399.95	£699.95	£350.00	£549.99	£495.00	£329.98	£700.00
SOUND	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
GUARANTEE	5 years	5 years	1 year	1 year	3 years	5 years	2 years
SIZE (WXHXD)	22x32x25cm	28.5x115x41cm	20.5x91x31cm	26.5x94x30cm	20x94x26cm	23x104x30cm	23x89x34cm
WEIGHT	6.5kg	26kg	15kg	17kg	13.5kg	17kg	17kg
SENSITIVITY @ 1M/2.83V	87.1dB	90.2dB	89.5dB	90.7dB	91.6dB	90.6dB	94.2dB
AVERAGE IMPEDANCE	12.3 Ohms	4.82 Ohms	10.2 Ohms	70 Ohms	9.5 Ohms	6.63 Ohms	6.0 Ohms
BASS EXTENSION (-6DB)	40Hz	25Hz	26Hz	33Hz	32Hz	43Hz	33Hz

of Recommendation, five of them had adopted a three-way drive-unit line-up.

Don't misunderstand us. We are not making a sweeping statement that three-way speakers don't work. Our point is that a three-way remains unlikely to be the best option below £700. However, in a twist of irony, the three-way design is likely to measure better than a comparable two-way on nearly every parameter, except perhaps 'ease of drive'. A three-way is certainly likely to offer superior bass performance, but music reproduction is a fundamentally holistic affair, and the additional complexity of a three-way design seems to undermine overall musical coherence in subtle ways.

On the other hand, in a three-way design built to a strict budget, maybe the engineering content is spread that little bit more thinly than in a two-way. However, we note consistency between this test's results and those from the group of more upmarket (£800-£1,800) enclosures tested in *HFC* 180. In that test, too, the d'Appolito two-way designs (Magnat, Living Voice, Celestion, JBL) were consistently more successful than the three-ways.

In many ways, this was not the most impressive group of speakers I have had to test — there were interesting models, to be sure, but none bowled me over.

However, on a more positive note, average sensitivities appear to be rising, especially among the floorstanding speakers. That has to be good news, not only because it makes life so much easier for the driving amplifier, but also because it can add an extra element of dynamic realism to the whole musical experience. However, only you can decide whether to side with this or the opposing school of low-efficiency speakers driven by massive amps!

## BEST BUYS & RECOMMENDATIONS



**BEST BUYS:** Our famous Best Buy swing-tag is awarded to hi-fi equipment which offers an excellent standard of performance at an attractive price. Best Buy winners are superb all-round components.



**RECOMMENDED:** Recommended products are first-class audiophile propositions, losing out to Best Buy status only because of a higher price, an operational flaw or a cosmetic quirk.

## HOW TO BUY HI-FI



Our Recommended and Best Buy swing-tags are a great way to begin your hi-fi shopping list. However, at *Hi-Fi Choice* we believe firmly that only individual listeners can decide which hi-fi gear to buy. There is only one golden rule of buying hi-fi: hear it for yourself. And for this you need the services of a good local hi-fi dealer. (See page 102 for the *HFC* dealer guide, to find your nearest hi-fi specialist.) If you are upgrading an existing system, you must hear any

proposed new component with gear you use already. Either take your kit to the dealer, or arrange a home trial which most decent retailers will arrange. Listen for as long as possible (a weekend is ideal) because initial impressions can be misleading. Hi-fi you find exciting and zingy 'on the shelf', may well sound unbearably bright in time. If you find dealers you can trust, rely on their recommendations, even if they're not totally in line with ours. Hi-fi is part science, part art!

## UNDERSTANDING OUR BAR-GRAPH MEASUREMENTS

Behind *Hi-Fi Choice*'s unique bar-graphs are some of the most advanced measurements made anywhere on the planet. They are provided by our Technical Editor, Paul Miller, using both GPIB-controlled measurement hardware and his own, award-winning, PC-based Virtual Instrument software. Each bar-graph value is derived from a weighted statistic of several key measurements and is displayed relative to a notional zero per cent which represents the group average for that particular category.

### 1 EASE OF DRIVE

This statistic is derived from the reactive

and resistive components of the speaker load, indicating how tricky it is for the amplifier to drive.

### 2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS

The sensitivity of the speaker is measured at 1m with a 2.83V input across third-octave bands 17-29, then weighted according to the human loudness contour to indicate how 'loud' one speaker will sound relative to another.

### 3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS

This takes into account the speaker's sensitivity, distortion, the maximum useable amplifier power and the effects of placement in an 'average room' to gauge the maximum practical Sound Pressure Level obtainable from a given pair of loudspeakers.

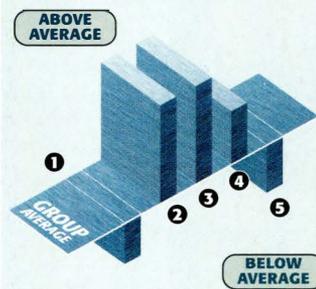
### 4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION

This valuable test momentarily raises the output to 96dBa with dynamic signals through bass, midrange and treble. This allows us to assess distortion under realistic, transient conditions.

### 5 BASS EXTENSION

This provides an indication of a speaker's likely bass extension in an "average" living room, according to the maker's suggestions for positioning.

## THE BAR-GRAPHS



## RIVAL BUYS

### 1 B&W DM603 £499.95

A squat floorstander with decent dynamics and a very well-judged, if rather restrained balance; bass is informative but could go deeper.

### 2 DALI 606 £399.95

An unusual combination of good manners, high sensitivity, power handling and fine bass extension, at a low price.

### 3 DYNAUDIO Aud 50 £577.00

Punches way above its weight in the sound quality arena. Open and transparent with a fine dynamic range, but sensitive to careful system matching.

### HEYBROOK Heylios £269.00

4 Fine bass, showing just how good a compact standmount can be. A bit thin and forward, though, with some mid-band coloration.

### NEAT Mystique 2 From £575.00

5 A smooth and elegant-looking package which delivers a fine overall sound quality. Some might find the top end too insistent.

### PMC TB1S £430.05

6 A classy, laid-back performer that relishes its pro-audio associations, likes going loud and loves the bass guitar.



## SPEAKER COMPARISON TABLE (PART TWO)

MAKE	MAGNAT	MISSION	MUSICAL TECHNOLOGY	NEAT	RUARK	SYSTEM AUDIO	TDL
MODEL	VECTOR 77	774	PM15	CRITIQUE 2	EPILOGUE	1130	CF100 CHILTERN
PRICE	£449.00	£499.90	£475.00	£445.00	£239.00	£499.95	£449.95
SOUND	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
GUARANTEE	5 years	2 years	2 years	5 years	5 years	3 years	Lifetime (orig. purch.)
SIZE (WXHXD)	22x115x29cm	18x95x31cm	20x41x27cm	22x32x24cm	17x29x23cm	13x100x21cm	20x29x23cm
WEIGHT	22kg	13kg	7.5kg	7kg	4kg	n/a (see review)	5.5kg
SENSITIVITY @ 1M/2.83V	89.1dB	90.4dB	87.6dB	86.2dB	87.1dB	88.6dB	85.0dB
AVERAGE IMPEDANCE	6.9 Ohms	6.65 Ohms	6.34 Ohms	15.0 Ohms	9.4 Ohms	7.39 Ohms	11.36 Ohms
BASS EXTENSION (-6DB)	30Hz	40Hz	38Hz	50Hz	47Hz	43Hz	50Hz

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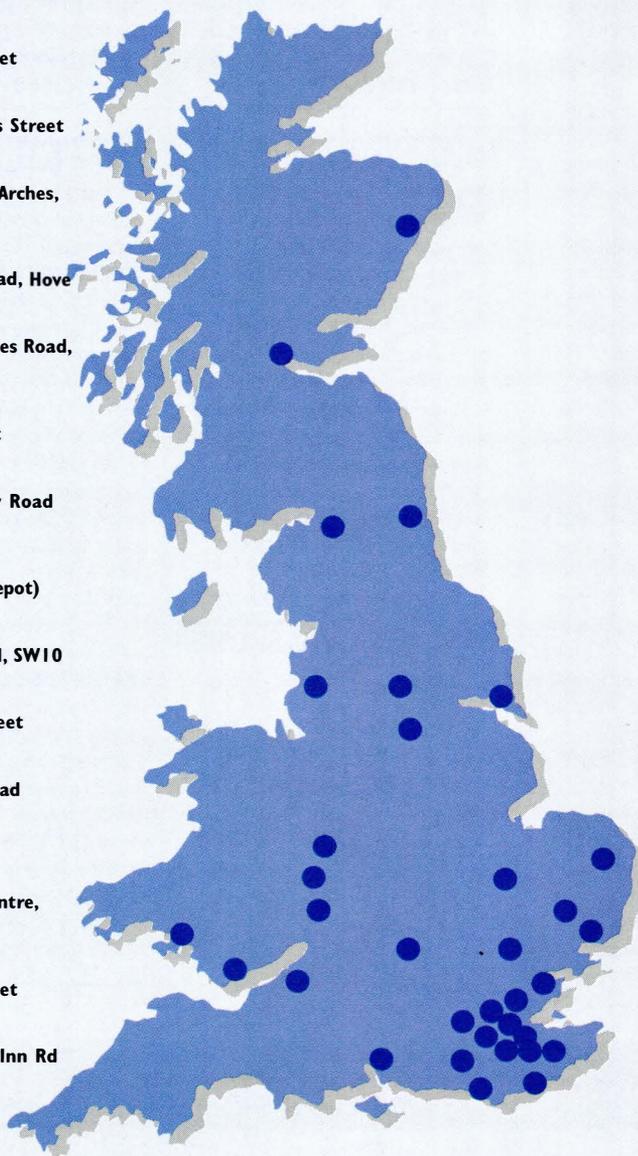
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Thorens TD166/VI	inc RB250	£ 399.95

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Arcam Alpha 8	£ 279.95
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Cyrus FM7	£ 399.95
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Denon TU1500RD	£ 249.95

Kenwood KT2080RDS	£ 89.00
Marantz ST48	£ 119.95
Marantz ST17	£ 599.95
Meridian 504	£ 739.95
Myryad T30	£ 399.95
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Roksan Caspian	£ 694.95
Sony STSE500	£ 99.00

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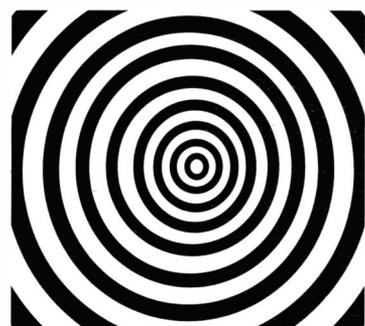
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# Dealer Guide

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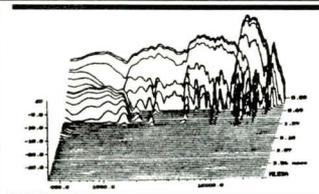
and NOW AT 111 The Parade, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham  
**0121 321 2445**

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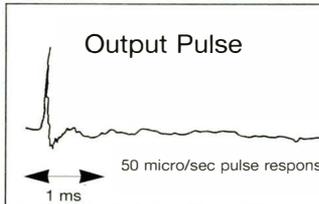
A-Z Ref. H5/37

...mission...short...meridian...micromega...research...apollo...at...audio alchemy...chord company...cyrus...celestion...dpa...epos...exposure...kef reference...kenwood...marantz...michell...mordant...moth...

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Bandor loudspeakers - the specialist product of Englishwoman with 35 years experience in this field - embody numerous features which ensure excellent performance. Cone, voice-coil former and voice coil are formed from aluminium alloy, providing good heat dissipation and low thermal compression 1983 Bandor originated the use of a thin, curvilinear, spun cone, subsequently anodised, yielding a structure both light and rigid. The cone assembly is mounted in the chassis by carefully-terminated suspension components, so that Fo is lower than in most other drivers of comparable size. Voice-coil connections ensure linear motion and reliability, even at large amplitudes.

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Classified





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High End Audio  
Amplifier  
CD Player  
Car Audio  
Audio Recorder  
Audio Innovation

JVC UX-MD9000R  
Tannoy Mercury M1  
Sonus Faber Electa Amtor 11  
Arcam Alpha 10  
Pioneer PD-S06  
JVC KD-MX300R  
Sony MDS-JB920  
Mission X-Space

The following dealers  
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award winning  
products...

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TANNOY MERCURY M1  
SONY MDS JB920

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Amplifier - Arcam Alpha 10  
CD Player - Pioneer PD - S06  
Audio Recorder - Sony MDS - JB920  
Audio Innovation - Mission X-Space

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## Practical Hi-Fi

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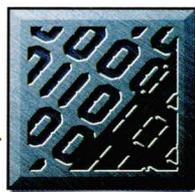
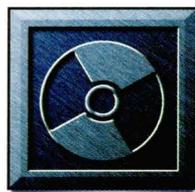
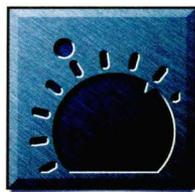
Loud Speaker - Tannoy Mercury M1 • Amplifier - Arcam Alpha 10  
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- ▶ MANCHESTER: 65 Bridge Street - 0161 839-8869
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# READER CLASSIFIED



● Acoustic Energy AE1 speakers, with dedicated lead-filled stand. Suits top-notch partnering equipment £400. Possible exchange for Ruark Talisman 2. Edinburgh (0131) 228 9989.

● Acoustic Research AR18LS speakers £100. Pioneer A400X amp, boxed, £140. 2 x 6m Linn K20 speaker cable £35. (0171) 937 5900.  
● Arcam Delta 290 integrated amp 75W + 75W. MM/MC phono stage. Full remote. As new £275. W London (01895) 236258.

● Audio Innovations 800 Anniversary amp, as new with certificate, just serviced £700 ono. Pioneer CD player, remote, new £75. Oxon (01608) 811908.

● Audiolab 8000S & 8000P amps, £1,450 new, 12 months old, must sell as a pair £750. Kidderminster (01562) 67411.

● Audio Note CD3 CD player, as new, just burnt in. Boxed, etc. £1,400 (saving of £300) (01952) 406759.

● Audio Synthesis Passion passive preamp. All Vishay. 3 inputs plus direct in/tape out. SE. Gold knobs. £350 ono (cost £695). (01922) 477682.

● Cables: 2 x 10m Cable Talk 3 £15. 4 x 4m Naim NACA5, terminated one end. £38 or £20 pair. Essex (01255) 675115.

● Cable Talk 3.1 bi-wire speaker cable 2 x 7.5m lengths. 8 months old. £40. Leeds (01132) 168164.

● Cerwin Vega E315B speakers, 15in woofers, 400W, 80hms each, £525 (£750 RRP). Sony TCK-E600S cass deck, 3 head, Dolby-S, £150 (£300 RRP). Both mint, unmarked, boxed, hardly used. (0181) 405 4599.

● Cyrus dAD7 CD player, £650. Cyrus III amp £350. Denon TU-260L tuner, £80. All mint, boxed. Tom, London (0171) 359 8020 (eves). 0976 608543 (mobile).

● DA Tascam Semi-Pro DAT Recorder 19" rack mount £650. Pioneer A-400X amp £150. Pioneer tuner £40. All mint. Devon (01803) 865406.

## ADVERTISE IN HI-FI CHOICE FOR £5\*

To advertise on this page, write your advert in block capitals and send it to: *Hi-Fi Choice*, Reader Classifieds, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ. Include a cheque for £5\* made payable to Dennis Publishing Ltd. The advert will appear in one issue only and must be no more than 20 words (or five lines) long, including all spaces and your phone number. Reader Classifieds are for the use of private individuals only. All Reader Classified adverts will be printed

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● Dynaudio 1.8 speakers £1,250. Restek Fable amp (chrome) £1,100. Audio Alchemy DDE3 DAC/PS3/ DTI+ £700. James (01344) 741300 (daytime).

● JBL 4312, reissued professional monitors, highly reviewed. 93dB, awesome dynamics, 3 weeks old, as new, bargain when £1,000, sell for £885. Brighton (01273) 749304.

● Kenwood DP-R4060 5 multi-disc player, with remote. £100 ono. London (0171) 917 7745.

● Krell KAV-300i amp, 3 months old £1,950. Rega ELA Mk I speakers £150. Bristol (01454) 857251.

● Linn LP12/Akito/AT-OC5, Cyrus 2/PSX, Sony TCK-777ES top of the range cassette. Ark 101 speakers c/w stands £1,000. Herts (01279) 725757.

● Meridian D600 digital active speaker system, remote (£2,995) £1,350. Lexicon CP3+ plus THX digital surround processor (£3,325) £1,350. (01704) 879171.

● Michell Gyrodec Bronze/Gold, Gyropower-QC RB300/MC10Super & LVX/OM10 £845ono. Bryston 4B-NRB power amp 250+ Watts/channel £745 ono. Mint, boxed. Beds/Bucks (01234) 713199.

● Micromega T-Dac, 4 in/outs inc opt and AES. Boxed, superb sound £200. Exposure 19&18 pre/power, includes Bal 1/C. Bargain at £750. Full demo, reviews/ instructions.

Edinburgh (0131) 538 9073.

● Musical Fidelity A200 amplifier, larger powerful version of the classic A1. £275. Central London (0171) 833 5641.

● Naim Audio CD3.5 CD player £700, Naim Flat Cap power supply £150, under 1 year old. Glos (01452) 539357.

● Naim NAC72 (with phono boards) £450. Naim NAP180 £700. Target 5 shelves (smoked glass) £120. Ex cond. London (0181) 516 3071.

● Naim NACDS CD player (new £3,940) £3,150 ono. NAC52 preamp (new £3,450) £2,800 ono, Supercap power supply (new £2,125) £1,725 ono, NAP135 Mono power amps (new £3,410 £2750 ono. All one year old, mint & boxed. (0118) 958 5463 days, (0118) 946 1421 eves.

● Naim Nait One integrated amp, complete with Cable Talk and QED interconnects £150. James, Lancaster (01524) 847331.

● Parasound C/BD-2000 belt drive CD transport. Boxed, manual, as new, excellent condition (£1,600) £850. London (0171) 370 2404.

● Quad 66 preamp with stylish remote, lovely sound, oodles of inputs, perfect condition, £440 ono. Gosport (01705) 552259.

● Rega ELA MkIII speakers, black, VGC £300. Glos (01594) 844763.

● Rega Planar II, unpacked, list

price £214, offers. Johnson, 77 Bewick Court, Princess Square, Newcastle, Tyne NE1 8EQ.

Rogers Studio 3 loudspeakers in rosewood, £240. REL Strata 2 sub £275. Both VGC. Andy (0802) 434778.

● Tannoy Profile 632 speakers, black, Dec '94, on Profile stands. Mission 75C centre speaker, black, boxed, Sep 97. Roksan Corus black MM cartridge, boxed. Offers (01462) 813573, eves.

● Thorens TD166VI/RB250, HFC Best Buy, cost £400, sell for £195. Heybrook HB3/2 inc stands, black, £225. Rotel RB980BX £275. (01926) 740254.

● Yamaha digital processor (DDP-2) Dolby Digital, 3 months old, boxed, £350 new, sell for £195 for quick sale. (01708) 447048.

## WANTED

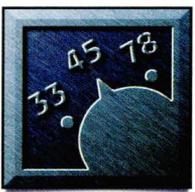
● Audiolab 8000C preamp. (0181) 405 4599.

● Audio Note CD2 compact disc player, must be unmarked, with box etc. (01952) 406759.



## BUYING TIPS

Buying secondhand can be a great way to pick up a bargain. A formerly-expensive second-hand component might well prove a better long-term bet than a brand-new product engineered down to a price. Do some research on which brands and products have a good service back-up, so if something does go wrong, you can get it fixed. Unless you purchase from a secondhand hi-fi dealer, you're unlikely to get any warranty. So it's up to you to ensure the fitness of any gear that you buy. Products such as speakers should be less prone to breakdown than amplifiers, and amps should be more reliable than CD players. But any abused component could be troublesome — have a proper dem, and judge the seller as well as the goods!



54 ALBUMS  
REVIEWED INSIDE!

# Classic

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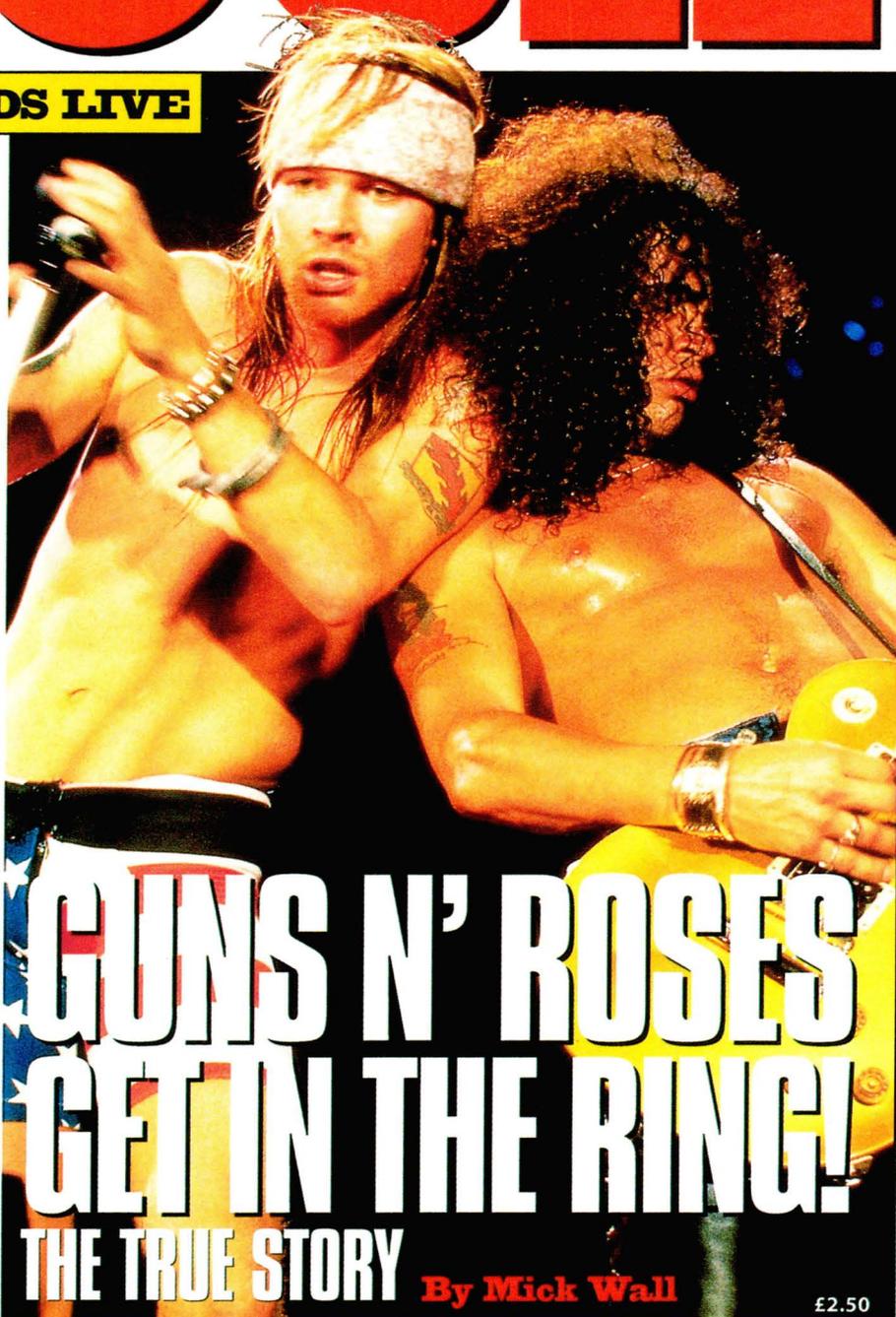
## RADIOHEAD



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Dennis Oneshots

ON SALE IN ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS FROM 1ST OCTOBER 1998

# HOW TO USE THE BUYERS' GUIDE

## Best Buys, Recommendations & Editor's Choices

**B BEST BUYS:** Awarded to group-tested products which display an unbeatable blend of performance and value for money.

**R RECOMMENDED:** Top performers in group tests: perhaps not the cheapest but possibly more sophisticated than Best Buys.

**E EDITOR'S CHOICE:** More expensive components which exhibit outstanding engineering, industrial design and sound quality.

## Our Three Step Guide to Buying Hi-Fi

The Hi-Fi Choice Price Guide and Directory are extremely simple to use, but contain all the information you need to select and buy the perfect hi-fi system. Here's how it works.

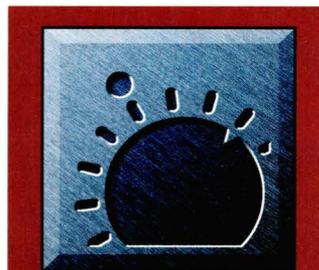
**STEP 1 DISCOVER** which products fall within your budget by using our Price Guide, which starts on this page. The product listing is updated using manufacturers' data every other month, and aims to include every hi-fi component currently available in the UK. (But please fax us on 0171-917 5512 with any omissions!) It is an alphabetical listing divided into different types of hi-fi component, and also into price bands.

**STEP 2 PRODUCTS** whose names are printed in **RED** are those we have reviewed, which you can read about in the Directory (starts after the Price Guide). Here you will learn which items have been singled out for our famous Best Buy, Recommended or Editor's Choice awards, denoting products of exceptional quality and value. The Directory is sorted by product type and listed alphabetically, and the beginning of each section provides essential information about each kind of hi-fi component.

**STEP 3 FIND** your nearest hi-fi store in our Dealer Directory (at the end of the Directory) to book a demonstration of the hi-fi equipment you want to hear. Remember to take your own LPs or CDs!

# DIRECTORY INDEX

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## AMPLIFIERS INTEGRATED

### KEY

Ⓢ - Number of line-level inputs.  
 '20W' - Rated RMS output power per channel into nominal load of 8 Ohms.

### UP TO £250

Akai AM1 100	Ⓢ	50W	230
AMC 3020	Ⓢ	20W	100
AMC 3025A	Ⓢ	30W	140
AMC 3050A	Ⓢ	45W	170
Ariston AX900	Ⓢ	30W	80
Ariston AX910	Ⓢ	30W	100
Cambridge A1 Mk III	Ⓢ	30W	119
Cambridge A3i	Ⓢ	60W	200
Denon PMA-250SE	Ⓢ	30W	160
Denon PMA-350SE	Ⓢ	50W	200
Denon PMA-425R	Ⓢ	45W	230
Denon PMA-100M	Ⓢ	80W	240
Goodmans Delta 900A	Ⓢ	100W	130
H/K HK610	Ⓢ	30W	180
H/K HK620	Ⓢ	40W	250
JVC AX-V4BK	Ⓢ	30W	200
JVC AX-A372BK	Ⓢ	40W	200
JVC AX-R5BK	Ⓢ	45W	200
Kenwood KA-1080	Ⓢ	60W	140
Kenwood KA-3080R	Ⓢ	70W	170
Kenwood KA-3020SE	Ⓢ	50W	200
Marantz PM-47	Ⓢ	40W	150
Marantz PM-57	Ⓢ	50W	200
Marantz SR-47	Ⓢ	40W	200
Marantz PM-66SE	Ⓢ	50W	230
Musical Fidelity E1	Ⓢ	30W	199
NAD 310	Ⓢ	20W	100
NAD 312	Ⓢ	25W	200
Pioneer A-105	Ⓢ	30W	130
Pioneer A-204R	Ⓢ	25W	160
Pioneer A-300R	Ⓢ	50W	200
Pioneer A-305R	Ⓢ	50W	200
Pioneer A-405R	Ⓢ	45W	250
Rega Brio	Ⓢ	30W	229
Rotel RA921	Ⓢ	20W	100
Rotel RA-931	Ⓢ	35W	150
Rotel RA971	Ⓢ	70W	200
Sansui AUX-410R	Ⓢ	50W	150
Sansui AUX-510R	Ⓢ	70W	230
Sherwood AX 4050R	Ⓢ	50W	150
Sherwood AX-7030R	Ⓢ	95W	250
Sony TA-FE210	Ⓢ	45W	130
Sony TA-FE310R	Ⓢ	45W	150
Sony TA-F248E	Ⓢ	40W	200
Sony TA-F448EB	Ⓢ	55W	250
TEAC A-R300	Ⓢ	45W	200
TEAC A-R500	Ⓢ	90W	250
Technics SU-V300	Ⓢ	25W	150
Technics SU-V500	Ⓢ	30W	180
Technics SU-A600 Mk3	Ⓢ	37W	200
Technics SU-V620	Ⓢ	70W	230
Technics SU-A700 Mk3	Ⓢ	45W	250
Yamaha AX-392	Ⓢ	60W	170
Yamaha AX-9	Ⓢ	50W	200
Yamaha AX-492	Ⓢ	85W	220

### £251 TO £500

Alchemist Maxim	Ⓢ	30W	350
AMC CVT 3030A	Ⓢ	30W	400
Arcam Alpha 7	Ⓢ	40W	260
Arcam Alpha 8	Ⓢ	50W	360
Arcam Alpha 9	Ⓢ	70W	500
Audio Analogue Puccini	Ⓢ	40W	450
Audiogram MB1	Ⓢ	40W	493
Aura VA-100 II	Ⓢ	70W	350
CR Dev CR324	Ⓢ	100W	499
Creek 4330	Ⓢ	35W	279
Creek 4340	Ⓢ	35W	279
Creek 4330R	Ⓢ	35W	355
Creek 5250	Ⓢ	50W	450
Cymbal CA1	Ⓢ	40W	499
Denon PMA-725R	Ⓢ	65W	350
EMF Audio Sequel	Ⓢ	50W	450
H/K HK640	Ⓢ	55W	400
Kenwood KA-5090R	Ⓢ	65W	300
Kenwood KA-7090R	Ⓢ	85W	400
Magnum IA120	Ⓢ	65W	265
Magnum IA170	Ⓢ	96W	330
Magnum IA170SE	Ⓢ	90W	430

Marantz PM-68	Ⓢ	90W	300
Marantz PM-66 XI Sig.	Ⓢ	50W	400
Micromega Minium	Ⓢ	40W	350
Mission Cyrus SL	Ⓢ	50W	398
Monrio Asty	Ⓢ	55W	400
Musical Fidelity E11	Ⓢ	60W	300
Musical Fidelity X-A1	Ⓢ	50W	480
Musical Fidelity A2	Ⓢ	25W	500
Myriad T-40	Ⓢ	50W	400
NAD 314	Ⓢ	35W	260
NAD 317	Ⓢ	80W	470
Onkyo A9210	Ⓢ	40W	260
Onkyo A921	Ⓢ	50W	350
Onkyo A922	Ⓢ	70W	400
Orelle SA-100	Ⓢ	50W	499
Pioneer A-400X	Ⓢ	50W	300
Pioneer A-605R	Ⓢ	80W	400
Pioneer A-300R Precision	Ⓢ	35W	400
Rega Luna	Ⓢ	40W	375
Rega Mira	Ⓢ	60W	450
Shearpe 2.5	Ⓢ	35W	489
Sony TA-FA3ES	Ⓢ	70W	400
Sony TA-F3000ES	Ⓢ	35W	500
Talk Electronics Storm 1	Ⓢ	50W	500
TEAC A-H500	Ⓢ	50W	280
Technics SU-A800D Mk2	Ⓢ	55W	300
Technics SU-A900D Mk2	Ⓢ	70W	400
Yamaha AX-592	Ⓢ	100W	280

### £501 TO £700

Alchemist Kraken APD6A	Ⓢ	55W	600
Alchemist Nemesis	Ⓢ	80W	700
Audio Analogue Puccini SE	Ⓢ	50W	595
Audio Note Kanji Line SE	Ⓢ	9W	699
Audio Note First integrated	Ⓢ	40W	699
Audiogram MB2	Ⓢ	60W	599
CR Dev Kalypto	Ⓢ	15W	599
CR Dev CR325	Ⓢ	175W	699
Creek 5250R	Ⓢ	50W	575
Creek 5250SER	Ⓢ	60W	665
Densen Beat B-100 MkII	Ⓢ	60W	650
DPA Renaissance int.	Ⓢ	40W	595
Exposure XX Super	Ⓢ	55W	700
Fase Evoluzione Performance 2.0	Ⓢ	40W	570
Gamma Gemini	Ⓢ	12W	699
H/K HK660	Ⓢ	65W	700
Hi Q Sound MCI	Ⓢ	30W	565
Jolida 202	Ⓢ	40W	695
LFD Integrated 0	Ⓢ	50W	549
Linn Majik (Line)	Ⓢ	33W	650
Lynwood Opal	Ⓢ	80W	685
Magnum IA200	Ⓢ	100W	599
Magnum Class A	Ⓢ	85W	690
Mission Cyrus Illi	Ⓢ	50W	598
Musical Fidelity A220	Ⓢ	50W	700
Myriad MI 120	Ⓢ	60W	600
Naim Nait 3	Ⓢ	30W	575
Orelle SA-100RX	Ⓢ	75W	649
Prime Design A-100	Ⓢ	100W	650
Quad 77 Integrated	Ⓢ	85W	700
Roksan Caspian	Ⓢ	70W	695
Rose Scion	Ⓢ	65W	615
Shearpe Phase 2	Ⓢ	50W	649
Stemfoot SF60	Ⓢ	60W	549
TAG McLaren 60i	Ⓢ	72W	799
Talk Electronics Storm 2	Ⓢ	50W	650
TEAC A-BXR	Ⓢ	50W	700

### £701 TO £1000

Alchemist Forseti Integrated	Ⓢ	100W	1,000
Audio Note Oto Line PP	Ⓢ	12W	950
AVI S2000MI	Ⓢ	100W	999
Copland CSA8	Ⓢ	60W	945
Credo IMP702	Ⓢ	70W	850
Credo IMP703	Ⓢ	70W	1,000
Electrocompaniet ECI-2	Ⓢ	50W	995
Exposure XV Super	Ⓢ	55W	800
Fase Evoluzione Performance 1.1	Ⓢ	70W	790
Fase Evoluzione Performance 1.0	Ⓢ	60W	790
Golden Tube Audio SI-50	Ⓢ	50W	1,000
H/K HK680	Ⓢ	85W	1,000
LFD 0 LE Integrated	Ⓢ	60W	799
Linn Majik (Phono)	Ⓢ	33W	800
Magnum Class A SE	Ⓢ	80W	795
Marantz PM-17	Ⓢ	60W	900
Meridian 551	Ⓢ	55W	795
Micromega Tempo 1	Ⓢ	50W	750
Micromega Tempo 2	Ⓢ	75W	950
Naim Nait 3 R	Ⓢ	30W	760
Opera Aida	Ⓢ	60W	795
Pioneer A-07	Ⓢ	80W	999
Primare A20mkl	Ⓢ	40W	799
Rega Elicit	Ⓢ	70W	730
Shearpe Phase 2 Reference	Ⓢ	50W	799
Sonneteer Alabaster	Ⓢ	50W	900
Stemfoot SF100	Ⓢ	100W	849
TAG McLaren 60iRV	Ⓢ	72W	999
TEAC AB-X10	Ⓢ	100W	1,000

### £1001 TO £2000

Art Audio Integra	Ⓢ	30W	1,499
ATC SIA2-150	Ⓢ	150W	1,984
Audio Note Soro Line PP	Ⓢ	20W	1,200
Audio Note Oto Line SE	Ⓢ	12W	1,200



# HI-FI PRICE GUIDE

Audio Note Oto Phono SE	Ⓢ	12W	1,500
Audio Note Sorro Line SE	Ⓢ	18W	1,699
Beam-Echo SA-50	Ⓢ	50W	1,950
Bow Technologies Wazoo	Ⓢ	50W	1,795
Bryston B-60	Ⓢ	60W	1,249
Copland CSA14	Ⓢ	70W	1,199
Copland CSA28	Ⓢ		1,299
Copland CTA401	Ⓢ	25W	1,699
CR Dev Romulus V3	Ⓢ	35W	1,198
CR Dev Remus V3	Ⓢ	60W	1,989
Credo LIM 702	Ⓢ		1,191
Credo LIM 703	Ⓢ		1,249
EAR 834	Ⓢ	40W	1,999
Graaf Venticinque	Ⓢ	20W	1,695
LFD Integrated 1	Ⓢ	65W	1,099
Meracur Intrate	Ⓢ	60W	1,095
Primare A301	Ⓢ	80W	1,699
Rogers E-20a	Ⓢ	20W	1,229
Rogers E-40a	Ⓢ	40W	1,900
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Integrated	Ⓢ	25W	1,299
T+A PA1200	Ⓢ	90W	1,350
T+A R1200R	Ⓢ	90W	1,495
T+A PA1500	Ⓢ	135W	1,650
T+A R1500R	Ⓢ	135W	1,895
Unison Simply Two	Ⓢ	12W	1,100
Unison Simply Four P	Ⓢ	24W	1,600
Unison Pentode 35	Ⓢ	35W	1,650
Unison Simply Four T	Ⓢ	11W	1,650
Woodside ISA230 Line	Ⓢ	30W	1,099
Woodside ISA230 Disc	Ⓢ	30W	1,249
YBA Integré DT	Ⓢ		1,650

## OVER £2000

Adyton Opera	Ⓢ	50W	2,595
Audio Note Meishu Line	Ⓢ	9W	2,750
Audio Note Ongaku	Ⓢ	26W	56,000
Audio Research CA50	Ⓢ		3,990
Cary CAD-300SE1	Ⓢ	11W	3,995
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50	Ⓢ	50W	2,495
EAR V20	Ⓢ	24W	2,495
EAR 859	Ⓢ	13W	2,499
Electrocompaniet ECI-1	Ⓢ	100W	2,195
Gamma Rhythm	Ⓢ	18W	2,499
Gamma Rhythm Ref	Ⓢ	20W	3,499
Gamma Moment	Ⓢ	40W	19,999
Jadis DA30	Ⓢ	30W	3,490
Jadis DA60	Ⓢ	60W	5,750
Krell KAV300i	Ⓢ	150W	2,550
McIntosh MA6400E	Ⓢ	100W	3,999
McIntosh MA6800E	Ⓢ	150W	5,999
Meracur Onesta	Ⓢ	75W	2,595
Musical Fidelity A1001	Ⓢ	200W	2,500
Pioneer A-09	Ⓢ	45W	4,000
Rowland Concentra	Ⓢ	100W	5,500
Tube Tech Unisig Sig. Int.	Ⓢ	30W	2,300
Tube Tech Synergy PPS	Ⓢ	150W	6,900
Unison Simply 845	Ⓢ	24W	3,195
Unison Performance One	Ⓢ	25W	4,500
Unison 845 Absolute	Ⓢ	40W	11,995

## CREAMPS

<b>KEY</b>
Ⓢ (etc) - Number of line-level inputs.
Ph - Phono input fitted as standard
(may be an option on some other models).
<b>UP TO £500</b>

Art Audio Minuet	Ⓢ	Ph	499
Audio Analogue Bellini	Ⓢ	Ph	475
Audio Note The M	Ⓢ	Ph	350
Beam-Echo PP-21	Ⓢ	Ph	499
Bryston BP1	Ⓢ	Ph	438
Carver CT-24	Ⓢ	Ph	499
CR Dev Themis	Ⓢ	Ph	349
Creek P43	Ⓢ	Ph	399
Creek P52	Ⓢ	Ph	499
Crimson CS610C	Ⓢ	Ph	450
EAR 834P	Ⓢ	Ph	349
EAR 834L	Ⓢ	Ph	449
Electrocompaniet ECP-1	Ⓢ	Ph	495
Fase Evoluzione Phondrive 1.0	Ⓢ	Ph	445
Henley HMC50	Ⓢ	Ph	200
Henley HMC100	Ⓢ	Ph	450
Hi Q Sound LCP2	Ⓢ	Ph	149
LFD Mistrall Lonestage	Ⓢ	Ph	449
LFD LSO Lonestage	Ⓢ	Ph	499
Lumley PP70	Ⓢ	Ph	345
Lumley PP1	Ⓢ	Ph	330
Magnum MP120	Ⓢ	Ph	330
Magnum MP660	Ⓢ	Ph	500
Magnum MP330	Ⓢ	Ph	500
Monrio ADN-N	Ⓢ	Ph	295
Monrio Asty L	Ⓢ	Ph	500
Moth 30 Passive	Ⓢ	Ph	149
Moth 30 RIAA	Ⓢ	Ph	249
Moth 30 Active	Ⓢ	Ph	349
Musical Fidelity X1 O-D	Ⓢ	Ph	120
Musical Fidelity X-LP	Ⓢ	Ph	130
Musical Fidelity X-PRE	Ⓢ	Ph	200
Musical Fidelity E20	Ⓢ	Ph	400
NAD 114	Ⓢ	Ph	270
NAD 116	Ⓢ	Ph	430
Naim Prefix	Ⓢ	Ph	350

Naim NAC92	Ⓢ	Ph	470
Parasound P/HP-100	Ⓢ	Ph	130
Parasound P/HP-850	Ⓢ	Ph	400
Rega EOS	Ⓢ	Ph	398
Rega Cursa	Ⓢ	Ph	450
Roksan Artaxerxes 10	Ⓢ	Ph	395
Rose RV-23	Ⓢ	Ph	450
Rotel RC970BX	Ⓢ	Ph	130
Rotel RC971	Ⓢ	Ph	150
Rotel RC972	Ⓢ	Ph	225
Talk Electronics Hurricane 1	Ⓢ	Ph	500
Technics SU-C1000 Mk2	Ⓢ	Ph	300
Trilogy 905	Ⓢ	Ph	375
Trilogy 904	Ⓢ	Ph	375
Trilogy 900	Ⓢ	Ph	499
Unison Simply Phono	Ⓢ	Ph	500

## £501 TO £2000

Adyton Chorus	Ⓢ	Ph	1,995
Alchemist Kraken Pre	Ⓢ	Ph	550
Alchemist Forseti Pre	Ⓢ	Ph	950
Art Audio Headline	Ⓢ	Ph	700
Art Audio VPL	Ⓢ	Ph	741
Art Audio Conductor Phono	Ⓢ	Ph	750
Art Audio VPI	Ⓢ	Ph	952
Art Audio Conductor	Ⓢ	Ph	1,250
Art Audio Conductor Export	Ⓢ	Ph	2,000
Audio Note M1 Line	Ⓢ	Ph	550
Audio Note M1 RIAA	Ⓢ	Ph	550
Audio Note M2 Line	Ⓢ	Ph	999
Audio Note Discovery	Ⓢ	Ph	999
Audio Note M2RIAA	Ⓢ	Ph	1,099
Audio Research LS7	Ⓢ	Ph	1,750
Audio Research LS3	Ⓢ	Ph	1,997
Audio Synthesis Pro Passion	Ⓢ	Ph	595
Audio Synthesis Passion	Ⓢ	Ph	695
Audio Synthesis Passion 85	Ⓢ	Ph	1,295
Audio Synthesis Passion 8M	Ⓢ	Ph	1,695
Aura CA-200	Ⓢ	Ph	700
AVI S2000MP	Ⓢ	Ph	949
AVI S2000MP+P	Ⓢ	Ph	1,199
Beam-Echo SP-21	Ⓢ	Ph	1,116
Bryston 4	Ⓢ	Ph	642
Bryston BP5	Ⓢ	Ph	889
Bryston BP20	Ⓢ	Ph	1,126
Bryston BP-25	Ⓢ	Ph	1,326
Cary SLP-50	Ⓢ	Ph	995
Cary SLP-74	Ⓢ	Ph	1,795
Cary PH-301	Ⓢ	Ph	1,795
Chord CPA 1800	Ⓢ	Ph	1,774
Concordant Exhilarant	Ⓢ	Ph	900
Concordant Exquisite	Ⓢ	Ph	1,950
Conrad-Johnson PV-10AL	Ⓢ	Ph	995
Conrad-Johnson PV-10A	Ⓢ	Ph	1,295
Conrad-Johnson PV-12AL	Ⓢ	Ph	1,990
Conrad-Johnson EF-1	Ⓢ	Ph	1,990
Conrad-Johnson PF-2	Ⓢ	Ph	1,990
Copland CSA303	Ⓢ	Ph	1,199
Copland CTA301 MkII	Ⓢ	Ph	1,399
CR Dev Carmenta	Ⓢ	Ph	659
CR Dev Argento	Ⓢ	Ph	699
Credo CMP004	Ⓢ	Ph	1,246
Credo CMP005	Ⓢ	Ph	1,876
Densen DM-20	Ⓢ	Ph	1,200
DNM 3 Start	Ⓢ	Ph	1,000
DNM 3A Start	Ⓢ	Ph	1,650
DPA Enlightenment pre	Ⓢ	Ph	795
DPA DSP500S	Ⓢ	Ph	2,000
Dynavector L200	Ⓢ	Ph	1,195
Dynavector P100	Ⓢ	Ph	1,495
Dynavector L100	Ⓢ	Ph	1,995
Earmax Pre	Ⓢ	Ph	1,895
ECA Vista S	Ⓢ	Ph	760
ECA Vista HD	Ⓢ	Ph	880
ECA Prisma	Ⓢ	Ph	880
Electrocompaniet EC-4.5	Ⓢ	Ph	1,195
Electrocompaniet EC-4R	Ⓢ	Ph	1,495
Electrocompaniet EC-4.6	Ⓢ	Ph	1,750
Exposure XIX	Ⓢ	Ph	800
Exposure XVII	Ⓢ	Ph	850
Fase Evoluzione Controlsources 2.0	Ⓢ	Ph	625
Fase Evoluzione Controlsources 1.0	Ⓢ	Ph	1,395
Golden Tube Audio SEP-1	Ⓢ	Ph	990
Graaf WFB Two	Ⓢ	Ph	1,195
Graaf WFB One	Ⓢ	Ph	1,725
Henley HMC200	Ⓢ	Ph	750
Heybrook Signature II Pre	Ⓢ	Ph	555
Hi Q Sound MCB2	Ⓢ	Ph	545
Hi Q Sound MCL2	Ⓢ	Ph	645
Jadis DPL2	Ⓢ	Ph	1,790
LFD MC1 Phonestage	Ⓢ	Ph	949
LFD LS1 Lonestage	Ⓢ	Ph	999
LFD MC2 Phonestage	Ⓢ	Ph	1,499
LFD LS2 Lonestage	Ⓢ	Ph	1,599
LFD LSB Lonestage	Ⓢ	Ph	1,999
Linn Wakonda	Ⓢ	Ph	750
Linn Linto	Ⓢ	Ph	850
Linn Kairn	Ⓢ	Ph	1,400
Lumley LV1.5	Ⓢ	Ph	895
Lumley LV1	Ⓢ	Ph	1,150
Lumley PV1.5	Ⓢ	Ph	1,700
Lumley PV1	Ⓢ	Ph	1,700
Matisse Atom	Ⓢ	Ph	1,000
McIntosh C712	Ⓢ	Ph	1,999
Meracur Ingredi	Ⓢ	Ph	925
Meridian 501	Ⓢ	Ph	695

Meridian 562	Ⓢ	Ph	765
Meridian 562V	Ⓢ	Ph	995
Meridian 502	Ⓢ	Ph	1,295
Michell Argo	Ⓢ	Ph	730
Michi RHC-10	Ⓢ	Ph	795
Michi RHQ-10	Ⓢ	Ph	1,150
Michi RHA-10	Ⓢ	Ph	1,150
Micromega Tempo P	Ⓢ	Ph	1,250
Mission Cyrus Pre	Ⓢ	Ph	648
Monrio Pluri-L II	Ⓢ	Ph	900
Muse Model 3	Ⓢ	Ph	1,990
Musical Fidelity F25	Ⓢ	Ph	1,500
NAD 118	Ⓢ	Ph	1,000
Naim NAC92R	Ⓢ	Ph	630
Naim NAC72	Ⓢ	Ph	725
Naim NAC102	Ⓢ	Ph	1,050
Quad 77 Pre	Ⓢ	Ph	850
Rega Hal	Ⓢ	Ph	998
Roksan ROK-L2.5	Ⓢ	Ph	1,250
Rose RV-235	Ⓢ	Ph	525
Rotel RC995	Ⓢ	Ph	525
Shearpe Phase 6 Pre	Ⓢ	Ph	899
Shearpe Phase 1 Pre Ref	Ⓢ	Ph	1,399
Siemel MC20	Ⓢ	Ph	650
Siemel MM20	Ⓢ	Ph	650
Siemel TU10	Ⓢ	Ph	1,599
Siemel TR20	Ⓢ	Ph	1,599
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Pre 1P	Ⓢ	Ph	899
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	Ⓢ	Ph	1,999
Sonographe SC26	Ⓢ	Ph	995
Sumo Athena II Line	Ⓢ	Ph	767
Sumo Athena IIB/II LS	Ⓢ	Ph	987
Sumo Athena III	Ⓢ	Ph	987
Sumo Artemis uP	Ⓢ	Ph	1,595
T+A P1200R	Ⓢ	Ph	890
TAG McLaren PA10	Ⓢ	Ph	849
TAG McLaren PA20R	Ⓢ	Ph	1,499
TAG McLaren PPA20	Ⓢ	Ph	1,499
Talk Electronics Hurricane 2	Ⓢ	Ph	650
Talk Electronics Hurricane 3	Ⓢ	Ph	900
Talk Electronics Hurricane 4	Ⓢ	Ph	1,550
Talk Electronics Hurricane 5	Ⓢ	Ph	1,900
Technics SU-C2000	Ⓢ	Ph	700
Tesseract TAADA	Ⓢ	Ph	1,500
Tesseract TALA	Ⓢ	Ph	1,500
Tesseract TAHA	Ⓢ	Ph	1,800
Thorens TTP-2000F	Ⓢ	Ph	699
Trilogy 901	Ⓢ	Ph	750
Trilogy 906	Ⓢ	Ph	995
Trilogy 902	Ⓢ	Ph	1,595
Tron Retro	Ⓢ	Ph	1,000
Tron Nucleus Phono	Ⓢ	Ph	2,000
Tron Nucleus	Ⓢ	Ph	2,000
Tube Tech Seer Line	Ⓢ	Ph	935
Tube Tech Mac Phono	Ⓢ	Ph	1,150
Tube Tech Prophet	Ⓢ	Ph	1,970
Unison Feather One	Ⓢ	Ph	795
Unison Mystery Two	Ⓢ	Ph	1,750
Unison Mystery One	Ⓢ	Ph	1,750
Unison VPP One	Ⓢ	Ph	1,995
Van Den Hul Pre-amp	Ⓢ	Ph	1,700
Wilson Benesch Stage One	Ⓢ	Ph	995
Woodside SC27 Line	Ⓢ	Ph	949
Woodside SC26 Line	Ⓢ	Ph	1,557
XTC PRE-1	Ⓢ	Ph	1,250
Yamaha CX-2	Ⓢ	Ph	650
YBA 3	Ⓢ	Ph	1,199
YBA Integré	Ⓢ	Ph	1,199
YBA 2	Ⓢ	Ph	1,999

## OVER £2000

Adyton Temper	Ⓢ	Ph	2,495
Adyton Modus	Ⓢ	Ph	2,695
Alchemist The Alchemist pre	Ⓢ	Ph	4,995
ATC SCA2	Ⓢ	Ph	2,499
Audio Note M3Line	Ⓢ	Ph	2,650
Audio Research LS15	Ⓢ	Ph	3,399
Audio Research LS22	Ⓢ	Ph	4,391
Audio Research LS5 MkIII	Ⓢ	Ph	6,435
Audio Research REF 1	Ⓢ	Ph	9,900
Boulder L3AE	Ⓢ	Ph	2,100
Boulder L5AE	Ⓢ	Ph	3,400
Boulder L5M	Ⓢ	Ph	3,800
Boulder 2010	Ⓢ	Ph	19,995
Cary SLP-98L	Ⓢ	Ph	2,595
Chord CPA 2200	Ⓢ	Ph	2,355
Chord CPA 2800	Ⓢ	Ph	3,246
Chord CPA 3200	Ⓢ	Ph	3,320
Chord CPA 4000	Ⓢ	Ph	6,210
Conrad-Johnson PF-R	Ⓢ	Ph	2,490
Conrad-Johnson PV-12A	Ⓢ	Ph	2,590
Conrad-Johnson Premier 15	Ⓢ	Ph	3,995
Conrad-Johnson Premier 14	Ⓢ	Ph	4,495
Conrad-Johnson Art	Ⓢ	Ph	14,995
CAT SL1 Sig. Mk3	Ⓢ	Ph	6,500
CR Dev Kastor	Ⓢ	Ph	2,995
Credo LPR 001	Ⓢ	Ph	2,815
DNM 3C Primus	Ⓢ	Ph	2,550
DNM 3C Twin	Ⓢ	Ph	3,800
DNM 3C Six	Ⓢ	Ph	5,050
EAR 802MC	Ⓢ	Ph	2,599
EAR G88	Ⓢ	Ph	9,999
EAR P52	Ⓢ	Ph	15,999
Gamma Era Ref	Ⓢ	Ph	7,999
Graaf GM1			



## HI-FI HELP

Let our experts help with your hi-fi problems. Send your query to 'Help' at the usual address.

### POWER AMPS (CONTINUED)

Chord SPM 600	130W	1,720
Conrad-Johnson MV-55	50W	1,995
Copland CTA501	30W	1,750
CR Dev Amphion	12W	1,949
Credo PMP 804		1,876
Creek AS25E	80W	599
Crimson CS630C	100W	800
Densen DM-30	100W	1,200
DNM PA Start	45W	1,000
DNM PA1 Start	45W	1,650
DPA Enlightenment pwr	100W	995
Earmax Power	25W	1,895
ECA Lectern S	50W	880
ECA Lectern HD	50W	1,480
Electrocompaniet AW60B	60W	1,095
Exposure XVIII Super	70W	850
Fase Evoluzione Powersource 2.0	65W	860
Fase Evoluzione Powersource 1.0	100W	1,670
Golden Tube Audio SE-40	40W	1,100
Golden Tube Audio SE-300B MkII	8W	1,490
Golden Tube Audio SE-100	100W	1,995
Graaf Venticinque P	25W	1,395
Heybrook Signature II Pwr	120W	1,045
Hi Q Sound MCM	70W	715
Jadis DA5	40W	1,997
Lexicon 212	120W	1,850
LFD PA1 Powerstage	60W	999
LFD PA2 Powerstage	75W	1,599
LFD PA2M Powerstage	90W	1,999
Linn LK100	50W	650
Linn LK240	120W	750
Linn AV5105	100W	1,200
Lynwood Ruby	120W	985
Magnum MF330	150W	685
Magnum MF660	125W	825
Magnum A500SE	200W	1,485
Magnum A505E	200W	1,595
McIntosh MC7100	100W	1,999
Meracus Gere	60W	1,095
Meridian 555	60W	750
Meridian 556	100W	895
Meridian 557	200W	1,400
Meridian 505	160W	1,590
Michell Alecto Stereo	50W	1,150
Michell Alecto Mono	100W	1,989
Michi RHB-05	100W	1,100
Michi RHB-10	200W	2,000
Micromega Amp	100W	1,250
Monrio Asty P	100W	950
Monrio Cento	135W	1,495
Monrio HP-1	135W	1,750
Moth 60 Stereo	60W	599
Moth 30 Mono/100	100W	879
Muse Model 100	100W	1,490
Musical Fidelity X-A200	200W	1,000
NAD 218THX	200W	850
Naim NAP140	45W	750
Naim NAP180	60W	1,060
Naim NAP135	75W	1,655
Naim NAP250	70W	1,655
Papworth TVA50	50W	1,425
Parasound HCA-1000A	125W	600
Parasound HCA-1500A	205W	1,000
Prime Design P-150	150W	650
Quad 77 Power	85W	600
Quad 707	140W	800
Rega EXS	70W	598
Rega Exon	125W	1,196
Roksan Caspian	70W	595
Roksan ROK-S1.5	100W	1,495
Rose RP-190 (Dual Mode)	75W	550
Shearpe Phase 3	50W	619
Shearpe Phase 3 Reference	50W	729
Shearpe Phase 5 Mono	100W	1,500
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Amp 1	40W	1,299
Sonographe SA250	125W	1,195
Sonographe SA400	220W	1,695
Sumo Polaris III	164W	950
Sumo Model Five	60W	1,975
Sumo Andromeda III	240W	1,975
T+A A1200	110W	845
T+A A1500	140W	1,495
TAG McLaren 60P	60W	849
TAG McLaren 100P	100W	1,099
TAG McLaren monoblock 125M	145W	1,199
Talk Electronics Tornado 2	65W	600
Talk Electronics Tornado 3	100W	750
Talk Electronics Tornado 4	110W	1,100
Technics SE-A2000	100W	1,100
Thorens TTA-2000	30W	599

Trilogy 948	50W	1,895
Trilogy 948T	22W	1,895
Tube Tech Synrx	45W	1,150
Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Pwr	30W	1,900
Unison Power 35	35W	1,500
Woodside SA240	40W	1,199
Woodside MA100	100W	1,733
Woodside STA50	50W	1,880
XTC POW-2	150W	1,450
Yamaha MX-2	150W	750
YBA 3 stereo		1,299

### OVER £2000

Aodyton Cordis 1.6	120W	3,495
Aodyton Cordis 3B	280W	12,995
Alchemist The Alchemist pwr	220W	3,995
Alchemist The Alchemist mono	55W	8,995
Art Audio Tempo	30W	2,499
Art Audio Quintet SE	-W	2,500
Art Audio Maestro	100W	3,524
ATC SPA2-200PRO	200W	2,056
ATC SPA2-150	200W	2,500
Audio Note P3	9W	2,150
Audio Note Quest	9W	2,750
Audio Note Yubi	18W	3,850
Audio Note Conquest	18W	4,450
Audio Note Tomei	30W	8,500
Audio Note Neiro	7W	11,360
Audio Note Ankoru	14,500	
Audio Research D130	130W	2,299
Audio Research VT60	35W	2,395
Audio Research D300	300W	4,678
Audio Research VT100	100W	4,995
Audio Research D400 MkII	400W	6,850
Audio Research VT130 SE	130W	8,500
Audio Research VT150 SE	150W	17,000
Audio Synthesis Desire Decade	200W	2,495
Beam-Echo DL7-35	30W	3,525
Border Patrol 300B SE	10W	3,495
Boulder 102AE	100W	2,800
Boulder 102M	100W	3,100
Boulder 500AE	150W	4,995
Boulder 500M	150W	5,500
Boulder 2060	600W	19,000
Boulder 2050	999W	35,000
Bryston THX8B	150W	2,385
Cary CAD-572SE	20W	2,495
Cary CAD-300SE	12W	3,995
Cary 300SE Sig	12W	4,795
Cary CAD-805	50W	8,995
Chord SPM 800	160W	2,265
Chord SPM 1000B	200W	2,785
Chord SPM 1200B	250W	3,525
Chord SPM 1200C	315W	3,915
Chord SPM 1600	200W	4,718
Chord SPM 1400B mono	380W	7,830
Chord SPM 5000	415W	13,544
Conrad-Johnson MF-2300A	250W	2,990
Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A	70W	3,500
Conrad-Johnson Premier 12	140W	6,900
Conrad-Johnson Premier 8XS	150W	17,000
Conrad-Johnson Premier 8A	275W	17,000
CAT JLL	100W	18,000
Copland CTA505	67W	2,099
CR Dev Artemis	35W	4,995
Credo LPO 804		2,456
Credo PMP 155		2,676
Credo LPO 455		4,975
Credo LPO 155		6,983
DNM PA3	50W	2,500
DNM PA3S	23W	3,750
DPA DAP500S	25W	3,000
Dynavector HX75	75W	2,195
Dynavector HX1.2	130W	3,995
EAR 861	32W	3,299
EAR 509 Mk II	100W	3,699
EAR 519	100W	4,699
EAR 549	200W	6,499
Electrocompaniet AW100DMB	100W	2,095
Electrocompaniet AW120DMB	120W	2,695
Electrocompaniet AW250DMB	250W	3,995
Electrocompaniet AW180MB	180W	4,595
Exposure IV	80W	2,199
Exposure XVI	125W	4,000
Gamma Aeon	20W	4,999
Gamma Space Ref	18W	7,999
Gamma Aeon Ref	70W	49,999
Graaf 5050	50W	2,100
Graaf GM20	60W	2,750
Graaf GM100	100W	4,250
Graaf GM200	200W	7,500
Jadis DA8	80W	3,333
Jadis DA7	100W	5,290
Jadis JA30	30W	9,980
Jadis JA300B	10W	9,000
Jadis JA80	60W	9,912
Jadis JA200	160W	15,518
Jadis JA500	400W	21,500
Krell KAV500/2	100W	3,485
Krell FPB200	200W	6,490
Krell FPB300	300W	9,500
Krell FPB600	600W	12,900
Krell KAS2	200W	20,000
Lexicon 225	250W	2,500
Lexicon 501	500W	5,000
Linn Klout	80W	2,400

Lumley M125	120W	3,750
Lumley M250	250W	7,500
Magnum Class A mono	180W	2,450
Magnum A200SE	275W	3,750
Mark Levinson 331	100W	4,495
Mark Levinson 332	200W	6,495
Mark Levinson 333	300W	8,495
Mark Levinson 33H	150W	19,395
Matisse Ref Monoblocks	180W	8,000
McIntosh MC150	150W	3,499
McIntosh MC300	300W	3,999
McIntosh MC500	500W	8,999
McIntosh MC1000	999W	14,999
Meracus Tentare	75W	2,245
Meracus Cantare	-W	8,995
Muse Model 160 Ser. II	160W	2,290
Muse Model 150	125W	2,690
Muse Model 175 Ser. II	175W	3,490
Muse Model 300 Ser. II	300W	3,990
Musical Fidelity F16	200W	2,500
Musical Fidelity F19	300W	4,000
Papworth M100	100W	2,645
Papworth M200	200W	3,825
Roksan ROK-M1.5	160W	2,250
Rowland Model 2	75W	4,999
Rowland Model 6	150W	10,999
Rowland Model 8T	250W	12,499
Rowland Model 9T	350W	27,999
Shearpe Phase 1 Pwr Ref	100W	2,199
Siemel TA20	2,350	
Sonic Frontiers Power 1	55W	2,499
Sonic Frontiers Power 2	110W	4,999
Sonic Frontiers Power 3	220W	8,599
Sumo Model Ten/M	240W	4,200
Sunfire Sunfire	300W	2,170
T+A A3000	190W	3,000
Talk Electronics Tornado 5	200W	2,100
Tesseract TAMP-60	60W	7,350
Trilogy 958T	45W	3,395
Trilogy 958	100W	3,395
Tube Tech Genesis Sig.	100W	4,700
Tube Tech Synergy DMA	150W	6,400
Unison Smart 845	24W	3,500
Unison Smart 300B	24W	4,250
Unison Palladio	32W	11,995
Van Den Hul Power amp	65W	2,500
XTC POW-1	200W	2,250
YBA 2 stereo		2,200
YBA 1 HC stereo		4,999

Cambridge Silver Spirit 60	100.00
Cardas Audio 300B-Microtwin	115.00
Cardas Audio Quadlink-Five	200.00
Cardas Audio Cardas Cross	360.00
Cardas Audio Hexlink-Five C	530.00
Cardas Audio Hexlink Golden-5 C	600.00
Cardas Audio Golden Cross	700.00
ChordCo Chrysalis	33.00
ChordCo Cobra 2	50.00
ChordCo Siren	65.00
ChordCo Chameleon	85.00
ChordCo Solid	99.00
ChordCo Chorus	185.00
Connections UK Ultra	28.00
Connections UK Midas	39.00
Connections UK HD	46.00
DBF Acoustics Black Velvet	30.00
DBF Acoustics Black Velvet SE	40.00
DBF Acoustics Azure SE	75.00
DNM-Reson TCC75	34.00
DPA Slink	41.00
DPA White Slink	75.00
DPA Black Slink	245.00
Expressive Tech IC-1	700.00
Gamma Wow Balance	799.00
Goertz M1 Interconnect	145.00
GT Audio Intercon	130.00
Henley HSP10	20.00
Henley HSP50	35.00
Henley HSP100	65.00
Henley HSP200	95.00
Heybrook Black Flash	49.95
Insert Audio Focus 1.2	21.50
Insert Audio IC100 Mk II	46.95
Insert Audio Studio 3.4	160.00
Ixos 104	20.00
Ixos 1003	30.00
Ixos Gamma 1002	39.95
Ixos 103	45.00
Ixos 102	60.00
Ixos 101	100.00
Ixos 100XO3	150.00
Kimber PBJ	68.00
Kimber KC1	96.00
Kimber Hero	110.00
Kimber Silver Streak	180.00
Kimber KCAG	390.00
Kimber KCTG	720.00
Kronos Konnekt 3	49.00
Kronos Konnekt 2	99.00
Kronos Konnekt 1	199.00
LAT International IC-50	37.00
LAT International IC-80	60.00
LAT International IC-100-D	89.00
LAT International IC-200 Mk II	151.00
Lieder Chanson	340.00
Lieder Lek	420.00
Lieder Het Lied	420.00
Lieder Song	580.00
Lieder Maas	620.00
Lieder Rijn	1,000.00
Lieder Waal	1,400.00
Lumley Silver 12/2	115.00
Lumley Silver 14/4	175.00
Moth Leyline Black	100.00
Moth Leyline Grey	200.00
Nordost Magic	35.00
Nordost Black Knight	60.00
Nordost Blue Angel	98.00
Nordost Blue Heaven I/C	144.95
Nordost Red Dawn	285.00
Nordost SPM	825.00
Ortofon 7N interconnect	250.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 35	40.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 50	50.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 52	70.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 53	90.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 100	100.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 102	130.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 103	160.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 104	190.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 200	220.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 202	290.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 203	360.00
Precious Metals Silver Signal 204	430.00
Prowire Silver	60.00
PAD Elementa	145.00
QED Qnect 2	30.00
QED Qnect 4	60.00
Roksan ROK-Intercon	75.00
Shinpy Red Devil	80.00
Shinpy Red Star 2	120.00
Shinpy Black Star 2	240.00
Shinpy Pulsar 2	495.00
Shinpy Quasar 2	850.00
Siltech MC2-12	308.00
Siltech MC4-24S	400.00
Siltech FTM-3S	730.00
Silver Sounds SS2	99.00
Silver Sounds SS1	199.00
Silver Tone Ex-Static	35.00
Silver Tone Sci-Fi	95.00
SME 52LB-4	46.18
SME 53LB-4	52.66
SME 4900A	76.83
SME 5900A	102.57
Sonic Link Red	25.00



### CABLES Analogue Interconnects

#### KEY

- ⊖ - Stranded construction.
- ⊕ - Solid-core construction.

Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

Apertura Model B	260.00
Apertura Model A	469.00
Art Yam Church 5000	515.00
Audio Note AN-A	18.00
Audio Note AN-C	35.00
Audio Note AN-S	99.00
Audio Note AN-V	179.00
Audio Note AN-Vx	450.00
Audioquest Jade	30.00
Audioquest Turquoise 2	40.00
Audioquest Topaz 2	59.95
Audioquest Ruby 2	80.00
Audioquest Quartz	125.00
Audioquest Opal	200.00
Audioquest Emerald	260.00
Audioquest Lapis	399.00
Audioquest Diamond	549.00
Cable Talk Improved 2/CD	26

Sonic Link Silver Pink	35.00
Sonic Link Black	49.00
Sonic Link White	65.00
Sonic Link Brown	70.00
Sonic Link Violet	85.00
Sonic Link Maroon	125.00
Sonic Link Blue Nickel	150.00
Sonic Link Vermillion	195.00
Sonic Link Red Earth	300.00
Sonic Link Black earth	450.00
Sonic Link Blue earth	695.00
Sonic Link Black Rhodium	995.00
<b>Straightwire Chorus</b>	<b>40.00</b>
Supra DAC-X	60.00
Supra EFF-ISL	80.00
Supra EFF-XLR	90.00
Transparent Cable Musichord Int	48.00
Transparent Cable The Link	92.00
<b>Transparent Cable Music Link</b>	<b>119.00</b>
Trichord Pulsewire 75	169.00
Vampire Wire CC	24.00
Vampire Wire CCC/II	58.00
Vampire Wire SC/II	98.00
Vampire Wire SC/IV	144.00
Vampire Wire A/2	259.00
Vampire Wire SL	412.00
<b>Van Den Hul Storm</b>	<b>25.00</b>
<b>Van Den Hul Source HB</b>	<b>50.00</b>
<b>Van Den Hul D102 III</b>	<b>69.99</b>
Van Den Hul Thunderline HB	130.00
Van Den Hul First	210.00
Van Den Hul Second	240.00
Van Den Hul MC Gold	400.00
Van Den Hul MC Silver IT	1,240.00
Van Den Hul MC Silver IT Bal	1,560.00
Wireworld Orbit	30.00
Wireworld Solstice II	40.00
XLO Type 150	50.00
XLO Type 0.1	180.00

Sonic Link Green	60.00
Supra EFF-ID	45.00
Supra DAC-XLR	45.00
Transparent Cable PDL	199.00
Trichord Pulsewire 75D	75.00
Trichord Pulsewire 110D	145.00
Vampire Wire DJ/1	150.00
Van Den Hul Source HB	30.00
<b>Van Den Hul Videolink</b>	<b>60.00</b>
Van Den Hul AES-EBU 110	65.00
<b>Van Den Hul First</b>	<b>125.00</b>
Van Den Hul Second	130.00

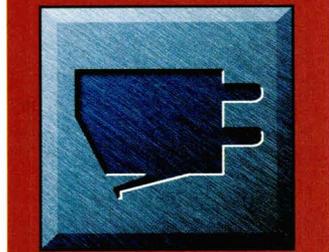


## Speaker Cables

**KEY**  
 ● - Stranded construction.  
 ○ - Solid-core construction.  
 Price per mono metre, unterminated.

Acoustic Energy AESC-C3	11.95
Apertura Silver	82.50
Art Yam Church M2000	470.00
Art Yam Church 5000	795.00
<b>Audio Note AN-D</b>	<b>4.50</b>
<b>Audio Note AN-B</b>	<b>16.50</b>
<b>Audio Note AN-L</b>	<b>29.50</b>
<b>Audio Note AN-SP</b>	<b>150.00</b>
Audio Note AN-SPx	450.00
Audioquest Type 2	3.50
Audioquest F-18	3.60
Audioquest Type 6+	9.00
Audioquest Indigo +	15.00
<b>Audioquest Crystal +</b>	<b>25.00</b>
Audioquest Forest	75.00
Audioquest Argent +	125.00
Audioquest Clear 3	200.00
<b>Bandridge LC7409</b>	<b>4.00</b>
Bandridge LC4110	28.00
Bandridge LC3410	40.00
Bandridge LC3210	75.00
Bandridge LC3219	75.00
Bandridge LC3220	90.00
Bandridge LC3310	95.00
Bandridge LC3240	125.00
Cable Talk Theatre 2	1.50
Cable Talk The Flat One	2.00
<b>Cable Talk Talk 3.1</b>	<b>2.25</b>
Cable Talk Overture 2.1	3.25
<b>Cable Talk Talk 4.1</b>	<b>4.25</b>
Cable Talk Talk 3.1 Biwire	4.50
Cable Talk Concert 2.1	7.00
Cable Talk Talk 4.1 Biwire	8.50
Cable Talk Symphony 3	12.50
Cable Talk Concert 2.1 Biwire	14.00
Cardas Audio 300B-Microtwin SC	35.00
Cardas Audio Quadlink-Five SC	59.00
Cardas Audio Cross SC	99.00
Cardas Audio Hexlink-Five SC	109.00
Cardas Audio Hexlink Golden's SC	175.00
Cardas Audio Golden Cross SC	789.00
<b>ChordCo Myth</b>	<b>6.00</b>
ChordCo Legend	15.00
<b>DNM-Reson LSC</b>	<b>6.95</b>
<b>DNM-Reson LSCB</b>	<b>11.95</b>
<b>DPA Black Sixteen</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Electrocompaniet EC-K2	30.00
Gale XL105	1.00
<b>Gale XL189</b>	<b>1.00</b>
<b>Gale XL315</b>	<b>2.00</b>
<b>Gale XL160-2</b>	<b>2.50</b>
<b>Gale XL315-2</b>	<b>3.99</b>
Gamma Wonder Line	99.00
Goertz M1	16.00
<b>Goertz M2</b>	<b>32.00</b>
Goertz Big Boy	64.00
GT Audio Speaker	50.00
Ixos 607	2.00
Ixos 6004	3.00
Ixos 6003	3.00
Ixos 605	3.00
Kimber 4PR	3.90
Kimber 4VS	9.00
<b>Kimber 4TC</b>	<b>19.60</b>
Kimber 8TC	32.70
Kimber 4AG	394.00
Kimber 8AG	656.00
LAT International SS 800	21.00
LAT International BIWIRE	27.00
LAT International SS 1000	42.50
Lieder Pad	340.00

Lieder Bel Canto	450.00
Lieder Spoor	580.00
Lieder Straat	1,000.00
Lieder Weg	1,400.00
Linn K20	4.00
Linn K400	10.00
Linn K600	15.00
Lumley Silver 12/2	35.00
Lumley Silver 14/4	40.00
Mission Duet	1.90
Mission Quartet bi-wire	3.90
<b>Naim NACA 5</b>	<b>5.50</b>
<b>Nordost Octava</b>	<b>3.00</b>
Nordost 4-Flat	12.00
Nordost Blue Heaven Spkr	55.00
Nordost Red Dawn	110.00
Nordost SPM	325.00
<b>Ortofon SPK100</b>	<b>3.00</b>
Ortofon SPK200	5.00
<b>Ortofon SPK300</b>	<b>8.00</b>
Precious Metals Silver L'r 32	7.50
Precious Metals Silver L'r 102	10.00
Precious Metals Silver L'r 34	15.00
Precious Metals Silver L'r 104	20.00
Precious Metals Silver L'r 106	30.00
Precious Metals Silver L'r 108	40.00
Puresonic OFC 7892	1.20
Puresonic OFC 7844	1.65
<b>Puresonic OFC 7855</b>	<b>1.95</b>
<b>Puresonic OFC 7891</b>	<b>2.85</b>
Puresonic OFC 7816	3.75
Puresonic OFC 7832	3.75
Puresonic OFC 7812	6.95
Puresonic OFC 7825	9.50
Puresonic PSOC 7801	18.00
Puresonic PSOC 7802	27.00
Puresonic PSOC 7803	27.00
QED Qudos Micro	1.25
QED Qudos micro 4 core	2.00
QED Qudos 4 core	4.00
QED Qudos Bi-Wire	4.50
QED Qudos Silver	4.95
<b>QED Profile 4x4</b>	<b>9.00</b>
QED Profile Silver 12	15.00
Rega RECA	2.00
Roksan ROK-Speaker	6.00
Shinpy Red Devil	30.00
Shinpy Red Star 2	39.00
Shinpy Black Star 2	62.00
Shinpy Pulsar 2	104.00
Shinpy Quasar 2	208.00
Siltech LS2-45	109.00
Siltech FT-12 Mkl	240.00
Siltech LS4-120	549.00
<b>Silver Sounds 12 Gauge</b>	<b>15.00</b>
Silver Sounds 10 Gauge	35.00
Silver Sounds 8 Gauge	75.00
Silver Tone Silver-Sonic	10.00
Silver Tone Silver-Sonic HC	15.00
Silver Tone Silver-Voice	55.00
Silver Tone Silver-Voice Ultra	85.00
<b>Sonic Link AST50</b>	<b>1.95</b>
Sonic Link AST75	2.75
Sonic Link AST200	5.95
Sonic Link AST200x2	10.00
<b>Sonic Link S300</b>	<b>18.00</b>
Sonic Link S130x2	20.00
Sonic Link S300x2	35.00
Sonic Link S900	50.00
Sonic Link S600x2	70.00
Sonic Link RES.1	90.00
Sonic Link RES.4	330.00
Supra Classic 2.5	2.49
Supra Linc 2.5 Flex	3.49
Supra Classic 4.0	3.95
Supra Ply 2.0	4.95
Supra Linc 4.0 Flex	4.95
Supra Ply 3.4	6.95
Supra Quattro 4x4	8.95
Supra Classic 10	9.95
Tech + Link SPC 79	1.20
<b>Transparent Cable Musichord Spkr</b>	<b>11.00</b>
<b>Transparent Cable The Wave</b>	<b>23.00</b>
Transparent Cable Music Wave Spkr	25.00
Vampire Wire SC-384	11.00
Vampire Wire SC-554	15.00
Vampire Wire ST-I	30.00
Vampire Wire SC-1108	30.00
Vampire Wire ST-II	48.00
Vampire Wire ST-III	73.00
Van Den Hul Skyline HB	3.50
Van Den Hul Snowline	5.00
Van Den Hul Skytrack HB	5.50
<b>Van Den Hul Clearwater</b>	<b>7.00</b>
Van Den Hul Snowtrack	10.00
<b>Van Den Hul CS122 HB</b>	<b>12.00</b>
Van Den Hul Cleartrack	13.00
Van Den Hul D352 HB	20.00
Van Den Hul Teatrack HB	22.00
Van Den Hul SCS12	34.00
<b>Van Den Hul Magnum HB</b>	<b>38.00</b>
<b>Van Den Hul The Wind HB</b>	<b>40.00</b>
<b>Van Den Hul Revolution HB</b>	<b>76.00</b>
Van Den Hul Revelation HB	120.00
Van Den Hul The Third	900.00
<b>XLO Pro 625</b>	<b>4.00</b>
<b>XLO Pro 600</b>	<b>16.60</b>



## CARTRIDGES

**KEY**  
 MM - Moving-magnet type.  
 MC - Moving-coil type.

<b>UP TO £100</b>		
Audio Note IO1	MM	99
Audio Technica AT-91	MM	15
<b>Audio Technica AT-95E</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>20</b>
Audio Technica AT-110E	MM	28
Audio Technica AT450E	MM	70
Audio Technica AT440ML	MM	90
Benz-Micro MC20EII	MM	70
<b>Denon DL110</b>	<b>MC</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Denon DL160</b>	<b>MC</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Denon DL103</b>	<b>MC</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Goldring Elan</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>19</b>
Goldring Elektra	MM	29
Goldring 1006	MM	59
<b>Goldring 1012GX</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Goldring 1022GX</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>99</b>
Grado ZTE+1	MM	27
Grado ZCE+1	MM	37
Grado ZF3E+1	MM	48
Grado Prestige Black	MM	49
Grado Prestige Green	MM	59
Grado Prestige Blue	MM	69
Grado ZF1+	MM	83
Grado Prestige Red	MM	99
N'ham Tracer I	MM	98
Ortofon VMS2	MM	15
Ortofon OM 5E	MM	20
Ortofon OM 10	MM	30
<b>Ortofon 510</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>40</b>
Ortofon OM DJ	MM	50
Ortofon OM 20	MM	70
<b>Ortofon 520</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>70</b>
Ortofon MCI Turbo	MM	75
Ortofon Concorde DJ	MM	80
Ortofon OM 30	MM	90
<b>Ortofon 530</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>100</b>
Pickering TE-15	MM	20
Pickering VE-15	MM	25
Pickering T-E	MM	25
Pickering V15-DJ	MM	28
Pickering TL-E	MM	35
Pickering TL-2E	MM	45
Pickering XV15-625E	MM	50
Pickering XV15-150-DJ	MM	50
Pickering TL-2S	MM	55
Pickering XV15-757S	MM	60
Pickering XV15-625DJ	MM	60
Pickering XV15-1800S	MM	70
Pickering TL3S	MM	80
Pickering XEV-3001E	MM	95
Pickering XL2-3500	MM	100
Pickering TL-4S	MM	100
<b>Rega Bias</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>39</b>
Rega RB78	MM	39
Rega Super Bias	MM	59
<b>Rega Elys</b>	<b>MM</b>	<b>85</b>
Shure M70BX	MM	21
Shure M92E	MM	22
Shure SC53C	MM	29
Shure M447X	MM	35
Shure M44GX	MM	35
Stanton 500AL II	MM	35
Stanton 500EL	MM	44
Stanton 680AL/X	MM	59
Stanton 680EL/X	MM	74
Sumiko Oyster	MM	30
Sumiko Black Pearl	MM	50
Sumiko Pearl	MM	70
Sumiko Blue Point	MM	100
<b>OVER £100</b>		
Audio Note IO2	MM	139
Audio Note Soara	MC	795
Audio Note IO TV	MC	1,095
Audio Note IO Ltd	MC	4,500
Audio Technica AT-OC9	MC	330
Benz-Micro The Glider	MC	650
Benz-Micro M090	MC	700
Benz-Micro L040	MC	700
Benz-Micro H200	MC	700
Benz-Micro Reference	MC	1,100
Benz-Micro Reference Ruby	MC	1,500
Benz-Micro Ruby Open Air	MC	1,600
Clearaudio Aurum-Alpha	MM	135



## CABLES Digital Interconnects

**KEY**  
 ● - Stranded construction.  
 ○ - Solid-core construction.  
 Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

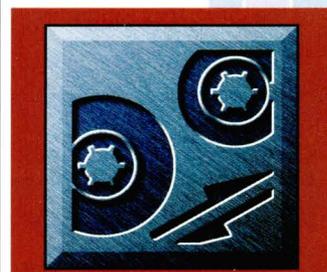
Apertura Model B	139.00
Apertura Model A	255.00
Apogee Digital Wyde Eye	20.00
Apogee Digital Wyde Eye Bal	30.00
Art Yam Church 5000	275.00
Audioquest Digital/video 1	30.00
Audioquest Digital/video 2	60.00
Audioquest Optlink X	90.00
<b>Audioquest Digital PRO</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Audioquest Optlink Pro	149.00
<b>Audioquest Optlink Z</b>	<b>179.00</b>
Cable Talk Digital 2	78.00
Cardas Audio Lightning	190.00
<b>ChordCo Codac</b>	<b>36.00</b>
<b>ChordCo Prodac</b>	<b>50.00</b>
DNM-Reson DIG100	26.00
DPA Opt-Link	20.00
<b>DPA Digi-Link</b>	<b>28.00</b>
Insert Audio Dataline 500	24.95
Insert Audio Optic 2.1	29.95
Insert Audio Dataline 700	39.95
Insert Audio Image 5.1	44.95
<b>Ixos 105</b>	<b>25.00</b>
Ixos 106	30.00
<b>Kimber Opt-Link</b>	<b>50.00</b>
Kimber Illuminati DV-30	70.00
Kimber Illuminati D-60	325.00
Kimber Illuminati DX-50	350.00
Kimber Illuminati Orchid	750.00
LAT International DI-20-D	79.00
<b>Moth Leyline Datalink</b>	<b>140.00</b>
Nordost Moonglo	155.00
Precious Metals Silver Dig 35	20.00
Precious Metals Silver Dig 100	50.00
Precious Metals Silver Dig 200	110.00
Precious Metals Silver Dig 202	145.00
<b>QED DigiFlex</b>	<b>20.00</b>
QED Optiflex	25.00
Roksan ROK-Intercon	45.00
Shinpy Digital	265.00
Siltech HF-6	145.00

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## CARTRIDGES (CONTINUED)

Clearaudio Aurum-Beta	MM	195
Clearaudio Aurum-Beta/S	MM	265
Clearaudio Gamma-S	MC	745
Clearaudio Signature	MC	1,495
Clearaudio Accurate	MC	2,500
Clearaudio Insider	MC	4,900
Denon DL304	MC	200
Dynavector 10X4II	MC	189
Dynavector 25R5	MC	375
Dynavector 17D2	MC	450
Dynavector XX-1L	MC	998
Dynavector XX-1	MC	998
Dynavector Te-Katora	MC	1,698
Goldring Eroica LX	MC	110
Goldring Eroica	MC	110
Goldring 1042	MM	120
Goldring Elite	MC	220
Goldring Excel VX	MC	525
Grado Prestige Silver	MM	119
Grado Prestige Gold	MM	149
Grado Signature Junior	MM	150
Grado Signature BMZ	MM	250
Grado Signature MCZ	MM	375
Grado Signature TLZ	MM	650
Grado Signature XTZ	MM	975
Grado Reference	MM	995
Koetsu Red T	MC	1,550
Koetsu Red K Sig	MC	1,998
Koetsu Urushi	MC	2,297
Koetsu Signature	MC	3,218
Koetsu Gold PR	MC	5,498
Linn K9	MM	125
Linn Klyde	MC	500
Linn Arkiv	MC	1,000
London Decca Maroon	MM	299
London Decca Gold	MM	319
London Decca Maroon Dp	MM	379
London Decca Gold Dp	MM	399
London Decca S Gold	MM	439
London Decca S Gold Dp	MM	519
London Decca Jubilee	MM	999
Lyra Lydian	MC	649
Lyra Clavis Da Capo	MC	995
Lyra Parnassus DCT	MC	1,895
N'ham Tracer II	MM	310
N'ham Tracer III	MM	410
N'ham Tracer IV	MM	660
Ortofon MC15 Super II	MC	140
Ortofon 540	MM	140
Ortofon MC3 Turbo	MC	150
Ortofon MC2SE	MC	200
Ortofon MC2SFL	MC	250
Ortofon MC10 Supreme	MC	300
Ortofon MC20 Supreme	MC	450
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	MC	550
Ortofon MC2000II	MC	800
Ortofon MC Rohmann	MC	1,600
Ortofon MC3000 II	MC	1,200
Ortofon MC7500	MC	2,000
Pickering TL-3003	MM	145
Pickering XLZ-4500	MM	150
Pickering TL-4004	MM	175
Pickering XSV-5000U	MM	200
Pickering XLZ-7500	MM	200
Pickering TLZ-7500-S	MM	200
Reson Mica	MM	185
Reson Recla	MM	250
Reson Aciore	MC	299
Reson Etile	MC	455
Reson Lexe	MC	1,300
Roksan Conus Black	MM	130
Roksan Shiraz	MC	970
Shure V15XMR	MM	295
Stanton 890ALX	MM	120
Sumiko BPS	MC	250
Transfiguration Spirit	MC	1,000
Transfiguration Temper	MC	1,950
Van Den Hul MM-1	MM	250
Van Den Hul MM-2	MM	300
Van Den Hul DDT-II	MC	600
Van Den Hul MC-10	MC	750
Van Den Hul MC-One	MC	900
Van Den Hul MC-ONE Super	MC	1,050
Van Den Hul MC-Two	MC	1,200
Van Den Hul The Frog Low o/p	MC	1,500
Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIISLA	MC	2,000
Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIICLN	MC	2,800
Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIIGLA	MC	2,800

Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIICMN	MC	2,800
Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIICHN	MC	2,900
Van Den Hul Grasshopper IVGLA	MC	3,000
Wilson Benesch Matrix	MC	786
Wilson Benesch Carbon	MC	1,573
Wilson Benesch Analog	MC	1,850



## CASSETTE DECKS

**KEY**  
↔ - Autoreverse - no need to remove and turn around the tape.  
3-H - 3 heads, i.e. separate record and replay heads.

<b>UP TO £200</b>	
Aiwa AD-F460	120
Aiwa AD-S750	200
Akai DXW1100	200
Akai DX1200	200
Ariston WX-510	80
Denon DRM-550	160
Denon DRW-580	200
Denon DRS-640	200
Goodmans Delta 801	130
JVC TD-X372BK	170
JVC TD-R472BK	200
Kenwood KX-W4080	160
Kenwood KX-3080	160
Kenwood KX-W6080	200
Kenwood KX-S080S	200
Marantz SD-455	169
Marantz SD-57	199
Onkyo K 185	200
Pioneer CT-S250	150
Pioneer CT-W205R	160
Pioneer CT-W505R	180
Pioneer CT-S450S	200
Pioneer CT-W606DR	200
Sony TC-KE200	120
Sony TC-WE405	150
Sony TC-KE400S	180
Sony TC-WE505	180
TEAC W-416	100
TEAC V-610	100
TEAC W-780R	170
TEAC R-560	180
TEAC R-H500	200
Technics RS-BX501	170
Technics RS-TR373	180
Technics RS-TR474	180
Technics RS-A26	200
Yamaha KX-393	130
Yamaha KX-W321	170
Yamaha KX-493	180

## OVER £200

Aiwa AD-F850	3-H	230
Aiwa AD-WX929	↔	230
Carver TDR-1550	↔	629
Denon DRM-650S	3-H	230
Denon DRM-740	3-H	270
Denon DRS-810	3-H	310
H/K TD420	↔	250
H/K TD450	3-H	350
JVC TD-V662BK	3-H	370
JVC TD-W718BK	3-H	300
NAD 613	↔	230
NAD 614	↔	270
NAD 616	↔	300
Onkyo TA 6210	↔	230
Onkyo TARW 211	↔	270
Onkyo TARW 311	↔	320
Onkyo TA 6310	↔	330
Onkyo KR 609	↔	350
Onkyo KW 606	↔	370
Onkyo TARW 411	↔	370
Onkyo K 611	3-H	460
Pioneer CT-S550S	3-H	250
Pioneer CT-W806DR	3-H	300
Pioneer CT-S550S Precision	3-H	340
Pioneer CT-S850S	3-H	500
Pioneer CT-95	3-H	1,000
Rotel RC960BX	↔	250
Sony TC-WE805S	↔	250
Sony TC-KA6ES	3-H	550
T+A CC1200R	↔	990
TEAC W-850R	↔	250
TEAC V-1030	3-H	250

TEAC W-6000R	↔	450
TEAC V-6030S	↔	550
TEAC V-8030S	↔	650
Technics RS-AZ7	↔	270
Technics RS-TR575	↔	280
Yamaha KX-580SE	↔	250
Yamaha KX-W592	↔	280



## CD PLAYERS

**KEY**  
⇒ - Multiplayer: can be loaded with more than one disc.  
T10 - Electrical (coaxial) digital output.  
Optical (Toslink) output.

## UP TO £250

Akai CD1100	T10	200
Akai CDM1200	↔	230
AMC CD9	↔	130
AMC CD8A	↔	150
AMC CD9/DAC8	T10	200
Ariston CDX700	↔	60
Ariston CDX710	↔	100
Ariston CDX910	↔	120
Ariston CDG610	↔	140
Cambridge CD4	T10	150
Cambridge CD4SE	T10	200
Cambridge CD6	T10	250
Denon DCD-635	↔	180
Denon DCD-625	T10	200
Denon DCD-715	T10	235
Denon DCD-825	T10	240
H/K HD710	T10	210
JVC XL-V120BK	↔	100
JVC XL-V130BK	↔	120
JVC XL-V230BK	↔	140
JVC XL-F116BK	↔	180
JVC XL-F216BK	↔	200
JVC XL-Z574BK	↔	250
Kenwood DP-1080	↔	110
Kenwood DP-2080	↔	130
Kenwood DP-R3090	↔	140
Kenwood DP-R4090	↔	160
Kenwood DP-3080	↔	170
Kenwood DP-R6090	↔	200
Kenwood DP-4090	T10	250
Marantz CD-38	↔	130
Marantz CC-38	↔	200
Marantz CD-48	T10	200
Marantz CD-57	T10	230
Marantz CD-67II	T10	250
NAD 522	↔	170
NAD 510	↔	200
NAD 523	↔	250
NAD 512	T10	250
Philips CD711	↔	120
Philips CD721	↔	130
Philips CD751	T10	150
Philips CDC751	↔	180
Pioneer PD-106	↔	130
Pioneer PD-206	↔	150
Pioneer PD-F606	↔	200
Pioneer PD-M603	↔	200
Pioneer PD-S505	T10	200
Pioneer PD-F706	↔	250
Rotel RCD-930AX	↔	180
Rotel RCD950	T10	250
Sansui CD220	↔	100
Sherwood CD-4030R	↔	180
Sherwood CDC680	↔	180
Sherwood CDC6050R	↔	180
Sony CDP-M205	↔	110
Sony CDP-XE210	↔	120
Sony CDP-M305	↔	130
Sony CDP-XE310	↔	140
Sony CDP-XE310S	↔	150
Sony CDP-CE105	↔	180
Sony CDP-XE510	↔	150
Sony CDP-CE315	↔	200
Sony CDP-C325M	↔	200
Synergy CDJ1210	↔	120
TEAC CD-P1800	↔	130
TEAC CD-P3450SE	↔	200
TEAC PD-H500	T10	240
TEAC PD-D2200	↔	250
Technics SL-PG390A	↔	90
Technics SL-PG490A	↔	100
Technics SL-PG590A	↔	120
Technics SL-PD688	↔	140

Technics SL-PD888	↔	160
Technics SL-P5670D	↔	200
Technics SL-MC410	↔	250
Technics SL-P5770D	T10	250
Yamaha CDX-393	↔	130
Yamaha CDC-565	↔	170
Yamaha CDX-493	↔	180
Yamaha CDX-9	↔	200
Yamaha CDC-665	T10	220
Yamaha CDX-593	T10	230

## £251 TO £500

Arcam Alpha 7	T10	330
Arcam Alpha MCD	↔	450
Aura CD100	T10	400
Carver MV-5	↔	469
Denon DCM-260	↔	300
Denon DCD-1550AR	T10	350
Denon DCD-1015	T10	350
H/K HD730	T10	300
H/K FL8300	↔	300
JVC XL-Z674BK	T10	300
Kenwood DP-R7080	↔	300
Kenwood DP-9090	T10	300
Kenwood DP-5090	T10	300
Kenwood DP-7090	T10	400
Marantz CD-67SE	T10	350
Marantz CC-870	↔	400
Marantz CD-63IKI	T10	400
Musical Fidelity E60	T10	300
Musical Fidelity A2 CD	T10	500
Myriad T-10	T10	400
NAD 513	↔	290
NAD 515	T10	350
NAD 514	↔	370
NAD 517	↔	400
Onkyo DX 7210	T10	260
Onkyo C721	↔	290
Onkyo DXC 320	↔	380
Onkyo DX 7510	T10	400
Onkyo CM 716	↔	450
Parasound C/DP-1000	T10	500
Pioneer PD-F805	↔	300
Pioneer PD-S705	T10	300
Pioneer PD-F906	↔	350
Pioneer PD-S904	T10	400
Pioneer PD-S505 Precision	T10	460
Sony CDP-CX55	↔	280
Sony CDP-XE900E	↔	300
Sony CDP-CX200	↔	380
Sony CDP-XA20ES	↔	450
Sony CDP-X3000ES	T10	500
TEAC CD-5	↔	350
Yamaha CDX-993	T10	400

## £501 TO £1000

Acurus ACD11	T10	899
Alchemist Nexus	T10	600
Arcam Alpha 8	T10	520
Arcam Alpha 8SE	T10	600
Audio Analogue Paganini	T10	695
AVI S2000MC2	T10	899
Creek CD42	T10	599
Denon DCD-3000	T10	1,000
DPA Renaissance int CD	T10	950
Fase Evoluzione Laserdrive 1.0	T10	995
Helios Model 3	T10	650
Helios Model 2	T10	950
Heybrook Signature II	T10	989
Linn Mimik	T10	875
Magnum CD2020	T10	595
Marantz CD-17	T10	800
Micromega Stage 4	T10	600
Micromega Stage 5	T10	750
Micromega Stage 6	T10	950
Mission dAD3	T10	598
Mission d		

Alchemist Forseti	1,995
Audio Research CD1	3,290
Audio Research CD2	4,100
Audiomeca Talisman	2,150
Audiomeca Talisman SE	2,300
AVI S2000MC	1,399
Cary CD-301	2,495
Conrad-Johnson DF-2	1,695
Conrad-Johnson DV-2b	2,495
Copland CDA-266	1,800
Copland CD277	1,199
Copland CDA288	2,199
Cymbal CDP12	1,299
Helios Model 1	1,250
Helios Stargate	2,250
Krell KPS30i	5,490
Krell KPS-20i	9,990
Marantz CD-17KIS	1,100
Mark Levinson 39	4,995
McIntosh MCD7009	3,699
Meracus Tanto	1,395
Meracus Imago Player	4,495
Meridian 506	1,100
Meridian 508	1,995
Micromega Solo	2,750
Myriad MCD500	1,300
Naim CD2	2,000
Naim CDX	2,200
Naim CDS	3,940
Oracle CD Player	7,300
Pink Triangle Numeral	1,049
Pink Triangle Litaural	2,200
Primare D302	1,799
Roksan Attezza-DP3P	1,495
Sherwood CD1	1,100
Sonic Frontiers Anthem CD1	1,699
Sonic Frontiers SFC-1	3,799
TAG McLaren CD20R	1,249
TEAC VRDS-25	1,300
Theta Digital Miles	2,495
XTC CDP-1	1,250
YBA Intégré	1,250
YBA CD3	2,250
YBA CD2	3,350
YBA CD1	4,500



## CD TRANSPORTS

**KEY**  
 1010 - Electrical (coaxial) digital output.  
 Many players also include an optical (Toslink) output.

Alchemist Forseti Drive	1,100
Altis CDT III	4,995
Arcam Delta 250	800
Audio Research CDT1	3,290
Audio Synthesis Transcend Decade	2,995
Audiomeca Damnation	999
Audiomeca Damnation SE	1,100
Audiomeca Talisman	1,850
Audiomeca Talisman SE	1,999
Audiomeca Talisman DOB	2,250
Audiomeca Mephisto	2,350
Audiomeca Mephisto SE	2,500
Audiomeca Mephisto	2,750
Cambridge Discmag One	300
Conrad-Johnson DR-1	1,795
DPA Enlightenment Drv	725
Jadis JD3	4,850
Jadis JD2	4,990
Jadis JDI	12,500
Krell KPS-20t	8,490
Linn Karik	1,850
Mark Levinson 37	3,995
Mark Levinson 31.5	9,295
Meracus Imago	3,995
Meridian 500	1,245
Micromega Drive 3	750
Micromega Data	2,250
Monrio Bitmatch	950
Muse Model 5	1,800
Oracle CD Drive	4,680
Pink Triangle Cardinal II	909
PS Audio Lambda TR	2,250
PS Audio Lambda AT&T	2,778
Rogers SC-8t	2,699
Roksan Attezza-DP3	1,295
Sonic Frontiers Transport 3	5,999
T+A CM1200R	990

TAG McLaren CDT20R	1,499
TEAC VRDS-T1	550
TEAC P-30	2,500
Theta Digital Data Basic II	2,397
Theta Digital Data III NTSC/PAL	5,455
Thorens TCD-2000	999
Trichord Digital Turntable	699
Tube Tech Fulcrum	1,000
Wadia 8	3,195
Wadia 20	4,370

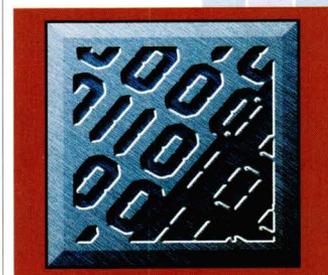


## DIGITAL TO ANALOGUE CONVERTERS (DACs)

**KEY**  
 4 - Number of digital inputs

Alchemist Forseti DAC	1,100
Altis Reference	4,995
AMC DAC8	130
Apogee Digital DA-1000	3,395
Arcam Black Box 50	350
Arcam Black Box 500	500
Audio Note DAC1	675
Audio Note DAC2	1,099
Audio Note DAC3	1,750
Audio Research DAC5	2,148
Audio Research DAC5	2,335
Audio Research DAC3	4,195
Audio Research DAC3	4,555
Audio Synthesis DAX Decade	2,795
Audiomeca Elbir	799
Audiomeca Ambrosia	1,850
Boulder 2020	17,750
Cambridge Dacmagic 2 Mk II	150
Chord DSC1100	2,575
Chord DSC1500	3,850
Conrad-Johnson D/A-3	1,195
Conrad-Johnson D/A-2b	1,990
dCS Elgar	8,500
Denon DCD-425	150
DPA Little Bit 3	325
DPA Renaissance DAC	570
DPA Enlightenment DAC	825
DPA SX128	2,000
DPA SX256	4,000
DPA SX512	8,000
Jadis JS3	2,129
Jadis JS1	8,068
LFD DAC2	1,950
LFD DAC3	3,000
Linn Numerik	1,500
Manley Professional DAC-20	6,950
Mark Levinson 36	3,995
Mark Levinson 30.5	15,950
Meracus Auriga	1,295
Meracus Flagrate	2,495
Meridian 566	1,095
Micromega DAC 2	750
Micromega Dialog	2,000
Monrio 18B2	795
Muse Model 2	2,190
Muse Model 2 Plus	2,500
Musical Fidelity X-ACT	200
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	300
Onkyo DX 7310	330
PS Audio DL3	777
PS Audio SL3	1,449
PS Audio UltraLink 2 HDCC	2,590
PS Audio Ref Link	4,550
Rogers SC-8m	1,899
Roksan Attezza-DA2	595
Sonic Frontiers Processor 3	5,999
Sumo Theorem II	945
Sumo Theorem IIB	1,155
TAG McLaren DAC20	1,249
Talk Electronics Thunder 3	1,000
TEAC D-T1	500
TEAC D-700	600
Theta Digital Chroma Std	849
Theta Digital Pro Geny	1,145
Theta Digital Pro Prime II	1,800
Theta Digital Pro Basic III	2,990
Theta Digital Gen V SE	4,300
Theta Digital Casablanca LS	5,910
Thorens TDA-2000	700
Trichord Pulsar Ser One	1,395
Tube Tech Fulcrum	1,400
Wadia 12	1,530
Wadia 15	3,790
Wadia 64.4	4,750

Wadia 16	7,395
Wadia 7	9,995
Wadia 9	12,790
Woodside DVAC-18	1,499



## DIGITAL RECORDERS

**KEY**  
 MD - MiniDisc  
 DAT - Digital Audio Tape  
 1010 - portable

Denon DMD-1000	MD	300
Denon DMD-1300	MD	500
Kenwood DM-7090	MD	500
Kenwood DM-9090	MD	550
Onkyo MD-121	MD	450
Onkyo MD 122	MD	700
Philips CDR870	MD	499
Pioneer PDR-04	MD	700
Pioneer D-05	DAT	900
Pioneer PDR-05	DAT	1,000
Pioneer D-C88	DAT	2,000
Sharp MD-R2	MD	300
Sharp MD-R1E	MD	300
Sharp MD-MS200H	MD	350
Sharp MDXV300H	MD	1,000
Sony MZ-E20	MD	180
Sony MDS-JE510	MD	250
Sony MZ-E50	MD	280
Sony MDS-538	MD	300
Sony MZ-R30	MD	300
Sony MDS-JA30ES	MD	699
Sony MDS-JA50ES	MD	1,300
TEAC MD-H500	MD	650
TEAC MD-10	MD	950
Yamaha MDX-9	MD	300



## HEADPHONES

**KEY**  
 'D' - Dynamic type, compatible with virtually all normal headphone sockets.  
 'E' - Electrostatic type; generally includes a separate power supply.  
 1010 - Open-back construction.  
 1011 - Closed-back construction.  
 UP TO £40

Aiwa HP-X301	D	1010	20
Aiwa HP-VX305	D	1011	25
Aiwa HP-X705	D	1010	40
AKG Rox	D	1011	30
Aural Envelope DX200	D	1010	20
Aural Envelope DX220	D	1010	30
Beyer DT111	D	1011	31
Beyer DT211	D	1011	35
Beyer DT211 TV	D	1011	18
JVC HA-CD88	D	1010	20
JVC HA-D525	D	1010	20
JVC HA-F65	D	1010	25
JVC HA-D626	D	1010	18
Kenwood KPM-310	D	1010	25
Kenwood KPM-410	D	1010	25
KLH KHP201 TW	D	1010	21
KLH KHP-300V	D	1010	25
KLH KHP-420V	D	1010	33
Maxell HP-2000	D	1010	20
Pioneer SE-A40	D	1010	20
Pioneer SE-A20V	D	1010	23
Pioneer SE-M250	D	1010	25
Pioneer SE-M350	D	1010	30
Sennheiser HD56	D	1010	18

Sennheiser HD433	D	1010	20
Sennheiser HD400	D	1010	25
Sennheiser HD470	D	1010	35
Sennheiser HD60TV	D	1010	40
Sony MDR-W20G	D	1010	18
Sony MDR-E837	D	1010	18
Sony MDR-P70	D	1010	18
Sony MDR-ED238	D	1010	20
Sony MDR-009TV	D	1010	20
Sony MDR-A34L	D	1010	20
Sony MDR-E848	D	1010	20
Sony MDR-P1TV	D	1010	25
Sony MDR-CD270	D	1010	30
Sony MDR-E868	D	1010	35
Sony MDR-V400	D	1010	40
Sony MDR-D11	D	1010	40
Stanton ST Pro	D	1010	25
Technics RP-F200	D	1010	30
Technics RP-HT300	D	1010	40
Vivanco SR150	D	1010	20
Vivanco SR200	D	1010	25
Vivanco SR250	D	1010	30
Vivanco SR300	D	1010	25
Vivanco IR5700	D	1010	40

## OVER £41

AKG K301	D	1010	80
AKG K222iR	D	1010	100
AKG K401	D	1010	120
AKG K501	D	1010	150
AKG K333iR	D	1010	150
AKG K444iR	D	1010	180
AKG K290S	D	1010	250
AKG K1000	D	1010	700
Audio Technica ATH910PRO	D	1010	80
Audio Technica ATHD40FS	D	1010	120
Audio Technica ATHM40FS	D	1010	120
Audio Technica ATH911	D	1010	120
Beyer DT311	D	1010	50
Beyer DT411	D	1010	63
Beyer DT511	D	1010	106
Beyer DT801	D	1010	125
Beyer DT811	D	1010	145
Beyer DT100	D	1010	160
Beyer DT901	D	1010	160
Beyer DT911	D	1010	170
Denon AH-D210	D	1010	45
Denon AH-D350	D	1010	65
Denon AH-D550	D	1010	80
Denon AH-D650	D	1010	95
Denon AH-D750	D	1010	130
Denon AH-D950	D	1010	150
Grado SR40	D	1010	45
Grado SR60	D	1010	79
Grado SR80	D	1010	100
Grado SR125	D	1010	150
Grado SR225	D	1010	200
Grado SR325	D	1010	300
Grado RS2	D	1010	495
Grado RS1	D	1010	695
Jacklin Float Model 1	D	1010	79
Jacklin Float Model 2	D	1010	99
Jacklin Float ELS	E	1010	399
JVC HA-D727	D	1010	43
JVC HA-W60	D	1010	49
JVC HA-D910	D	1010	65
JVC HA-D1000	D	1010	250
JVC HA-F25	D	1010	699
Philips SBC 3396	D	1010	70
Philips SBC HP9000	D	1010	90
Pioneer SE-M550	D	1010	50
Pioneer SE-M750	D	1010	60
Precide Ergo Model 1	D	1010	120
Precide Ergo Model 2	D	1010	140
Sennheiser IS 380	D	1010	55
Sennheiser HD455	D	1010	55
Sennheiser HD465	D	1010	65
Sennheiser HD570	D	1010	80
Sennheiser HD475	D	1010	80
Sennheiser HD25 SP	D	1010	90
Sennheiser IS450	D	1010	110
Sennheiser HD545 Ref	D	1010	125
Sennheiser HD265 Linear	D	1010	125
Sennheiser HD250II	D	1010	150
Sennheiser HD 451-1	D	1010	150
Sennheiser HD565 Ovat'n	D	1010	150
Sennheiser HD25-13	D	1010	160
Sennheiser HD25	D	1010	160
Sennheiser HD580 P'cision	D	1010	200
Sennheiser HD600	D	1010	250
Sennheiser Lucas	D	1010	280
Sennheiser IS850	D	1010	859
Sennheiser HE60/HEV70	E	1010	998
Sennheiser Orpheus	E	1010	9,652
Sony MDR-IF120K	D	1010	50
Sony MDR-EB88	D	1010	55
Sony MDR-IF125RK	D	1010	60
Sony MDR-V600	D	1010	70
Sony MDR-F1	D	1010	100
Sony MDR-NC5	D	1010	100
Sony MDR-IF420RK	D	1010	100
Sony MDR-CD770	D	1010	100
Sony MDR-D77	D	1010	130
Sony MDR-IF520RK	D	1010	150
Sony MDR-CD1700	D	1010	200
Stanton DJ Pro 101/HB	D	1010	65

## HEADPHONES (CONTINUED)

Stanton DJ Pro 1000	D	🎧	95
Stanton DJ Pro 1001	D	🎧	150
Stax SR-0001	E	🎧	280
Stax SR-Lambda Nova C	E	🎧	370
Stax Lambda Nova Basic	E	🎧	449
Stax SR-Lambda Nova S	E	🎧	450
Technics RP-F800	D	🎧	50
Technics RP-HT600	D	🎧	60
Technics RP-DJ1200	D	🎧	130
Vivanco IR5800	D	🎧	50
Vivanco SR850	D	🎧	50
Vivanco SR650	D	🎧	50
Vivanco FMH 3000	D	🎧	60
Vivanco SR750	D	🎧	60
Vivanco IR6000	D	🎧	70
Vivanco SR909	D	🎧	70
Vivanco IR7600	D	🎧	100
Vivanco SR1000IFL	D	🎧	100
Vivanco SR2000IFL	D	🎧	120

Atacama SE16	65
Atacama SE12	65
Atacama SX500	67
Atacama F2	70
Atacama F1	70
Atacama SX600	70
Atacama SL200	70
Atacama SE24	70
Atacama SE20	70
Atacama SX700	73
Atacama SL300	75
Atacama TP600	75
Atacama TP500	75
Atacama SE615	75
Atacama SE515	75
Atacama SE415	75
Atacama SL400	76
Atacama SE1000S	80
AVF Tower P6144BP	60
BCD Model 1010	60
Credo STD 001	284
Custom Design CD 500	50
Custom Design AS 130	25
Custom Design AS 630AV	65
Custom Design Tri 100	50
Custom Design R/S 200	50
Custom Design R/S300	60
Custom Design Tri 300	55
Custom Design SCS 24	60
Custom Design X24	61
Custom Design C 20	50
Custom Design H1	50
Deadrock 903	60
Deadrock 902	47
Deadrock 901	39
Dynaudio Trophy	60
Dynaudio Master	60
Dynaudio Ultima	60
Harbeth HL-Stands	21
Heybrook Stand-ULT	3
Heybrook Stand-S6	63
Heybrook Stand-S4	48
Heybrook Stand-S1	47
JPW MS2	45
JPW MS3	55
JPW MS1	46
JPW HS1	58
JPW HS2	45
Kudos Audio Arrow	60
Kudos Audio S-50	60
Kudos Audio S-100	63
Mission Micrometer	58
Mission Entasis	58
Opera S1	60
Pioneer CP-7	50
Pioneer CP-8	80



**EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS**  
**Speaker Stands**

**KEY**  
60 - Height of stand in cm

Alphason NCI	60	47
Alphason Akros I	60	49
Alphason RS1	120	49
Alphason Akros II	60	59
Alphason NCI	60	84
Alphason HDS-40/M	60	85
Alphason Titan S	60	125
Apollo AZ6	66	80
Arcici Q-1	30	299
Arcici Q-2	30	299
Atacama BD21	56	55
Atacama BD17	55	55
Atacama BD25	60	60

Projekt Signature	55	80
Revolver RS1	50	70
Royd Royd	55	99
SD Acoustics SD Alexandra	50	369
Silverado Silverado 1 Stand	60	350
Sonus Faber Ironwood	475	
Sonus Faber Stonewood	497	
Sound Org 2037	55	
Sound Org 2027	55	
Sound Org 2026	55	
Sound Org Z618	45	65
Soundstyle X6110	42	100
Stands Unique Speaker support	59	159
Stands Unique Tuned Spkr Support	59	220
Stands Unique Tuned Carbon Fibre	59	299
Stands Unique Vivas CF Spkr Supp	60	349
Target TR60	60	68
Target R1	53	280



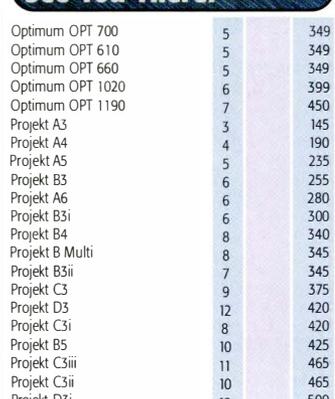
**EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS**  
**Hi-fi Tables**

**KEY**  
3 - Number of shelves

Alphason SM17	1	49
Alphason VSM17	1	85
Alphason GSM17	1	85
Alphason GMV1P	1	110
Alphason R17/17	3	120
Alphason GMH1P	1	150
Alphason GR17/17	3	150
Alphason VR17/17	3	190
Audiophile Base 01	1	79
Audiophile S4T120	4	280
Audiophile S4T120P	4	560
BCD Model 1006/8	1	795
BCD Model 1000	3	1,250
Custom Design G3	3	130
Custom Design Aspect 650	4	240
Custom Design Aspect 500AV	3	270
Custom Design Aspect 850	5	270
Deadrock 701	1	60
Deadrock 802	2	90
Deadrock 703	3	130
Deadrock 704	4	190
Deadrock 705	5	230
Fi-Rax R4	6	399
Frameworks H175	1	130
Frameworks FS1	150	
Frameworks FT2	285	
Frameworks FT3	350	
Frameworks H700	355	
Frameworks H900	389	
Frameworks H500/H175	3	404
Heybrook Stand-Signature	4	249
Impulse Iso-plate	190	
JPW 3 Tier	3	80
JPW 5 Tier	5	100
Kudos Audio Corinthian	5	600
Linn K3000	85	
Mana Sound Frame	125	
Mana Mini Table	150	
Mana Power supply table	150	
Mana Reference flat top	150	
Mana Sound Shelf	175	
Mana Sound Base	175	
Mana Sound Stage	200	
Mana Sound Table	235	
Mana Ref Shelf	325	
Mana Reference Table	350	
Mana 2 Tier Amp stand	375	
Mana 3 Tier Amp Stand	450	
Mana 4 Tier Amp Stand	500	
Mana 5 Tier Amp Stand	600	
Mana 6 Tier Amp Stand	700	
Mission Hark	298	
Optimum G2	2	69
Optimum G2/Pedestal	2	99
Optimum G4/Pedestal	5	130
Optimum OPT 3406	3	149
Optimum G5/Pedestal	6	150
Optimum OPT 4906	4	199
Optimum OPT 6606	5	249
Optimum OPT 340	3	249
Optimum OPT 490	4	299
Optimum OPT 440	4	299
Optimum OPT 10206	6	299
Optimum AV 300	3	329

## HI-FI CHOICE WEBSITE

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Optimum OPT 700	5	349
Optimum OPT 610	5	349
Optimum OPT 660	5	349
Optimum OPT 1020	6	399
Optimum OPT 1190	7	450
Projekt A3	3	145
Projekt A4	4	190
Projekt A5	5	235
Projekt B3	6	255
Projekt A6	6	280
Projekt B3i	6	300
Projekt B4	8	340
Projekt B Multi	8	345
Projekt B3ii	7	345
Projekt C3	9	375
Projekt D3	12	420
Projekt C3i	8	420
Projekt B5	10	425
Projekt C3iii	11	465
Projekt C3ii	10	465
Projekt D3i	12	500
Projekt C4	12	500
Projekt C3iv	10	510
Projekt D3ii	14	545
Projekt C Multi	9	555
Projekt D4	16	560
Quadraspire Q4S mini shelf	1	65
Quadraspire Q4S shelf	1	65
Quadraspire QKS Cabinet shelf	1	80
Quadraspire QAV shelf	1	130
Quadraspire Q4M mini table	4	250
Quadraspire Q4 table	4	250
Quadraspire Q4SP Table	4	320
Quadraspire QAV table	3	350
Quadraspire QAVSP Table	4	400
Quadraspire QK Cabinet	4	450
Reson DOMOPS	1	195
Reson DOMOWS	1	195
Sound Org 2022	1	65
Sound Org 2021	2	78
Sound Org 2030	3	100
Sound Org 2060	4	120
Sound Org 2038	5	135
Sound Org Z540	4	140
Sound Org Z545	4	140
Sound Org Z560	5	160
Sound Org Z530	3	170
Soundstyle X300	3	180
Soundstyle X305	3	210
Soundstyle X053	4	210
Soundstyle X050	4	210
Soundstyle X6300	3	215
Soundstyle X100	4	220
Soundstyle X6110	4	230
Soundstyle X058	5	240
Soundstyle X310	3	250
Soundstyle X105	5	250
Soundstyle X6053	4	255
Soundstyle X6100	4	265
Soundstyle X6310	3	275
Soundstyle X6058	5	290
Soundstyle X6105	5	300
Soundstyle Fnewoods W105	5	320
Stands Unique Isolation Platform	1	52
Stands Unique Sound Support	4	249
Stands Unique Sound Tower	5	289
Stands Unique Compact Sound Supp	4	315
Stands Unique Sound Support 10	4	315
Stands Unique Sound Twr Cabinet	5	369
Stands Unique Ref Wall Support	1	550
Stands Unique Ultimate Tower	10	689
Stands Unique Ref Floor Support	6	799
Target B5	5	175
Townshend Seismic Sink 1-CD		110
Townshend Seismic Sink 1-3D		400
Townshend S/Sink Stand 1-4	4	999
Townshend Seismic Sink 3-4	4	1,250
Vibraplane Passive	1	1,895
Vibraplane Active	1	3,600
Wilson Benesch Standard Shelf	1	130
Wilson Benesch Mono Block	1	265
Wilson Benesch Kevlar Shelf	1	270
Wilson Benesch Asside Basic	1	590
Wilson Benesch Asside	4	720
Wilson Benesch Triptych	1	990



Don't discount the value of a good quality support, like this Optimum International OPT 490G if you want to get the best from your sources and amps.



## LOUDSPEAKERS

### KEY

- ⊥ – Floorstander; larger models requiring no separate stand.
- ⊞ – Stand mount; smaller models designed to be raised above the floor.
- ⊣ – Wall mount; designed to be hung on the wall or mounted in-wall.
- ⊠ – Box type, including infinite baffle, reflex and transmission line types.
- ⊡ – Horn type; mostly large and very efficient.
- ⊞ – Panel type, including electrostatic and planar magnetic types.

### UP TO £130

Allison Micro Monitors	95
Allison Mini References	120
Ariston MSX 05	80
Celestion 12i	119
Denon SC-M2	80
Gale Mini Monitors	70
Gale Gold Monitors	90
Genexxa GX300	80
Genexxa GX330	80
GLL Arena	90
Goodmans Active 75	65
Interaudio XL1000	130
Jamo Studio-80	70
Jamo SAT-90	90
Jamo Cornet 25	100
Jamo D-110	100
Jamo SAT-170	110
Jamo Studio-110	110
Jamo Cornet 145	110
Jamo Cornet 35	120
Jamo Artina	120
Jamo D-115	120
Jamo 28	125
JBL TLX111	120
JPW Mini Monitor	60
JPW ML110	70
JPW Gold Monitor	80
JPW ML210	80
JPW ML310	90
JPW ML410	100
JPW ML510	130
JVC SX-SC1VBK	60
JVC SP-V50	80
JVC SP-X220TBK	100
JVC SP-X550BK	130
KEF Coda 7	129
Kenwood LS-90UK	130
Mission 700	130
Mission 731i	130
Mordaunt-Short VS-100	100
Mordaunt-Short MS05i	100
NAD 801	100
Paradigm Micro	100
Paradigm Atom	130
Pioneer CS-3030	120
Polk AB410	100
Realistic Minimus 26	56
Realistic Minimus Pro-77	100
Revolver Beretta	100
R Allen Minette 2	129
Solid HCM2	130
Sony SS-8eE	100
Tangent Monitor 3	60
Tangent Monitor 5	80
Tannoy Mercury M1	120
TDL Nucleus 1	75
TDL Nucleus 2	130
TEAC LS-X8 Mk II	80
Technics SB-CS55	80
Technics SB-CS65	100
Technics SB-CS75	100
Visonik 5202	129
Wdale Valdis 100	80
Wdale Diamond 7.1	100
Wdale Valdis 200	110
Wdale Modus Micro	110

### £131 TO £200

Acoustic Energy AE100	200
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Allison Model 4A	170
B&W DM302	150
B&W CWM5	170
B&W DM601	199
Bose 201 IV	200
Boston CR6	149
Boston 325	149
Boston Micro 80 Sat	169
Boston Runabout	169
Boston 335	179
Boston 351	189
Boston CR7	199
Boston Runabout II	200
Celestion 15i	199
Cerwin-Vega CT-165	200
Denon SC-E313	160
Gale 2i	140
Gale 4i	140
Gale 3i	140
Genexxa GX650	200
Genexxa Pro	160
GLL Imagio IC100	170
Heybrook Prima 2	159
Infinity SM65	150
Infinity Reference 1i	150
Infinity Reference 11i	200
Interaudio XL2000	200
Jamo Cornet 165	150
Jamo 38	150
Jamo 525	150
Jamo 560	150
Jamo 660	170
Jamo Cornet 65	170
Jamo Studio 180	180
Jamo D165	200
Jamo 68	200
JBL TLX121	150
JBL LX20	200
JPW ML610	170
JPW S551	200
KEF Coda 8	189
KEF Q15	199
KEF Model 60S	199
Kenwood LS-200G	200
KLH Model 21	155
KLH Model 11	155
KLH Model 31	185
Magnat Vector 22	179
Mission 731i Pro	140
Mission 732i	200
Mordaunt-Short MS10i Pearl	150
Mordaunt-Short VS-200	150
Mordaunt-Short MS20i Pearl	200
Mordaunt-Short VS-300	200
Paradigm Titan	150
Pioneer CS-5030	170
Polk M2	180
Polk RT3	200
Polk AB610	200
Rega Kytte	198
Revolver Colt	139
Revolver The 230	169

170	Revolver Purdey MkII
150	R Allen Minette 3
170	R Allen Dim'n 5/1 Compact
199	R Allen RA6
200	Rogers GS1
149	Royd A7X
149	Sequence 200
169	Solid Monitor
169	Sony SS-126EB
179	Sony SS-176E
189	Tangent Monitor 9
199	Tangent Monitor 11
200	Tannoy Mercury M2
199	TDL Nucleus 3
200	Technics SB-CS95
160	Technics SB-M20
140	Visonik 6003
140	Visonik 5001
200	Wdale Diamond 7.2
140	Wdale Valdis 300
170	Wdale Modus Music Two
159	Wdale Valdis 400
150	Wdale Diamond 7.3

### £201 TO £300

200	Acoustic Energy AE200
250	Audio Gem Opal
150	B&W CWM6i
150	B&W DM602
150	Bose 151
170	Bose 301 IV
170	Boston 361
180	Boston CR8
200	Boston 381
200	Boston CR9
150	Boston Voyager
250	Castle Iss
299	Celestion 23i
200	Cerwin-Vega VS-8
300	Cerwin-Vega CT-330
249	Chano Syntar 100
299	Chario Ref 100
299	Chario Hiper 1000
260	Dali 102B
300	Dali 150
249	Eltax Linear Response
245	Faraday FS1
220	Gale 5i
260	GLL Imagio IC110
300	GLL Imagio IC115
259	Heybrook Optima
269	Heybrook Heylette
269	Heybrook HB1
150	Infinity SM85
230	Interaudio XL3000
180	Interaudio XL4000
220	Jamo 892
230	Jamo Cornet 175
250	Jamo Classic 4
270	Jamo Art
300	Jamo D265

199	Jamo 307A
159	JBL LX2
179	JBL TLX151
199	JPW ML710
179	JPW ML810
155	JPW ML910
199	JVC SX-SW10
200	KEF Coda 9
150	KEF Model 70S
200	KLH 83A
150	KLH 183A
180	KLH Soundbites System
140	KLH Model 81
200	KLH Model 41
150	Mission 750LE
200	M-A Monitor 1
143	M-A Monitor 2
170	Mordaunt-Short MS30i
140	Mordaunt-Short MS10i Classic
150	Mus Tec Kestrel SE
200	NAD 802
200	NHT SuperZero
220	Paradigm Mini Monitor
250	Paradigm Monitor 5
230	Pioneer CS-7030
280	Pioneer CS-9030
300	Pioneer S-LC1
220	Polk AB505
220	Polk M3 II
250	Polk RT5
300	Polk RT7
300	Polk M5
299	Promenade SP1
298	Rega EL8
250	Revolver The 250
239	R Allen Dimension Five 1
249	R Allen RA8
249	R Allen RA8M
269	R Allen Dimension Five 2
250	Rogers db101
279	Rogers GS3
249	Royd The Envoy
275	Royd Minstrel
239	Ruark Epilogue
249	Sequence 300
250	Solid HCM1
250	Sony SS-176EB
230	Tannoy Mercury M3
300	Tannoy Precision P10
203	Visonik 7005
259	Visonik SUB5
230	Wdale Modus Music Four
250	Wdale MFM1
300	Wdale Valdis 500
300	Yamaha NS10M
219	ZYP A1
295	ZYP A2S

300	Acoustic Energy AE109
450	Acoustic Energy AE209

### £301 TO £500



**You must listen to...Mission's 731i.**

**MISSION**

"A combatant truly worthy of the budget speaker challenge".  
**Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi Choice, July/August 1996.**  
 Call ☎ (01480) 451777 for more information or your nearest stockist.

## SPEAKERS (CONTINUED)

Acoustic Energy AE120	500
Allison Model 2A	420
AVI Neutron	499
B&O Beovox CX50	325
B&O Beovox CX100	425
B&W CWM8i	350
B&W DM305	350
B&W CDM2	400
B&W DM603	500
B&W Signature 7	500
Bandor Pictures	352
Blue Room Mini Pod	400
Boston Micro 90 Sat	369
Boston Micro 80 Sys	369
Boston VR20	380
Castle Tay	350
Castle Eden	470
Castle Kendal	500
Celestion 25i	399
Celestion 30i	449
Celestion 35i	499
Cerwin-Vega VS-10	350
Chario Syntar 100T	399
Chario Ref 1000	499
Clements 300si	395
Dali 104B	370
Dali 606	400
Dali Royal	500
Def Tech Celsius	395
Dynaudio Audience 5	400
Epos ES12	499
Faraday SG	345
Faraday Siren	445
GLL Imagio IC120	400
GLL Imagio IC130	500
Heybrook Heylios	389
Heybrook Heylo	439
Infinity SM105	350
Infinity SM115	400
Infinity SM125	500
Jamo Classic 6	330
Jamo Cornet 75	330
Jamo Cornet 195	350
Jamo BX-100A	350
Jamo 98	350
Jamo 407A	350
Jamo D365	400
Jamo Cornet 95	400
Jamo Classic 8	400
Jamo Graphic	400
Jamo 128	450
Jamo BX-150A	450
Jamo Atmosphere	480
Jamo 477A	500
JBL LX60	350
JBL LX6	350
JBL TLX161	400
JBL PS8	500
JBL TLX171	500
JM Lab Micron	395
JM Lab Megane	495
Jordan Watts JHFLC	380
JPW S5553	400
JPW ML1010	400
JPW Ruby 1	400
JPW Ruby 2	500
KEF Q35	349
KEF Q55	499
KEF RDM One	499
Keswick Ana II	379
KLH 283A	310
KLH 383A	335
KLH Model 51	375
KLH Model 71	420
KLH Model 62T	486
Linn Sekrit	395
Magnat Vector 55	349
Magnat Vector 77	449
Mission 733i	330
Mission 751f	348
Mission 734i	499
M-A Monitor 3	400
M-A Monitor 4	500
Mordaunt-Short MS25i Pearl	330
Mordaunt-Short MS40i	450
Mus Tec Harner	400
NAD 804	400
Neat Critique	385
NHT SuperOne	338
NHT Model 1.5	450
Opera Duetto	395
Origin Live OL-1AS	399
Origin Live Monarch	399
Paradigm Monitor 7	330
Paradigm Studio/20	350
Paradigm Monitor 9	400
Pentachord A	469
Pioneer S-LC2	450
Polk AB705	330
Polk RT8	400
Polk RT10	500
Polk AB805	500
Prof Monitor Co TB1SM	403
Prof Monitor Co TB1	410
Prof Monitor Co TB1S	430
Prof Monitor Co TB1M	447
Prof Monitor Co XB1	499
Promenade SP2	399
Promenade SP3	499
Rega Jura	450
Rega ELA MkII	498
Revolver The 260	350
R Allen Dimension Five 3	349

R Allen Dimension Five 4	429
Rogers G55	379
Rogers G56	429
Rogers G58	479
Rogers C6/20	499
Royd The Squire	350
Royd Minstrel SE	399
Royd Doublet	485
Ruark Icon	359
Sequence 400	329
Solid Verticale	400
Spendor S2	399
Spendor 2020	399
Spendor S1	499
Tannoy Precision P20	400
TDL RTL2 SE	330
TDL RTL 3SE	450
TDL Chiltern CF100	450
Technics SB-M300	350
Technics SB-M500	450
Totem Mite	495
Triangle Titus TZe	379
Triangle Lunn	500
Visonik TB1S	366
W'dale Modus Music Six	330
W'dale MFM3	350
W'dale Modus Music Eight	430
W'dale MFM5	450
W'dale Modus Music 1/6	500

### £501 TO £800

Acoustic Energy AE1-II	795
Acoustic Precision Eikos FR1	800
Allison Model 3A	525
Audio Gem Emerald	540
Audio Note AN-K/D	620
Audio Note AN-I/B	799
Audiovector M1	759
B&O Beolab 2500	750
B&W CDM1 SE	600
B&W P4	675
Bose 501	600
Bose A mass AM3	650
Boston VR30	600
Castle Severn 2	580
Castle Avon	730
Celestion 45i	599
Cerwin-Vega VS-12	550
Cerwin-Vega VS-15	700
Chario Ref 100T	599
Chario Hiper 1000T	699
Clements 600si	595
Dali 107	600
Dali 350	600
Dali 450	700
Dali 109	800

Def Tech BP6B	750
Diapason Micra II	750
Dynaudio Audience 50	577
Epos ES14	675
Faraday FS10	795
Harbeth BBC LS3/5A	699
Harbeth HL-P3ES	799
Heybrook Ultima	649
Heybrook Quartet	649
Infinity SM155	550
Jamo BX-200A	530
Jamo Classic 10	600
Jamo 507A	700
Jamo 707i	800
JBL LX70	550
JBL LX7	550
JBL TLX181	600
JBL SVA1500	700
JBL L20	700
JBL PS12	750
JM Lab Profil 55	625
JM Lab Opal 59 ti	750
Jordan Watts JH200	510
Jordan Watts JH400	565
JPW Ruby 3	800
KEF LS3/5a	649
KEF RDM Two	699
KEF Q65	799
Kelly K72	700
Keswick Volante	729
KLH Model 82Ta	690
Linn Tulkan Passive	550
Linn Kellihd Passive	750
Magnat Vintage 710	799
Manicore Minaret	690
Meridian A500	750
M&K S-85	700
Mission 752f	578
Mission 735i	650
Mission 753i	798
M-A Studio 2SE	600
M-A 700 PMC	600
M-A 702PMC	700
M-A 703PMC	800
Mordaunt-Short MS50i	550
Mordaunt-Short MS30i Classic	600
Mus Tec Falcon	575
Naim Intro	660
Neat Mystique 2	575
Neat Petite II	745
Opera Seconda	595
Opera Operetta II	770
Opera Platea	795
Origin Live Resolution	732
Origin Live Victory	750
Paradigm Studio/60	650
Paradigm Studio/80	750
Pentachord B	519
Pentachord Pentode	729
Polk RT12	600
Polk RT16	799
Polk LS50	800
Proac Tablette 50	599
Proac Studio 100	699
Promenade SP4	650
Quad 10L	600
Rogers CS9	579
Rogers LS3/5A	699
Rogers C6/25	799
Roksan ROKone 1	595
Roksan Qjan 3	795
Royd The Sorcerer	595
Royd Abbot	695
Ruark Templar II	599
Ruark Sceptre	599
Ruark Talisman II	749
Ruark Prologue One	799
SD Acoustics SD3R	649
Shinpy Polarys	595
Silverado Raider	695
Sonus Faber Concertino	599
Spendor 2030	599
Spendor LS3/5A	630
Spendor SP3/1P	795
T+A TB 100	690
Tannoy Precision P30	600
Tannoy Definition D100	689
Tannoy Precision P40	800
TDL Cotswold CF200	650
TDL RTL 4	650
TDL T-Line 3	700
Totem Rokk	695
Triangle Comete TZe	525
Triangle Zephyr	799
W'dale MFM7	650

### £801 TO £1500

Acoustic Energy AE505	850
Acoustic Energy AE509	1,000
Acoustic Energy AE2-II	1,095
Acoustic Energy AE520	1,200
Acoustic Solutions Eight	1,200
Alon I Mk II	1,500
Ambience Mod. 4.0	1,185
Apertura Prima	1,095
Apertura Nova	1,395



◀ With the new Nautilus 800 series, B&W has shown the way ahead for 21st Century speaker design.



ATC SCM10	999	Shinpy Micraphonica	1,099	Polk LS90	1,700	Lowther Delphic	3,099	
Audio Note AN-J/D	930	Silverado Ryder	1,395	Posselt Albatross	2,500	Lowther Opus One	4,999	
Audio Note AN-K/SPx	1,060	Sonus Faber Minuetto	898	Proac Response 2S	2,000	Lumley L/M 2 Sig. Mk3	4,500	
Audio Note AN-E/B	1,299	Sonus Faber Concerto	1,098	Proac Studio 250	2,249	Magnat Vintage 770	3,500	
Audio Note AN-J/SPx	1,415	Spendor 2040	899	Proac Response 2.5	2,700	Magneplanar MG-3.5SE	3,800	
Audio Physic Step	1,299	Spendor SP2/3E	1,050	Prof Monitor Co IB1S	2,099	Magneplanar MG-20 SE P	10,300	
Audiovector M1 Super	999	Spendor SP1/2E	1,390	Rehdeko RK115	1,700	Magneplanar MG-20 SE A	11,000	
Audiovector M2	1,399	T+A TAS 1200E	990	Rogers L55/9	1,549	Martin-Logan SL3	3,499	
Audiovector M1 Sig	1,449	T+A TB 120	990	Ruark Crusader II	1,599	Martin-Logan CLS Ilz	4,555	
AVI Positron	899	Tannoy Definition D300	999	Ruark Equinox	1,849	Martin-Logan Re-Quest	5,875	
B&O Beolab 4000	1,100	TDL Chevot CF300	850	Ruark Accolade	2,699	Martin-Logan Monolith 5	7,440	
B&W P5	875	Technics SB-M1000	1,500	SD Acoustics SD5	1,549	Martin-Logan Monolith IIP	8,550	
B&W CDM7	1,000	Totem Model One	1,195	SD Acoustics SD1E	2,995	Martin-Logan Monolith IIXPB	11,900	
B&W DM604	1,000	Triangle Antal	1,099	Shahinian Arc	1,875	Meridian DSP5000	3,295	
B&W P6	1,095	Vandersteen 2Ce	1,395	Shahinian Obelisk	2,695	Meridian DSP5500	5,950	
B&W Matrix 805 V	1,095	Visonik LB1	935	Shinpy Eurtimica	1,995	Meridian DSP6000	9,400	
Bandor Trident	846			Shinpy Altair	2,895	M-A Studio 50	4,000	
Bandor Mora	1,260			Silverado Silverado 1	1,995	M-A Studio 60	6,000	
Bandor Bandora	1,340			Sonus Faber Minima Amator	1,566	Naim DBL Active	7,414	
BKS Audio Hybrid 107	1,500			Sound-Lab Quantum	2,150	Neolith NEO 2	3,499	
Bose A mass AM5	900			Spendor SP7/1	1,990	Neolith NEO 3	4,999	
Bose 701	1,000			Spendor SP100	2,099	NHT Model 3.3	3,500	
Boston VR40	1,000			T+A TB 140	1,680	Paragon Regent	3,490	
Cabasse Farella 400	950			Tannoy Definition D500	1,999	Proac Response 3.5	4,250	
Castle Harlech	880			Tannoy Stirling TW	2,200	Proac Response 5	9,000	
Castle Howard S2	1,200			Tannoy Definition D700	2,500	Proac Response 4	12,000	
Celestion A1	899			TDL Studio Monitor-m	2,750	Prof Monitor Co MB1P	4,370	
Celestion A2	1,499			Totem Mann-2	2,795	Prof Monitor Co BB5 A	16,688	
Cerwin-Vega AL-1000	1,100			Triangle Zays	1,750	Quad ESL63	3,450	
Cerwin-Vega 1515	1,300			Triangle Altinis	2,250	Rehdeko RK125	3,200	
Chario Ref 1000T	999			Triangle Extan	2,950	Rehdeko RK145	4,800	
Chario Academy 1	1,299			Wilson Benesch Orator	2,700	Rehdeko RK175	8,800	
Clements Reference 1	995					Revel Gem	5,295	
Dali 850	1,100					Rockport Syzygy	15,000	
Def Tech BP8B	1,000					Rockport Procyon	32,500	
Def Tech BP10B	1,500					Shahinian Hawk	4,995	
Diapason Prelude II	875					Shahinian Diapason	8,895	
Diapason Karis	1,250					Shinpy Enigma	3,995	
Dynaudio Contour 1.1	879					Shinpy Euphonia	5,995	
Dynaudio Contour 1.3	1,198					Shinpy Magnifica Suprema	14,500	
Electrocompaniet EC-Qube	1,195					Shun Mook Bella Voce	6,800	
Electrocompaniet EC-Qube SE	1,495					Sonus Faber Electa Amator	3,293	
Epos ES22	1,185					Sonus Faber Extrema	6,500	
Harbeth HL-K6	1,049					Sound-Lab Dynastat	3,790	
Harbeth HL-Compact 7	1,499					Sound-Lab Aura	6,490	
Harbeth BBC L55/12A	1,499					Sound-Lab Pristine III+	7,990	
Heybrook Sextet	1,299					Sound-Lab A-3	11,990	
Impulse Kora	1,250					Sound-Lab Ultimate II	13,950	
Jamo Concert 8	1,300					Sound-Lab A-1	13,990	
JBL L40	1,000					Sound-Lab Ultimate III	18,950	
JBL PS15	1,000					Sound-Lab Ultimate I	23,950	
JBL SVA 2100	1,250					Spendor SP9/1	3,450	
JBL L80	1,250					T+A AD4	3,940	
JBL L90	1,500					T+A AD3	4,660	
JM Lab Profil 77	1,050					T+A AD2	8,590	
JM Lab PS 5.1	1,250					Tannoy Edinburgh TW	3,250	
JM Lab Spectral 909.1	1,375					Tannoy Definition D900	3,999	
Jordan Watts JH1+1	995					Tannoy GRF Memory TW	4,000	
JPW Ruby 4	1,000					Tannoy Westminster TW	6,600	
KEF Q75	999					Tannoy Canterbury 15 TW	7,720	
KEF Ref. Model One	1,199					Tannoy Westminster Royal	14,920	
Kelly KT3	1,200					TDL Ref Standard-m	6,000	
Keswick Tonino	999					Triangle Nemo Altair	4,250	
Keswick Figaro Evolution	1,099					Wilson Audio Cub	5,495	
Keswick Milano	1,199					Wilson Audio WATT 5	8,750	
Keswick Legato	1,199					Wilson Audio WITT	8,888	
Keswick Amber	1,499					Wilson Benesch Actor	3,800	
Linn Tukan Aktiv	1,050					Wilson Benesch ACT1 spkr	6,857	
Linn Keilidh Aktiv	1,250							
L Voice Auditorium	1,500							
Lowther Accolade 2	1,199							
Lumley L/M3.5	1,050							
Magnat Vintage 720	1,199							
Magneplanar SMC-G SE	990							
Magneplanar MG-0.6 SE	1,370							
Meridian Argent 1	995							
M&K S-125	1,150							
Mission 754f	1,298							
M-A Studio 12	1,000							
M-A 705PMC	1,400							
Mordaunt-Short Perf 820	1,495							
Mus Tec Condor	1,000							
Mus Tec Hawk	1,250							
Mus Tec Eagle	1,500							
Naim Credo	1,060							
NHT VT-1.2	999							
NHT Model 2.5	1,299							
Opera Terza	999							
Opera Callas Gold	1,050							
Opera Divina II	1,500							
Origin Live Sovereign	975							
Paradigm Studio/100	950							
Polk LS70	1,200							
Polk RT20p	1,500							
Proac Tablette 50 SIG	899							
Proac Response 1 SB	1,199							
Prof Monitor Co LC1	935							
Prof Monitor Co AB1	1,496							
Rega XEL	1,040							
RMS Revelation S 1	1,299							
Rogers Q6/28	1,399							
Roksan Qjan 3X	995							
Royd The Albion	985							
Ruark Broadsword II	899							
Ruark Paladin	1,099							
Shahinian Super Elf	875							
Shahinian Compass	1,395							
<b>£1501 TO £3000</b>								
Acoustic Energy AE1 Sig	1,695	Acoustic Energy AE2 Sig	2,695	Alon IV Mk II	2,300	Ambience Mod 3.2	1,780	
Apertura Agora Signature	2,295	Apertura Tanagra	2,395	Apertura Tanagra Sig	2,795	ATC SCM20	1,599	
ATC SCM20 Tower	2,099	Audio Note AN-E/D	1,520	Audio Note AN-E/SPx	2,250	Audio Physic Spark 2	1,749	
Audio Physic Tempo	1,999	Audiovector M3	1,899	Audiovector M3 Sig	2,499	Avalon Monitor	2,995	
B&O Beolab 6000	1,550	B&O Beolab 8000	2,100	B&O Beolab Penta 3	2,650	B&W Matrix 804	1,695	
B&W Matrix 80352	2,495	B&W Matrix 80233	2,995	BKS Audio Hybrid 128	2,549	Bose 901 VI	1,650	
Boston Lynfield 300L	2,000	Bravura Virtuoso Bronze	2,995	Carver AL-111P	1,999	Cary SP-301	2,295	
Celestion A3	2,399	Celestion Kingston	2,500	Chano Academy 2	1,649	Chord L55/12A	1,595	
Chord CEL 201	2,130	Chord CEL 202	2,375	Chord CEL 301	2,840	Clements Reference 7	1,995	
Credo SPB 003	1,820	Credo SPB 009	2,453	Dali Grand Coupe	2,500	Def Tech BP2002	2,400	
Diapason Adamantes II	1,895	Diapason Adamantes III	1,995	Dynaudio Contour 1.8	1,842	Dynaudio Craftt	2,598	
Dynaudio Contour 3.0	2,930	ECA Servo A.2	2,450	ELS Res'ch Vision	2,800	Epos ES30	2,385	
Gamma Epoch Ref Five	2,999	Harbeth HL-S8	1,999	Helius Syrius II	2,395	Helius Syrius I	2,850	
Heybrook Octet	1,800	Hi Q Sound SM108	2,000	Horning Aristophane	2,600	Impulse Lali	1,850	
Jamo Concert 11	2,000	JBL L100	1,750	JM Lab Spectral 913.1	1,850	JM Lab Antea	2,850	
Jordan Watts JH2K	2,820	KEF Ref. Model Two	1,599	KEF Ref. Model Three	1,999	Linn Kaber Passve	2,000	
Linn Kaber Aktiv	2,640	Lowther Fidelio	1,999	Lowther Academy	2,399	Lowther Bel Canto	2,699	
Lumley L/M2 MK3	2,995	Magnat Vintage 760	1,999	Magneplanar MG-10 SE	1,650	Magneplanar MG-1.5 SE	1,780	
Magnat Vintage 760	1,999	Magneplanar MG-2.7 SE	2,650	Manticore Matisse	1,890	Martin-Logan Aeries i	2,299	
Meridian M60	2,150	M-A Studio 20SE	2,200	Mordaunt-Short Perf 860	1,895	Mordaunt-Short Perf 880	2,795	
Naim SBL Active	1,830	Naim SBL Passive	1,970	Neolith NEO 1	2,999	NHT VT-2	1,600	
NHT Model 2.9	2,199	Opera Caruso II	2,350	Origin Live Conqueror	1,650	Paragon Jubilee	1,995	
Pentachord Prcolum	1,649							
Polk LS90	1,700	Posselt Albatross	2,500	Proac Response 2S	2,000	Proac Studio 250	2,249	
Proac Response 2.5	2,700	Prof Monitor Co IB1S	2,099	Rehdeko RK115	1,700	Rogers L55/9	1,549	
Ruark Crusader II	1,599	Ruark Equinox	1,849	Ruark Accolade	2,699	SD Acoustics SD5	1,549	
SD Acoustics SD1E	2,995	Shahinian Arc	1,875	Shahinian Obelisk	2,695	Shinpy Eurtimica	1,995	
Shinpy Altair	2,895	Silverado Silverado 1	1,995	Sonus Faber Minima Amator	1,566	Sound-Lab Quantum	2,150	
Spendor SP7/1	1,990	Spendor SP100	2,099	T+A TB 140	1,680	Tannoy Definition D500	1,999	
Tannoy Stirling TW	2,200	Tannoy Definition D700	2,500	TDL Studio Monitor-m	2,750	Totem Mann-2	2,795	
Triangle Zays	1,750	Triangle Altinis	2,250	Triangle Extan	2,950	Wilson Benesch Orator	2,700	
<b>OVER £3000</b>								
Acoustic Energy AE5	7,995	Alon IV Mk II	3,495	Alon Lotus SE	3,495	Alon V Mk III	4,995	
Alon Adriana	8,500	Alon Circe	9,995	Alon Phalanx	19,000	Ambience Mod 5.0	9,550	
Apertura Athena	6,995	Apertura Atlantea	8,995	ATC SCM20A	3,049	ATC SCM50	3,750	
ATC SCM100	4,499	ATC SCM50A	5,250	ATC SCM100A	5,999	ATC SCM200A	12,999	
ATC SCM300A	14,999	Audio Note AN-JSE Silver	7,900	Audio Note AN-ESE Silver	9,600	Audio Physic Virgo 2	3,399	
Audio Physic Avanti 2	6,699	Audio Physic Caldera	10,599	Audio Physic Medea	24,999	Audiovector 5X	3,999	
Audiovector 6X	5,699	Avalon Avatar	4,495	Avalon Arcus	6,000	Avalon Eclipse	6,495	
Avalon Radian	10,995	Avalon Osiris	72,000	B&W Matrix 801s3	3,995	B&W Silver Signature	5,500	
B&W Nautilus	35,000	B&W Nautilus 802	6,000	Bandor Bandoline	3,290	Bandor Bandora/Mora	3,290	
BKS Audio Hybrid 175	3,995	Boston Lynfield 500L	4,449	Bravura Virtuoso Gold	3,395	Bravura Virtuoso Reference	3,995	
Bravura Accelerando	6,600	Chario Academy 3j	5,999	Credo SPB 012	3,147	Credo SDL 001	5,677	
Dali Grand	4,000	Def Tech BP2000	3,600	Diapason Adamantes Ltd	3,995	Dynaudio Contour 2.8	3,198	
Dynaudio Contour 3.3	4,815	Dynaudio Confidence 3	4,846	Dynaudio Confidence 5	5,924	Dynaudio Consequence	14,566	
Electrofluidics Sonolith 2.2xt	5,999	ELS Res'ch Vista	3,900	ELS Res'ch Illusion MkII	9,000	Fase Evoluzione Aria	3,100	
Horning Agathon	3,555	Impulse Ta'us	3,100	Infinity Sigma	5,995	Infinity Epsilon	9,995	
Jamo Oriel	7,000	JBL S2600	3,500	JBL S3100	4,000	JM Lab Alcor	4,995	
JM Lab Utopia	16,000	JM Lab Grande Utopia	33,000	Jordan Watts JH5K	3,950	Jordan Watts JH10K	7,570	
KEF Ref. Model Four	3,299	Keswick Zero 2	7,000	Linn Kelth Aktiv	6,000	L Voice Air Scout	19,500	
L Voice Air Partner S	37,200							
Lowther Delphic	3,099	Lowther Opus One	4,999	Lumley L/M 2 Sig. Mk3	4,500	Magnat Vintage 770	3,500	
Magneplanar MG-3.5SE	3,800	Magneplanar MG-20 SE P	10,300	Magneplanar MG-20 SE A	11,000	Martin-Logan SL3	3,499	
Martin-Logan CLS Ilz	4,555	Martin-Logan Re-Quest	5,875	Martin-Logan Monolith 5	7,440	Martin-Logan Monolith IIP	8,550	
Martin-Logan Monolith IIXPB	11,900	Meridian DSP5000	3,295	Meridian DSP5500	5,950	Meridian DSP6000	9,400	
M-A Studio 50	4,000	M-A Studio 60	6,000	Naim DBL Active	7,414	Neolith NEO 2	3,499	
Neolith NEO 3	4,999	NHT Model 3.3	3,500	Paragon Regent	3,490	Proac Response 3.5	4,250	
Proac Response 5	9,000	Proac Response 4	12,000	Prof Monitor Co MB1P	4,370	Prof Monitor Co BB5 A	16,688	
Quad ESL63	3,450	Rehdeko RK125	3,200	Rehdeko RK145	4,800	Rehdeko RK175	8,800	
Revel Gem	5,295	Rockport Syzygy	15,000	Rockport Procyon	32,500	Shahinian Hawk	4,995	
Shahinian Diapason	8,895	Shinpy Enigma	3,995	Shinpy Euphonia	5,995	Shinpy Magnifica Suprema	14,500	
Shun Mook Bella Voce	6,800	Sonus Faber Electa Amator	3,293	Sonus Faber Extrema	6,500	Sound-Lab Dynastat	3,790	
Sound-L								

## Factsback

For access to past reviews see page 145.

### SUBWOOFERS (CONTINUED)

Boston VR2000	A	THX	800
Celestion S11	A		349
Cerwin-Vega HT-10D	A		200
Cerwin-Vega HT-12D	A		250
Chario Syntar Bass	A		299
Chario Hipor Bass	A		499
Credo SDC 001	A		3,054
H/K Citation 7.4	A	THX	875
Infinity SSW-10	A		500
Jamo SW503E	A		220
Jamo SW400E	A		330
Jamo SW505E	A		400
Jamo Sub One	A		400
Jamo SW600e	A		530
JBL Control Sub 6	A		200
JBL PSW800	A		275
JBL Sub 10	A		300
JBL PSW1000	A		325
JBL PSW1200	A		375
JPW Subwoofer	A		130
JPW SW40	A		199
JPW SW60	A		350
JPW SW-120	A		500
KEF Model 20B	A		349
KEF Model 30B	A		499
KEF Model AV1	A	THX	2,499
Kenwood SW500	A		250
Keswick Alto	A		1,299
KLH ASW10-100	A		350
KLH ASW12-120	A		380
Linn AV5150	A		2,850
L Voice RW24	A		11,500
Magnat Vector Sub 30P	A		149
Magnat Vector Sub 30A	A		299
Meridian M2500	A		1,595
M&K VX-7MKII	A		450
M&K V-75 MKII	A		650
M&K V-125	A		800
M&K V-125 (THX)	A	THX	800
M&K MX-70	A		900
M&K MX-150 (THX)	A	THX	1,500
M&K MX-200	A		1,800
M&K MX-300	A	THX	2,500
M&K MX-5000 (THX)	A	THX	2,900
Mission 73AS	A		450
Mission 75AS	A		548
Mordaut-Short T2000	A		500
Mus Tec Sub	A		650
Muse Model 22	A		1,890
Muse Model 18	A		3,790
Neat Gravitats	A		1,095
NHT SW2Ph	A		699
Paradigm PDR10	A		250
Polk PSW50	A		350
Polk PSW150	A		500
Polk PSW300	A		750
REL Q50	A		375
REL Q-100E	A		495
REL Strata II	A		575
REL Storm	A		695
REL Stadium II	A		995
REL Stentor II	A		1,800
REL Studio II	A		4,000
Revel Sub-15	A		2,195
Revolver The Recoil	A		100
R Allen Gold Sub	A		149
R Allen Dim'n Active	A		499
R Allen Magnum Active	A		699
Rogers AB1	A		549
Rogers Sub-bass	A		679
Roksan Ojan 3S	A		795
Sequence FW120	A		249
Solid PB100	A		350
Sony SA-W101	A		230
Sunfire True Sub	A		1,450
TDL Nucleus SBR	A		200
Triangle Sat III	A		650
Tsunami TS200	A		300
Tsunami TS210	A		400
Velodyne VA-68XII	A		399
Velodyne VA-810XII	A		599
Velodyne VA-1012XII	A		699
Velodyne VA-1215XII	A		999
Velodyne FSR-12	A		1,099
Velodyne FSR-15	A		1,299
Velodyne F-1800II	A		1,999
W'dale Modus Sub Bass	A		180
W'dale Modus Powered Sub	A		350
Wilson Audio Puppy 5.1	A		8,450
Wilson Audio Whow III	A		12,500
Yamaha YST-SW40	A		140
Yamaha YST-SW80	A		180
Yamaha YST-SW150	A		280
Yamaha YST-SW300	A		350

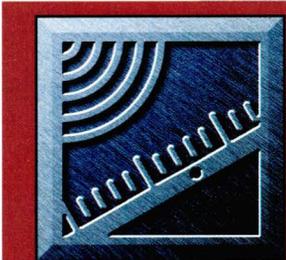


### TO NEARMS

#### KEY

- ⊖ - Pivoted.
- ## - Parallel tracking.

Air Tangent IC	##	4,600
Air Tangent 10B	##	8,600
Air Tangent Reference	##	14,000
Audio Note AN-ARM 1	⊖	169
Audio Note AN-0s	⊖	795
Audio Note AN-1s	⊖	995
Audiomeca SL5	##	2,500
Clearaudio TQ-1 Improved	##	1,950
Dynavector 507	⊖	1,995
Graham 1.5 Basic	⊖	1,695
Graham Mk 2.0	⊖	2,650
Helius Orion 4 Copper	⊖	549
Helius Cyalene 2	⊖	1,495
Kuzma Stogi	⊖	750
Kuzma Stogi Ref	⊖	1,250
Linn Akito	⊖	500
Linn Ekos	⊖	1,500
Manticore Musician II	⊖	595
Manticore Magician II	⊖	895
Manticore Magician 12	⊖	995
Moth Mk I	⊖	109
Moth MKIII Stainless	⊖	146
Moth Mk III Tungsten	⊖	174
Moth Moth 900	⊖	598
Naim ARO	⊖	1,040
N'ham Space	⊖	450
N'ham Paragon 3	##	550
N'ham Paragon 2	##	800
N'ham Mentor	⊖	800
N'ham Foot	⊖	1,100
N'ham Paragon 1	##	1,600
Rega RB250	⊖	109
Rega RB300	⊖	174
Rega RB900	⊖	598
Rockport Series 7000	##	6,000
Roksan Tabriz	⊖	320
Roksan Tabriz Zi	⊖	420
Roksan Artemiz	⊖	895
SME 3009 Ser II Imp	⊖	309
SME 3009 S2 Ser II Imp	⊖	338
SME Series II 3009-R	⊖	514
SME Series II 3010-R	⊖	526
SME Series II 3012-R	⊖	565
SME 309	⊖	689
SME 310	⊖	705
SME 312	⊖	802
SME Series IV	⊖	983
SME Series V	⊖	1,461
Wheaton Music Tri-Planar 4i	⊖	3,000
Wheaton Music Tri-Planar 5i	⊖	3,250
Wilson Benesch Act 0.5	⊖	795
Wilson Benesch ACT2	⊖	1,350
Zeta AS	⊖	469
Zeta VDH	⊖	549



### TUNERS

#### KEY

- 'P20' (etc.) - Number of presets.
- RDS - Radio Data System; receives text information on station, programme type etc.

Akai AT1200	P30	170
AMC T7	P30	130
Arccam Alpha 7	P24	230
Arccam Alpha 8	P24	280

Arccam Delta 280	P20	300
Ariston TX-510	P20	60
Aura TU80	P30	350
AVI S2000MT	P16	599
AVI S2000MT2	P99	899
Carver TX-8R	P20	469
Creek T43	P68	399
Day Sequerra FM Ref		5,937
Day Sequerra S B'd cast Mon		14,640
Denon TU-260L	P20	120
Denon TU-215RD	P40	150
Denon TU-425RD	P40	200
Fanfare FT1	P08	1,395
H/K TU930	P30	150
H/K TU950	P30	200
Kenwood KT-2080	P20	130
Kenwood KT-3080	P30	180
Linn Kudos	P50	775
Linn Kremlin	P80	2,600
Magnum Dynalab FT11		550
Magnum Dynalab FT-101A		825
Magnum Dynalab Etude		1,250
Magnum Dynalab 108		4,500
Marantz ST-48	P30	119
Marantz ST-17	P60	600
McIntosh MR7084	P50	2,499
McIntosh MX118	P50	4,999
McIntosh MX130	P50	6,999
Meridian 504	P30	695
Michi RHT-10	P16	895
Micromega Minium FM Mk2	P39	329
Micromega Tuner	P39	750
Mission Cyrus FM7	P29	400
Musical Fidelity E50	P20	300
NAD 412	P24	190
NAD 414RDS	P20	250
NAD 710	P34	270
NAD 712	P24	330
Naim NATO3		595
Naim NATO2		1,080
Naim NATO1		1,730
Onkyo T 421CRDS	P30	180
Onkyo T 409	P30	230
Onkyo T 411RDS	P30	260
Pioneer F-204RDS	P30	140
Pioneer F-504RDS	P40	250
Pioneer F-504RDS Precision	P40	300
Quad 77FM	P25	700
Rega Radio	P24	298
Roksan Caspian	P50	595
Rotel RT-935AX	P20	160
Rotel RT940AX	P20	200
Sony ST-5E200	P30	100
Sony ST-5E300	P30	120
Sony ST-5E500	P30	140
Sony ST-5E700	P30	180
Sony ST-SA3ES	P50	250
T+A T1200R	P39	745
TAG McLaren T20	P39	1,099
TEAC T-R400	P20	120
TEAC T-H500	P30	170
TEAC TB-X10	P20	400
Technics ST-GT350L	P30	130
Technics ST-GT550L	P39	180
Technics ST-GT650L	P39	230
Thorens TRT-2000	P59	499
Yamaha TX-480L	P40	100
Yamaha TX-10 II	P40	130
Yamaha TX-492RDS	P40	130
Yamaha TX-59 2RDS	P40	180
Yamaha RX-396RDS	P40	250



### TURNTABLES

#### KEY

- ⊖ - Arm included.
- ⊖ - Cartridge included.

Audio Note AN-TT 1	⊖	349
Dual CS435-1	⊖	150
Dual CS455	⊖	190
Dual 505-4 UK	⊖	250
Eclipse TT430	⊖	70
Genexa Lab-710	⊖	60
Genexa Lab-810	⊖	70
Kenwood KD-492F	⊖	100
Michell Mycro	⊖	455
Moth Alamo	⊖	199
Moth Kanoot MkI Arm	⊖	279
Moth Kanoot Mk3 Arm	⊖	329

NAD 533	⊖	220
N'ham Interspace	⊖	500
Pioneer PL-J2500-C	⊖	80
Pioneer PL-990	⊖	130
Pro-Ject 0.5/OM10	⊖	170
Pro-Ject 1/510	⊖	210
Pro-Ject 2/520	⊖	325
Pro-Ject 6/MC15	⊖	500
Rega Planar 78	⊖	214
Rega Planar 2	⊖	214
Rega Planar 3	⊖	274
Roksan Radius	⊖	470
Sherwood PM8550	⊖	130
Sony PS-LX150H	⊖	90
Sony PS-LX300H	⊖	150
Systemdek I/920	⊖	136
Systemdek IIX/900	⊖	230
Systemdek I/920/Moth	⊖	235
Systemdek IIXE/900Ap	⊖	388
Systemdek 960	⊖	500
Systemdek 2X2	⊖	500
Technics SL-J110D	⊖	120
Technics SL-BD20	⊖	160
Technics SL-BD22	⊖	180
Technics SL-1210MKII	⊖	400
Technics SL-1200MKII	⊖	400
Thorens TD-180 AT91	⊖	190
Thorens TD-280 IV/UK	⊖	210
Thorens TD-166 V/UK/RB	⊖	400
Thorens TD-318 III TP50	⊖	500

### OVER £500

Audio Note AN-TT 2		995
Audio Note AN-TT 3		1,995
Audiomeca Romance	⊖	1,895
Audiomeca J1	⊖	3,500
Basis 2000		1,995
Basis 2001		2,995
Basis Ovation II		5,400
Basis 2500		5,495
Basis 2800		7,495
Basis Debut Gold Std III		8,200
Basis Debut Gold Vacuum		10,300
Chantray QT Level 2	⊖	705
Clearaudio Evolution	⊖	1,790
Clearaudio Reference	⊖	3,990
DNM-Reson Rota 1	⊖	3,900
DNM-Reson Rota 2	⊖	5,600
Impulse Moskito	⊖	695
Kuzma Stabi	⊖	1,950
Kuzma Stabi Reference		3,750
Linn LP12 Basic		1,100
Linn LP12 Lingo		1,750
Manticore Mantra		895
Manticore Magister		4,400
Michell Gyrodek		875
Michell Orbe		1,995
N'ham Spacedeck		750
N'ham Graphic		1,200
N'ham HyperSpacedeck		1,500
N'ham Mentor		2,600
N'ham Anna Log		5,500
Oracle Paris		1,100
Oracle Delphi		3,370
Oracle Delphi 15th Anniv		3,800
Pink Triangle Tarantella		680
Rega Planar 9	⊖	1,598
Reson RS1M	⊖	600
Reson Rota 1	⊖	3,900
Rockport Capella II		7,000
Rockport Sirius III		50,000
Roksan Xerxes 10		1,295
Roksan TMS		2,750
SME Model 20/2		3,403
SME Model 20/2A	⊖	4,863
SME Model 30/2		10,675
SME Model 30/2A	⊖	12,135
Stratosphere ST1		6,500
Technics SL-1200LTD	⊖	700
Thorens TD-146 VI TP50	⊖	550
Thorens TD-2001 TP90	⊖	700
Thorens TD-520 SME		1,050
Well Tempered Record Player	⊖	1,850
Well Tempered Classic	⊖	2,980
Well Tempered Super	⊖	3,900
Well Tempered Reference	⊖	5,300
Wilson Benesch Circle		795
Wilson Benesch WB Turntable		1,775
Wilson Benesch Full Circle	⊖	1,995

## PRODUCTS TESTED & RATED

Turn over for a full round-up of all reviewed products!

## A

Acoustic Energy • tel 01285 654432  
 Acoustic Precision • tel 01483 267516  
 Acurus • Audio Illusion • tel 01753 542761  
 Adyton • Aanvil Audio • tel 01359 240687  
 Air Tangent • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Aiwa • tel 0181 897 7000  
 Akai • tel 0181 897 6388  
 AKG • Path Group plc • tel 01494 441736  
 Alchemist • Henley Designs • tel 01491 834700  
 Allison Acoustics • tel 01484 603333  
 Alon • Sound Image UK • tel 0181 255 6868  
 Alphason • tel 01942 678000  
 Altis • HEAR • tel 01232 319148  
 Ambience • Esoteric Aud. Imp. • tel 01243 533030  
 AMC • Tangent Acoustics • tel 0500 828620  
 Analysis • Audio Spectrum • tel 01752 363355  
 Apertura • Audiophile Club • tel 0181 882 2822  
 Apogee Digital • Sound Image • tel 0181 255 6868  
 Arcam • A&R Cambridge • tel 01223 203203  
 Ariston • Richer Sounds plc • tel 0171 940 2240  
 Art Audio • tel 0115 963 7795  
 Atacama • Sambell Eng. • tel 01455 283251  
 ATC Loudspeaker Technology • tel 01285 760561  
 ATD • Aanvil Audio • tel 01359 240687  
 Audio Analogue • UKD • tel 01753 652669  
 Audio Innova • Richer Sounds • tel 0171 940 2240  
 Audio Note • PM Components • tel 01474 560521  
 Audio Physic • Aanvil Audio • tel 01359 240687  
 Audio Research • Abs. Snds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Audio Synthesis • tel 0115 922 4138  
 Audio Technica • tel 0113 277 1441  
 Audiogram • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Audiomeca • Kronos Distrib. • tel 01868 748632  
 Audiophile Furniture • tel 01342 826262  
 Audiophile International • tel 01932 821111  
 Audioquest • A&R Cambridge • tel 01223 203203  
 Audiostatic • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Audiovector • Glave • tel 01622 664070  
 Avalon • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 AVF • tel 01952 670009  
 AVI • AV International • tel 01453 765682

## B

B&O • Bang & Olufsen UK • tel 0118 969 2288  
 B&W Loudspeakers • tel 01903 750750  
 Bandor • tel 01494 714058  
 Basis • RT Services • tel 01235 810455  
 BCD Engineering • UKD • tel 01753 652669  
 Benz-Micro • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Beyerdynamic • Veda Products • tel 01279 501111  
 Bose UK • tel 01795 475341  
 Boston Acoustics • Portfolio • tel 01489 795519  
 Boulder • Sound Image UK • tel 0181 255 6868  
 Bow Tech • Path Premier • tel 01494 441736  
 B\* • Thomas Transducers • tel 01424 813888  
 Bryston • PMC • tel 01707 393002

## C

Cable Talk • tel 01276 686717  
 Cambridge Audio • Richer Snds • tel 0171 940 2240  
 Cardas Audio • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Carver • Sound Dept • tel 01235 555622  
 Cary • Audiophile Club • tel 0181 882 2822  
 Castle Acoustics • tel 01756 795333  
 CAT • Audio Reference • tel 01483 575344  
 Celestion International • tel 01622 687442  
 Cenwin-Vega! • CSE • tel 01423 359054  
 Chario • MDC • tel 01992 573030  
 Chord • The Chord Company • tel 01722 331674  
 Chord Electronics • tel 01622 764874  
 Classé Audio • Audio Illusion • tel 01753 542761  
 Clearaudio • Absolute Analogue • tel 01425 654488  
 Clements • Wollaton Audio • tel 0115 928 4147  
 Connections UK • tel 01487 832424  
 conrad-johnson • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Copland • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 CR Developments • tel 01702 469055  
 Credo • Townshend Audio • tel 0181 979 2155  
 Creek Audio • tel 0181 361 4133  
 Crimson • Virtual Reality • tel 01277 227355  
 Croft • tel 01902 656517  
 Custom Design • tel 0191 262 4646  
 Cymbol • tel 01273 517358

## D

Dali • Audio Club • tel 01296 482017

Dawn Audio • tel 01932 355040  
 Day Sequerra • Abs. Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Deadrock • Path Distribution • tel 0121 749 2240  
 Definitive Tech • Gecko Inc • tel 0181 681 1817  
 Denon • Hayden Laboratories • tel 01753 888447  
 Densen • tel 01582 561227  
 Diapason • UKD • tel 01753 652669  
 DNM • Virtual Reality • tel 01277 227355  
 DPA • tel 01446 747288  
 Dual • Revolver UK • tel 0161 973 0505  
 Dynaudio UK • tel 01732 451938  
 Dynavector • Pear Audio • tel 01665 830862

## E

EAR • Yoshino • tel 01480 453791  
 Eclipse • Richer Sounds plc • tel 0171 940 2240  
 Electrocompaniet • Sound Im • tel 0181 255 6868  
 Electrofluidics • tel 0171 735 3300  
 Electrostatic Res. • Audusa • tel 0181 241 9826  
 EMF Audio • tel 0181 361 6734  
 Epos Acoustics • tel 01705 498866  
 Exposure Electronics • tel 01273 423877

## F

Fase Evoluzione • Esoteric AI • tel 01243 533030  
 Finite Elemente • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Frameworks • Arrow Consult • tel 01702 611451

## G

Gale • Richer Sounds plc • tel 0171 940 2240  
 Genesis • MDC • tel 01992 573030  
 Genexxa • Intertan • tel 01922 434000  
 GLL • tel 01705 492777  
 Goertz • Townshend Audio • tel 0181 979 2155  
 Golden Tube Audio • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Goldring Products • tel 01284 701101  
 Goodman Industries • tel 01705 391000  
 Graaf • UKD • tel 01753 652669  
 Grado • Goldring Products • tel 01284 701101  
 Graham • Audio Reference • tel 01483 575344  
 GT Audio • tel 01895 833099

## H

Harbeth Acoustics • tel 01444 440955  
 harman/kardon • Gamepath • tel 01908 317707  
 Harmonix • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Helios • Absolute Analogue • tel 01425 654488  
 Henley Designs • tel 01491 834700  
 Heybrook Hi-Fi • tel 01752 333800  
 Hørning • Definitive Audio • tel 0115 981 3562

## I

Impulse Loudspeakers • tel 0181 766 0474  
 Infinity • Gamepath • tel 01908 317707  
 Insert Audio • Glave • tel 01622 664070  
 Interaudio • Bose UK • tel 01795 475341  
 Ixos • Path Distribution • tel 0121 749 2240

## J

Jadis • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Jamo UK • tel 01327 301300  
 JBL • Gamepath • tel 01908 317707  
 Jecklin • May Audio Marketing • tel 01535 632700  
 JM Lab • Sound Image • tel 0181 255 6868  
 John Shearne • tel 01438 740953  
 Jolida • Wollaton Audio • tel 0115 928 4147  
 Jordan Watts Acoustics • tel 0181 985 1646  
 JPW Loudspeakers • tel 01752 333800  
 JVC UK • tel 0181 208 7654

## K

KEF Audio • tel 01622 672261  
 Kenwood Electronics UK • tel 01923 816444  
 Keswick Audio • tel 01977 671823  
 Kimber Kable • Russ Andrews • tel 01539 823247  
 KLH Europe • tel 01473 833228  
 Koetsu • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Krell • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Kronos Hi-Fi • tel 01868 753606  
 Kudos • tel 01732 461648  
 Kuzma • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153

## L

LAT International • Audusa • tel 0181 241 9826  
 Lexicon • Harman Audio • tel 0181 207 5050  
 LFD • tel 01255 422533  
 Lieder • Esoteric AI • tel 01243 533030  
 Linn Products • tel 0500 888909  
 Living Voice • Definitive Audio • tel 0115 981 3562  
 London • Presence Audio • tel 01444 461611  
 Lowther Voight • tel 0181 300 9166  
 Lumley Ref. • Sounds of Music • tel 01892 547003

Lynwood Electronics • tel 01709 873667  
 Lyra • Path Premier • tel 01494 441736

## M

MAG Audio (UK) • tel 0181 555 1222  
 Magneplanar • tel 01865 883535  
 Magnum • Hailey Audio • tel 01992 442425  
 Magnum Dynalab • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Mana Acoustics • tel 01753 655744  
 Manley Pro • Sound Image UK • tel 0181 255 6868  
 Mantecore Audio Visual • tel 01767 318437  
 Marantz Hi-Fi UK • tel 01753 680868  
 Mark Levinson • Path Premier • tel 01494 441736  
 Martin-Logan • Abs Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 McIntosh • Picture the Sound • tel 01483 454991  
 Meracus • Aanvil Audio • tel 01359 240687  
 Meridian Audio • tel 01480 434334  
 Michell • Michell Engineering • tel 0181 953 0771  
 Michi • Gamepath • tel 01908 317707  
 Micromega • Surrey Sounds • tel 01932 254297  
 Miller & Kresiel • Gecko Inc • tel 0181-681 1817  
 Monitor • Centralforce • tel 01480 451777  
 Monarchy • Wollaton Audio • tel 0115 928 4147

Monitor Audio • tel 01223 242898  
 Monrio • UKD • tel 01753 652669  
 Mordaunt-Short • tel 01705 498866  
 Moth Marketing • tel 01234 741152  
 Muse Electronics • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Musical Fidelity • tel 0181 900 2866  
 Musical Technology • tel 01494 793137  
 Myriad Systems • tel 01705 265508

## N

NAD • Audio Club • tel 01296 482017  
 Naim Audio • tel 01722 332266  
 Neat Acoustics • tel 01833 631021  
 Neolith • Picture the Sound • tel 01483 454991  
 Nordost • tel 01352 730251  
 Nottingham Analogue • tel 01773 762947  
 NHT • + 1 707 748 5940

## O

Onkyo • Audio Club • tel 01296 482017  
 Opera • UKD • tel 01753 652 669  
 Optimum Int. 2000 • tel 01274 583249  
 Oracle • Esoteric Audio Imports • tel 01243 533030  
 Orelle Hi-Fi • tel 0181 810 9388  
 Origin Live • tel 01703 442183  
 Ortofon • Henley Designs • 01491 834700

## P

Paradigm • Richer Sounds plc • tel 0171 940 2240  
 Paragon Acoustic • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Parasound • CSE • tel 01423 359054  
 Pentachord Loudspeakers • tel 0181 788 2228  
 Philips Consumer Electronics • tel 0181 665 6350  
 Picking Cartridges • tel 01904 642463  
 Pink Triangle Projects • tel 0171 703 5498  
 Pioneer High Fidelity (GB) • tel 01753 789500  
 Platinum • Woodstock M & F • tel 01865 481415  
 Polk Audio • tel 01727 827311  
 Posselt • GT Audio • tel 01895 833099  
 Primare • MDC • tel 01992 573030  
 Pro-Ject • Henley Designs • tel 01491 834700  
 ProAc • DNA Marketing • tel 01798 343414  
 Professional Monitor Co • tel 01707 393002  
 Prowire • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 947 5047  
 PS Audio • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Puresonic • Tech + Link • tel 0181 771 8388/9

## Q

QED Audio Products • tel 01276 451166  
 QLN UK • tel 01352 730251  
 Quad • IAG • tel 01480 431737

## R

RA Labs • RDL Acoustics • tel 01484 603333  
 Rega Research • tel 01702 333071  
 Rehdeko • Virtual Reality • tel 01277 227355  
 REL Acoustics • tel 01656 768777  
 Reson • Virtual Reality • tel 01277 227355  
 Revolver UK • tel 0161 973 0505  
 Revox • MDC • tel 01992 573030  
 Richard Allan Loudspeakers • tel 01484 549899  
 RMS Ltd • tel 01284 769848  
 Rockport • Abs Analogue • tel 01425 654488  
 Rogers International • tel 0181 640 2172  
 Roksan • Centralforce • tel 01480 433777  
 Rose Industries • tel 01235 847023  
 Rotel • Gamepath • tel 01908 317707

Rowland • Musical Design Co • tel 01992 573030  
 Royd Loudspeakers Co • tel 01952 290700  
 Ruark • tel 01702 601410

## S

SD Acoustics • tel 0181 399 6308  
 Sennheiser UK • tel 01494 551551  
 Sequence • May Audio • tel 01535 632769  
 Shahinian • Pear Audio • tel 01665 830862  
 Sharp Electronics (UK) • tel 0161 205 2333  
 Sherwood • Richer Sounds plc • tel 0171 940 2240  
 Shipny • Audiophile Club • tel 0181 822 2822  
 Shun Mook • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Shure • HW International • tel 0181 808 2222  
 Silver Sounds • CR Devs • tel 01702 469055  
 Silver Tone • tel 0973 743054  
 Silverado • tel 0181 567 0260  
 SME • tel 01903 814321  
 Solid • B&W Loudspeakers • tel 01903 750750  
 Sonic Frontiers • MPI • tel 01483 454993  
 Sonneteer • tel 01372 468676  
 Sonographe • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Sonus-Faber • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Sony UK • tel 0990 111999  
 Sound Organisation • Goldring • tel 01284 701101  
 Sound-Lab • Audiofreaks • tel 0181 948 4153  
 Soundstyle • Goldring • tel 01284 701101  
 Spondor Audio Systems • tel 01323 843474  
 Stands Unique • tel 01933 461058  
 Stanton • Lamba plc • tel 01728 40527  
 Stax • Path Premier • tel 01494 441736  
 Stemfoot Audio • Audio Synergy • tel 01924 406016  
 Straightwire • CSE • tel 01423 359054  
 Sugden • Audio Synergy • tel 01924 406016  
 Sumiko • Path Premier • tel 01494 441736  
 Sumo • Audusa & Co • tel 0181 241 9826  
 Sunfire • Audusa & Co • tel 0181 241 9826  
 Supra • Glave • tel 01622 664070  
 Synergy • Richer Sounds plc • tel 0171 940 2240

## T

T+A • Richard Hirschmann • tel 01234 345999  
 TAG McLaren Audio • tel 0800 7838007  
 Talk Electronics • tel 01276 686030  
 Tangent Acoustics • tel 0500 828620  
 Tannoy • tel 01236 420199  
 Tara Labs • Sound Image UK • tel 0181 255 6868  
 Target Audio Products • tel 01582 401244  
 TDL Electronics • tel 01628 850111  
 TEAC UK • tel 01923 819630  
 Tech + Link • tel 0181 771 8388/9  
 Technics • Panasonic • tel 0990 357357  
 Tesseract Research Ltd • tel 0181 669 0011  
 Theta • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Thiel • Picture the Sound • tel 01483 454991  
 Thorens • Portfolio Marketing • tel 01489 795519  
 Titan • tel 01702 206870  
 Totem • May Audio Marketing • tel 01535 632700  
 Townshend Audio • tel 0181 979 2155  
 Transfiguration • Audio Ref. • tel 01483 575344  
 Transparent Audio • Abs. Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Triangle • Kronos Distribution • tel 01868 748632  
 Trichord Research • tel 01684 573524  
 Trilobyte Audio Systems • tel 0181 856 2499  
 Tube Technology • tel 01932 821111

## U

UKD-Opera • UKD • tel 01753 652669  
 Unison Research • UKD • tel 01753 654531

## V

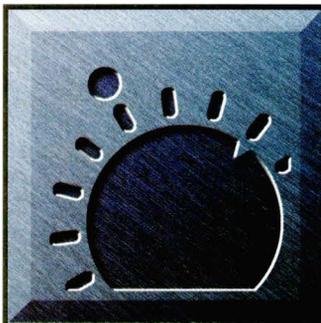
van den Hul • tel 0181 810 9388  
 Vandersteen • A&R Cambridge • tel 01223 203203  
 Vivanco UK • tel 01442 403020  
 Vivante • tel 0181 977 6600  
 VPI • Absolute Analogue • tel 01425 654488

## W

Wadia • MDC • tel 01992 573030  
 Well Tempered • Pear Audio • tel 01665 830862  
 Wharfedale • IAG • tel 01480 431737  
 Wilmslow Audio • tel 01455 286603  
 Wilson Audio • Absolute Sounds • tel 0181 971 3909  
 Wilson benesch • tel 0114 285 2656  
 Wireworld • Richer Sounds plc • tel 0171 940 2240  
 Woodside Electronics • tel 01994 448271

## Y

Yamaha Electronics UK • tel 01923 233166  
 YBA • Kronos Hi-Fi • tel 01686 753606



# Amplifiers

The amplifier is at the heart of any hi-fi system, accepting the outputs from various music sources, increasing the amplitude of their signal and then driving the loudspeakers to produce sound. One-box 'integrated' amps rule the roost at low-to-middle price points, but if you pay more, the low-level and high-level signal processes are separated into preamp and power amp boxes, and even separate 'outboard' power supplies come into play. Another luxury is a separate amp for each stereo channel: such devices are known as monoblocks. Finally, output power and sound quality are not necessarily related. Some of the finest amplifiers outputs only 12 Watts, but will yield loudness aplenty when partnered with high-efficiency loudspeakers.

## KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

**LINE INPUTS:** Number of input sockets for line-level (non-vinyl) sources such as CD players, tuners and cassette decks.  
**MM PHONO INPUT:** An input specially designed for moving magnet (high output) phono pickup cartridges.  
**MC PHONO INPUT:** An input for moving coil (low output) phono pickup cartridges.  
**REMOTE CONTROL:** An infrared handset to adjust volume etc.  
**HEADPHONE SOCKET:** An integral output for headphones.  
**POWER OUTPUT (Watts):** Our measurement of an amp's RMS power output into 8 Ohms.  
**RECEIVER:** An amplifier with built-in radio receiver (tuner).  
**FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on p145 of the magazine.  
**ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.  
**H:** High End Review

**B BEST BUY** **R RECOMMENDED** **E EDITOR'S CHOICE**

# Amplifiers

## SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS

MM PHONO INPUTS  
 MC PHONO INPUTS  
 REMOTE CONTROL  
 HEADPHONE SOCKET  
 POWER OUTPUT (W)  
 RECEIVER  
 FACTSBACK NO.  
 ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	RECEIVER	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Alchemist Maxim	319	Vivid and colourful-sounding amp, but just too bold and brassy	5	●				30		1737	154
Alchemist Kraken APD6A	579	Compact, with Darth Vader styling, yet sound quality is meek and mild, despite strong midband dynamics	5	●				55		2150	175
Alchemist Nemesis	700	Good if ultimately undistinguished amplifier whose strengths include warmth, authority and distinctive aesthetics	6					80		2006	168
AMC 3025a	140	Surprisingly potent and easy on the ear, if not especially analytical – classic bargain-basement material, in fact	4	●	●	●	●	30		2045	171
AMC 3050a	170	Tremendous value for money, and a full, big, if rather uninformative sound	4	●	●	●	●	45		1970	167
AMC CVT3030a	400	Beer-budget valve amp, with valve-like virtues (euphony with dynamics) and vices (system dependency, noise)	6	●				30		2001	168
Arcam Alpha 7	260	Decent, if slightly system-fussy amplifier that generally pulls all the right strings	5	●				40		1971	167
Arcam Alpha 8	360	Enjoyably soft-centred amp, won't frighten the animals. Upgradeable via preamp output, and optional remote	5	●				50		1853	162
Arcam Alpha 9	500	Not quite a match for the Alpha 9/9P combo, the solo integrated is nevertheless colourful and explicitly detailed	7				●	70		2007	168
Arcam Alpha 10	800	Although not the best sounding in its class, the Alpha 10's modular nature demands it be taken seriously	5				●	100			181
Audio Analogue Puccini	450	Superbly finished, the entry-level Audio Analogue performs way out of its class	5	●	●			40		2147	175
Audio Analogue Puccini SE	595	Upgraded, more powerful Puccini is disappointingly sluggish and curiously lacking in musical vitality	5	●	●			40			181
Audiogram MB1	493	The only flaws are the amateurish build, a number of technical problems and inconsistent sound quality	4	●			●	40		2235	178
Audio Note Oto SE	1,200	Transparent, dynamic, clear and subtle, but offers limited power output	4					24			126
Audiolab 8000LX	470	Well built, entry-level model lacks bottle and pizzazz. Superseded by new TAG McLaren Audio products	6				●	60		2148	175
Audiolab 8000A	500	The 8000A is a highly disciplined and mature-sounding amp. Superseded by new TAG McLaren Audio products	5	●	●		●	60		1581	140
Audiolab 8000S	700	Informative in every sense, only a slight lack of bite detracts. Superseded by new TAG McLaren Audio products	6				●	60		1740	154
AVI S2000MI	999	Fine, detailed amplifier with excellent timing and strong control of a wide range of loudspeaker loads	5				●	100		2155	175
Bryston B60R	1,249	Great build, but the lazy bass and opaque treble bracket an articulate midband. Comes with 20 year guarantee	5				●	60		2156	175
Cambridge Audio A3i	200	"Maximum information" design, with plenty of usable and reasonably refined power. A snip!	4	●				60		1972	167
Copland CSA8	945	Sophisticated yet transparent, this is one of those amplifiers that sounds good even when the gloss has worn off	5					60		2010	168
Copland CSA14	1,199	Great sound and looks, but avoid high capacitance speaker cables	4	●				60		1416	148
CR Developments CR324	569	Solid and capable on paper, this is a bit of a blunt instrument when let loose on the music	5					150			181
Credo IMP702	850	Old-fashioned looking, but bags of clarity and precision, though it can sound brash in the wrong system	5					70		2157	175
Symbol CA1	499	Lacklustre amplifier tends to underperform with complex material. Best with straightforward compact loudspeakers	6					40		2236	178
Creek 4330	279	Compact, even pretty, but sounds dark and uninviting, with coarse treble and 'woomy' bass	5					40		2052	171
Denon PMA-250SE	160	This amp can sound rough when extended, but within its limits it is open, detailed and likeable	5				●	30		2046	171
Denon PMA-350SE	200	Reinvented in the minimalist tradition, this SE model is a control freak, but can sound wonderful	5				●	50		1856	162
Denon PMA-425R	230	Well-equipped and generally enjoyable but slightly ragged performer	3	●			●	45		1973	167
Denon PMA-725R	350	Warm, bold, up-front presentation, but musically unexciting	5	●	●	●	●	97		1802	157
Denon PMA-1500R	500	Recommended for its outrageous power, especially with problem speakers.	5	●	●	●	●	70			181
Densen Beat B-100 MKII	650	High 'air guitar' factor, and can punch above its weight, but check it will complement your system	5					60		1855	175
DPA Renaissance	595	DPA's first integrated amp is typically innovative, but a little too 'crisp'n'dry' for our tastes	5	●			●	40		1582	140
EMF Audio Sequel	450	Relaxed and restrained design from Mike Creek	5	●			●	50			109
Exposure XX Super	700	Rather transistorised, unexciting sound. Good coherence and rhythm. Best played loud	6					55		1743	154
Electrocompaniet EC1-2	995	A 50 watt amplifier which sounds more powerful, and makes 'real sounding' music.	4					50		2158	175
Gamma Acoustics Gemini	699	Genuine single-ended triode design, but with low power, mundane sound and poor build	3					12		1416	148
Goodmans Delta 900A	130	Coloured and raw sound tarnish high power yield and remarkable pricing, and noisy fan cooling is a real joy-killer	5	●			●	100		2228	178
Harman/Kardon HK610	180	Lively and friendly sound, but could prove too exciting for the faint hearted	6	●			●	30		1465	149
Harman/Kardon HK620	250	Capable and musical amplifier which is one of the nicest at this price. Optional add-in MM/MC board available	6				●	40		1858	162
Hofli Audis Signature	750	A 'no-feedback' circuit giving outstanding resolution, but significant load dependency	4	●				65			181
Jolida 202	695	Well-built and technically accomplished, affordable valve integrated with subtle refined, if not quite gripping sound	4					40		2011	168
JVC AX-V4	200	Respectable performance for a Pro-Logic AV amplifier. Lacks resolution and sparkle, though	5	●			●	63		1805	157
JVC AX-R5	200	Versatile, and lots of even-handed, articulate detail; but let down by superficiality	5	●			●	45		1466	149
Kenwood KA-3020SE	200	Not a brilliant phono stage, but this is a lively, exuberant-sounding amp via CD	5	●			●	50		1130	134
Kerwood KA-5090R	300	Large, well equipped and high tech integrated, but TRAITR output still gives a harsh, unsubtle performance	5	●	●	●	●	65		2053	171
LFD Integrated Zero	549	Lively and brisk, but at the same time cold and unsympathetic	6					50		1584	140
Linn Majik (phono)	800	The cornerstone of Linn's modular hi-fi system is innovative, but sounds vague and confused	5	●	●			33		1013	129
Magnum IA120	265	Mirror finish amplifier with bold, colourful delivery, but needs careful system matching to avoid loss of clarity	6				●	65		2054	171
Magnum IA170	330	Gives a realistic sense of instruments playing within a very believable acoustic; preserves colour and dynamics	6				●	96		1260	142
Magnum IA-200	599	Sweet, valve-flavoured solid state amplifier which flatters where it doesn't cast light	7					160		1860	162
Magnum Class A	690	Lashings of rich and compelling music, but the Class A circuits trade lushness for accuracy	4	●	●			60			116
Magnum Class A SE	795	A MOSFET amplifier drawing inspiration from the world of valves, this is an erratically refined, detailed amplifier	5	●				80		2159	175
Marantz PM-57	200	Well equipped but ultimately anodyne amplifier which lacks for nothing but star quality	5	●			●	50		2049	171
Marantz PM-66SE	230	A bit lush, and power output is limited, but it gives airy, large-scale music. An excellent budget buy	5	●			●	50		1969	167
Marantz PM66 Ki-Signature	400	It knows how to rock and roll with holographic detail and stereo, but prefers small/medium scale acoustic material	5	●			●	50		2003	168
Marantz PM-17	900	Probably worth it for the WBT terminals and other build features alone, but this model doesn't sing as it should	6	●	●	●		60			181

CONTINUED

# Amplifiers

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

MM PHONO INPUTS  
MC PHONO INPUTS  
HEADPHONE CONTROL  
REMOTE CONTROL  
POWER OUTPUT (W)  
RECEIVER FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT (E) COMMENTS

PRODUCT	(E)	COMMENTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	HEADPHONE CONTROL	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)	RECEIVER FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Micromega Tempo 2	900	Idiosyncratic but flexible amplifier with an attractively forward and expressive sound quality					70		181
Mission Cyrus III	598	Beautifully presented, but mid-dominated balance was not liked. Upgradeable using PSX PSU unit					50	1854	162
Mission Cyrus SL	398	Articulate amplifier with build quality to die for, superb, outgoing midband and lean, though well-extended bass					50		168
Monrio ASTY	400	Engaging, but ill-disciplined, even OTT amplifier with unpredictable system compatibility					55	2237	178
Musical Fidelity E1	199	Richly flavoured tone and realistically-scaled imagery distinguish this entry-level Richer Sounds special					30	2050	171
Musical Fidelity E11	299	Well built minimalist amp with a 5 year guarantee, but can sound congested when extended					60	2232	178
Musical Fidelity X-A1	479	Idiosyncratic visuals just another plus for an amp that is powerful, well built, and serves the music superbly					50		181
Musical Fidelity A2	500	Lucid, transparent midband and a full upper bass are provided by this highly proficient A1 replacement					25	1862	162
Musical Fidelity A220	700	Powerful, authoritative and well turned-out amplifier that is easy to match with comparably priced speakers					50	2012	168
Myriad M1120	600	Well styled, well built: a good, even tempered amplifier, though it can sound rather brittle					60	2153	175
NAD 310	100	Fleet and sure of foot, it seems likely to set all appendages tapping with its blend of enthusiasm and artfulness					20	1468	149
NAD 312	200	Another great budget price NAD, and a worthy all-round successor to the 302					25	2051	171
NAD 314	260	Lively if coloured presentation that is musically engaging and easy on the ear					53	1807	157
Naim Nait 3	575	Distinctive and highly musical sounding integrated amp. Perhaps too distinctive for some tastes					30	1748	154
Orelle SA-100	499	A musically rewarding amplifier that grows on you. Trace of coarseness in treble					50	1749	154
Orelle SA-100RX	649	In its latest guise, this is a fluid, articulate and transparent design – and excellent value				Opt	75		181
Pioneer A-204R	160	The A-204R makes no special claims beyond being well equipped and cheap, but displayed unexpected quality					25	2047	171
Pioneer A-300R	200	Its bright and breezy sound is a natural tonic to those of us worn down by the ongoing stress of life					50	1469	149
Pioneer A-405R	250	Fully featured, open and dynamic sounding; makes up in enthusiasm what it occasionally lacks in refinement					45	2230	178
Pioneer A-400X	300	On second audition, this amp was tonally unchanged but less compelling than on its first outing					50	1545	138
Pioneer A-300R Precision	400	Sophisticated variant of the A-300R. Not an obvious winner, but will slowly ply you with its subtle charms					35	1863	162
Pioneer A-605R	400	Intriguing technology, but execution is certainly impeded by excessive gadget count					80	2005	168
Pioneer A-07	999	Curious blend of high-end attributes and inconsistent, though undeniably detailed sound					80	2160	175
Primare A-20 Mk II	799	Everything except packaging has changed in mkII version: but balsier model has lost none of its refinement					70		181
Pro-ject Model 7	300	A minimalist amplifier brimming with good intent, but too quirky for its own good. Either MM or MC phono					40	1264	142
Quad 77 Integrated	700	Compact and sophisticated amp. Has limited inputs when used with 'foreign' components. (Optional system remote)					84	2013	168
Rega Elex	398	Minimalist amplifier, derived from Elicit, is a little uninspiring, though at least it is well behaved					50	1865	162
Roksan Caspian	695	Well-built, open and articulate amplifier, which is also consistent from system to system, and well built					70	2014	168
Rose Scion	615	Unique two-box integrated gives real subtlety and low level resolution, but the sound lacks scale and weight					65	2009	168
Rotel RA-931	150	Rather dry and unforgiving sound from this internally well specified and attractively priced amplifier					35	2048	171
Sony TA-F448BE	250	Minimalist interface is matched to carefully considered circuit with satisfactory effect – but keep the volume in check					55	2055	171
Sony TA-F3000ES	500	Champagne 'shoebbox amp' may lack power reserves, but is quick and articulate. In every sense a knockout					35	2239	178
Talk Electronics Storm 1	500	Good soundstaging and strong detail are provided by this unassuming and not especially powerful model					50	1868	162
Talk Electronics Storm 2	650	Crisp, clean, well defined sound, arguably lacking warmth, but a good midrange purchase overall					50	2154	175
TEAC A-BX7R	700	Characterful balance mars a meticulously designed amplifier. Includes a balanced input, optional MM/MC stage					50	1869	162
Technics SU-A700 Mk 3	250	Fully equipped, high-tech amplifier ultimately fails the authenticity test, and can sound messy and inarticulate					45	1870	162
Technics SU-A800D Mk 2	300	Two-box amplifier looks great, has plenty of gadgets, and makes good, if slightly over-exuberant music					55	2234	178
Technics SU-A900D Mk 2	400	Looks like a pre/power amplifier, but in effect it's an integrated, with a rather soft-centred sound to match					70	2149	175
Woodside ISA230 Disc	1,249	Smooth and inoffensive valve amplifier, though it lacks the sparkle and euphony required for ultimate success					30		116
Yamaha AX-492	220	Powerful, well equipped amplifier at an attractive price, offers powerful and engaging music-making					85	2231	178
Yamaha AX-592	280	Fine, middle ranking amplifier, with a detailed midband but performance declines at frequency extremes					100	2056	171
<b>PREAMPLIFIERS</b>									
Audiolab 8000C	580	Distinctive, stark neutrality will not appeal to all. Superseded by new TAG McLaren Audio products							97
Audiolab 8000Q	1,250	Tested with 8000M monoblock power amps. Superseded by new TAG McLaren Audio products						1301	145
Copland CTA-301MkII	1,399	Sweet sounding, but never gets bogged down in audio treading						1630	151
Crimson 610C/620C	875	Not entirely satisfactory preamp which has dynamic strengths, but underachieves when the volume is raised							181
EAR 802MC	2,599	Tested with 509 Mk 2 power amp. (See Power Amplifier section.)							63
ECA Vista	760	Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system. (Tested with Lectern power amp)						1302	145
Exposure XVII	850	Superbly rhythmic; maybe a bit overpowering in the midband. Tested in Sessions with XVIII Super							142
Jadis JP-30MC	5,978	French tubes, beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange. (Tested with JA 30 power amp)							60
LFD Mistral Linstage	449	Strong ergonomics, generally decent sound, but a little lacking in detail						1930	165
Meridian 501	695	Tight, positive sound, but dispassionate; intense at high levels. (Tested with 555 power amp)						1303	145
Meridian 562V	995	Transparent and capable preamp, also features six digital inputs							140
Meridian 502	1,295	Extremely sophisticated analogue controller with tremendous flexibility and a fast and tidy presentation							162
Moth 30 Passive	149	Modular system gives cracking results. Passive preamp and power amp warrant Best Buy							109
Moth 30 Active Line Stage	349	Excellent-sounding ultra-simple miniature preamp						1931	165
Muse Model Three	1,990	Natural sounding tranny preamp with useful audiophile features. Works beautifully with 160 power amp							166
Musical Fidelity X-PRE	200	Cleverly configured preamp with many upgrade options, and open, lively and engaging sound						2152	175
Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista	1295	Fully remote, nuvistor tube equipped, with fine coherence and musicality							182
NAD 114	270	Beer-budget preamp, sounds focused, detailed and consistent						1932	165
Naim NAC92R	630	Upgradeable preamp uses proprietary socketry. (Tested with NAP90 power amp)						1936	165
Quad 77 Pre	850	Sophisticated design with 2-way remote control console; open colourful sound and very flexible						1941	165
Rega Hal	998	Passive line stages dedicated to Exon power amps.						1942	165
Rose RV-23	450	You can pay more to get a more transparent sound, but it's hard to criticise at the price							77
Rotel RC-971	150	Low price is offset by rather coarse sound quality with certain types of music. (Tested with RB-971 power amp)							178
Sumo Athena IIB	767	Big, natural and tidy-sounding with very natural reproduction of acoustic and electric instruments.						1305	145
Talk Hurricane 2L	649	Design of integrity which gets to the heart, if not the soul, of the music						1937	165
Thorens TTP2000F	699	Glamorous, shoebbox-format, minimalist pre with fine detail and some granularity						1938	165
Woodside SC26 Phono	2,233	Synergistic with STA35, with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency. (Tested with STA35)							100

CONTINUED

# Amplifiers

SPECIFICATIONS

MM PHONO INPUTS  
MC PHONO INPUTS  
REMOTE CONTROL  
HEADPHONE OUTPUT  
POWER OUTPUT (W)  
FACTSBACK NO.  
RECEIVER  
ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE OUTPUT	POWER OUTPUT (W)	FACTSBACK NO.	RECEIVER	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>POWER AMPLIFIERS</b>										
Alchemist Kraken/Pwr	529	Hardly accurate, but entertaining nevertheless.	1				60			124
Arcam Alpha 9P	400	Clear, colourful and well-disciplined, the Arcam is a strong all-rounder that can compete with conviction	1				60	1929		165
Arcam Alpha 10P	£600	Good all-rounder with huge headroom and a taut, controlled sound. Not the last word in transparency	1				100			183
Art Audio Quintet	1,393	Switchable triode, ultralinear output stage. In triode mode, these are 15 of the sweetest Watts around	1				15			109
Audiolab 8000M	1,600	Strong, controlled sound; confident bass, but colourless. Superseded by new TAG McLaren Audio products	1				125	1301		145
Copland CTA-505	2,099	Grown-up amplifier with a refined, yet never over-civilised air	1				67	1630		151
Crimson 620C	875	Not entirely satisfactory power amp which has dynamic strengths, but underachieves when the volume is raised	1				50			181
Cyrus Power	£498	Detail and midband clarity and stand-out qualities. Smooth and refined with most types of music but bass-soft	1				50			183
Densen B-300	£800	Expensive but highly musical. Colourful and warm sound with strong timing and listener involvement	1				100			183
EAR 509 Mk II	3,699	Combining sonic strengths of transistors and valves, this amp warrants attention. (Tested with 802 Preamp)	1				100			63
ECA Lectem	880	Tested with Vista. Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system	1				50	1302		145
LFD Mistral Power	449	Infectious upper band vitality, but LF dynamics lacking – likewise 'grip' and transparency	1				60	1930		165
Meridian 555	750	By providing an open window on the music, this amp is wide open to RF and low level IM distortions	1				60	1303		145
Michell Alecto	1,150	Open, well-focused imagery with natural, refined textures	1				50	1940		165
Moth 60 Watt Stereo	599	Miniature power amp lacks control and finesse – not comfortable with difficult speaker loads	1				60	1931		165
Moth 30 Series Monoblocks	879	Tested with Active Preamp. Demonstrated solid balance and proved adept at delivering vital musical qualities	1				100			155
Musical Fidelity FX2	800	Quality build and imposing presentation is married to strong power yield, tonal colour and finesse	1				100	1934		165
Musical Fidelity X-A50	500	Cleverly configured and attractively packaged, open, lively and engaging sound. Reviewed with X-PRE	1				50			175
Myryad MA120	450	Based in MI120 integrated – see latter for comments, but sounds significantly better when bi-amped with MI120	1				60	1935		165
NAD 214	370	A little lightweight, but detailed, consistent sound quality, and excellent value for money	1				80	1932		165
Naim NAP90	450	Power amp from a Nait integrated with some improvements	1				30	1936		165
Quad 77 Power	600	Open, bold and colourful, with mild compression	1				85	1941		165
Rega Exon	1,196	Monoblock, priced each, dedicated for Hal preamp. Bold, outgoing, in-command kind of sound	1				125	1942		165
Roksan Capsian Power	£595	Excels musically and in conventional hi-fi terms. A power amp for people with long-term satisfaction in mind	1				70W			183
Rotel RB-971	200	Somewhat better than the accompanying preamp – clean, mean and bridgeable. (Tested with RC-971)	1				70			178
Rotel RB-980BX	450	Tames enthusiastically recorded material with a laid-back and occasionally smeared sound	1				120			155
Sirius D200	2995	Single MOSFET pair per side gives tremendous resolution and timing (balanced only)	1				200			183
Sumo Polaris III	950	Tested with Athena IIB. Big and tidy-sounding with very natural reproduction of acoustic and electric instruments	1				164	1305		145
Talk Tornado 2	600	Good, but slightly retiring sound which lacks the authority to stand out in a crowd	1				65	1937		165
Thorens TTA2000	599	Low power shoe-box format, but gutsy and surprisingly subtle and articulate	1				30	1938		165



# Cables

Cables are an integral part of a hi-fi system, required to connect source components to amplifiers, and the latter to speakers.

- Analogue Interconnects connect source components and amplifiers, and run between pre and power amps. They are priced for one-metre terminated pairs.
- Digital interconnects connect CD transports to DACs or digital recorders. They come in optical and electrical varieties, the former being made of plastic or glass. The prices shown are for a terminated linear metre.
- Speaker cables are used between the amplifier and speaker. Our prices are per unterminated metre. Termination (plugs and soldering) costs vary.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **SYMMETRICAL:** A twisted pair of conductors.
- **COAXIAL:** A central 'hot' conductor and a shield that carries the negative signal.
- **STRANDED:** Multiple strands with no intervening insulation.
- **SOLID CORE:** Single or multiple, individually insulated strands.
- **COPPER:** Material used for conductor.
- **SILVER:** Material used for conductor.
- **DIG CABLE TYPE:** O - optical digital; E - electrical digital for CD Players, DACs and digital recorders.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on p145 of the magazine.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.
- **High End Review**

**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

STATUS

# Cables

SPECIFICATIONS

SYMMETRICAL  
COAXIAL  
STRANDED  
SOLID CORE  
COPPER  
DIG CABLE TYPE  
FACTSBACK NO.  
RECEIVER  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	DIG CABLE TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	RECEIVER	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS</b>											
Audio Note AN-A	18	Not especially impressive: warm but well-rounded balance that restricts 'air' but is quite clear									108
Audio Note AN-C	35	Neutral but lacking in subtle texture and unable to distinguish fine detail								1687	131
Audio Note AN-S	99	Up-beat and enthusiastic sound with satisfyingly deep and grumbly bass								1687	131
Audio Note AN-V	179	15 individually insulated silver strands make up this very clean and dynamically unchallenged cable								1687	131
Audioquest Turquoise	40	A 'fit and forget' cable that sounds distinctly lazy									160
Audioquest Topaz 2	60	Sounds flattened out, with poor imaging and grainy treble								2166	176
CableTalk Advanced 2	35	Slight roughness in loud music barely detracts from a well-balanced performance with good imaging								2166	176
Cable Talk Studio 2	65	A first-class performer from tonal, dynamic and rhythmic standpoints									160
Cambridge Pacific	30	Lacks subtlety and bass impact but is otherwise quite serviceable for the price								2167	176
Cambridge Audio Studio Ref	40	Dynamic cable with strong soundstaging and only a slight lack of detail									160
Chord Company Cobra 2	50	Good, strong sound with full-bodied music, less happy with smaller forces								2167	176
Connections Midas HD	39	Canary yellow cable with excellent plugs and an open sound. Slight treble glare									160
DNM TCC75	34	Price for 0.75m. High resolution cable, but best in short runs due to higher than average series impedance								1690	131
DPA Slink	41	Slightly bright and zingy with flat soundstaging and hollow bass, though vocals and strings sound convincing								1690	131
DPA White Slink	75	Bass recedes as the music gets complex; midrange and treble better with quite good detail and imaging								2168	176
DPA Black Slink	245	Initially dark and meaty but after running in, it's lucid and transparent. Quad geometry, Gore-Tex dielectric								1691	131
Goertz M1 Interconnect	145	Soft sound lacking in bite, with excessive and plummy bass (NB sample used in review was only 0.5m)								2168	176
Insert Audio IC100 MkII	47	Mostly good sound is let down by pervasive dryness								2169	176

CONTINUED

# Cables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

SYMMETRICAL COAXIAL STRANDED SOLID CORE COPPER DIG CABLE TYPE SILVER FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	DIG CABLE TYPE	SILVER	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
ixos 104	20	Open and detailed presentation, full bass and silky if overly smooth treble								1692	131
ixos Gamma 1002	39	Lumpy bass, grainy treble, and poor integration. Nice colour, though	●							2169	176
ixos 103	45	Even-handed and generous sound, bass has a well-rounded, bouncy quality								1692	131
ixos 102	60	A bit bright and undynamic, this cable is nevertheless a good all-rounder, whose faults are largely subtractive	●								160
ixos 101	100	A cable with personality: its veiled and shut in quality bring an earthiness to vocals and rhythm guitar alike	●							1693	131
Kimber Hero	110	Slight roughness detracts from some music; seems well suited to rock and jazz. Lively and detailed	●							2170	176
Moth Ley Line Black	100	Offers a full sound, neutral yet very solid and confident in delivery. Expansive imaging retains music's energy	●								108
Moth Ley Line Grey	200	Detailed, but there's a sense of distance between music and listener: vocals are coarse rather than liquid	●								108
Nordost Black Knight	60	Flat black cable that is distinctive but slightly coloured – but not in a wholly negative manner	●								160
Nordost Blue Heaven	145	Very good bass and only slightly grainy treble add up to a well integrated, natural-sounding cable	●								176
Prowire Silver	60	A good cable in every way, with just the occasional hint of coloration and coarseness								2171	176
PAD Elementa	145	A fat, heavy and frankly rather lazy-sounding cable; best with music for small forces	●							2171	176
QED Qnect 2	30	Very well balanced, refined and detailed, this is everything a good cable should be, and excellent value								2172	176
Silvertone Ex-Static	35	Pleasantly unfatiguing and competitively priced cable that lacks detail and insight	●								160
SonicLink Silver Pink	35	Dynamically sensitive and muddle-free. We're unsure about the flesh-coloured finish though...	●								160
Sonic Link Black	49	Nickel-plated copper with a slight dryness in the bass and a hint of treble roll-off don't compromise integration	●							2172	176
Straight Wire Chorus	40	A very confident cable with good bass, though perhaps a shade of treble loss								2173	176
van den Hul The Storm	25	Price for 0.8m. Rich and warm but bass is rolled off: however there's plenty of drive and top end is clean	●							1701	131
van den Hul Source HB	50	Price for 0.8m. Hybrid carbon-fibre/copper cable that is a paragon of naturalness	●								160
van den Hul D102 MkIII	70	A cable with everything; good bass, treble, imaging and naturalness								2173	176
van den Hul The First	210	Using 12,000 carbon fibres, a gentle and subtle sounding cable that conveys oodles of informatio	●							1702	131
van den Hul The Second	240	Wonderfully open and relaxing but also intimately detailed, slightly softens percussive dynamics	●							1702	131
XLO Type 150	50	A restrained but useful cable for taming lively CD players, dynamics lack freedom, treble lacks clarity	●							1703	131
XLO Type 0.1	180	Unusual but highly expressive and detailed with a hint of graininess on powerful vocals								1703	131
<b>DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS</b>											
Audioquest Digital Pro	100	A silver cable with all the drive of Video Z but lacking its clear-cut transparency								E	108
Chord Codac	36	A connection with a stranded inner core and a sound that lacks integration	●							E	108
Chord Prodac	50	Price for 0.6m length. Lively detailed treble, drives music along confidently with no hint of fizz	●							E	1706 131
DPA Opti-link	20	Sound is lacklustre								O	108
DPA Digi-link	28	Can seem slightly impassive but there's no avoiding its exceptionally detailed sound								E	108
ixos 105	25	Extended but soft-edged treble that's mercifully free of fatiguing colourations; plenty of weight, smooth	●							E	1707 131
Kimber Kable Opti-link	50	Appears to be a bog-standard PMNA fibre, yet sounds a little brighter and livelier than most								O	108
Moth Leyline Datalink	140	A thin, coaxial version of Leyline Black with a rather hard and unforgiving character. Too expensive	●							E	108
QED DigiFlex	20	A top performance, low-loss 75 Ohm coax with a very open, almost liquid quality	●							E	108
Siltech HF-6	145	Sounds detailed, very clean and extended, but bass is less well resolved – a treat for high-end systems	●							E	1709 131
SonicLink Green	60	Spacious, positive and engaging if a bit over-crisp at times – very compelling, however	●							E	1709 131
van den Hul The First	125	Exceptionally natural albeit slightly cautious compared to some. Plenty of subtle information and integration	●							E	1710 131
<b>LOUDSPEAKER CABLES</b>											
ALR Jordan QMM	5	Generally neutral, if sometimes bass-shy, but not very communicative	●								183
Audio Note AN-D	4.50	Supplied in linear, non-polarised lengths that are twisted into stereo pairs. Sounds rather grippy and forward									109
Audio Note AN-B	16.50	Well suited to valve systems, elastic bass, methodical but unintrusive and musical									1711 133
Audio Note AN-L	29.50	Fruity bass and expressive vocal rendition was appreciated by the panel, which was happy to accept its foibles	●								1712 133
Audio Note AN-SP	150	A calm and civilised presentation, very quiet in the way it reveals subtle low level detail. Great poise and clarity	●								109
Audioquest F-14	2.2	Ideal for laying under carpets. F-14 encourages a slightly warm and vibrant sound									109
Audioquest Type 4	5	Four 18-gauge OFHC copper conductors wound in a Litz-type fashion increases capacitance but restrains 'bite'	●								109
Audioquest Type 6	9	A very inflexible cable in which the sonic ends don't quite justify the means	●								183
Audioquest Crystal	25	Neutral balance is spoiled by some graininess and smearing	●								168
Bandridge LC7409	4	Detailed and up-beat cable. A bit too steely for classical strings									1800 157
Cable Talk Talk 3.1	2.25	Quite well-balanced but tends to lose bass lines in complex music	●								168
Cable Talk 4.1	4.25	Smooth and cultured sound that lacks fine detail and is a bit too restrained									1800 157
DNM LSC350	6.95	Majors on midband and lower treble lucidity at the expense of bass and extreme treble extension	●								168
DNM LSCB500	12	High impedance can influence the treble response, but this was a winner on sound per pound. Bi-wire									1716 133
DPA Black Sixteen	100	Unflappable resolution of musical details. No dampening of dynamics, simply oodles of taut information	●								1717 133
Gale XL189	1	Slightly bright and not too subtle, but a perfectly acceptable cable for any starter system	●								168



Tel: 0181 348 5676 (2.00-7.00 pm)  
Fax: 0181 341 9368

## Esoteric High Fidelity CABLES

Dealers in: Absolute, Audio Note, Audioquest, Deltec, Electrocompaniet, Harmonix, Kimber, Mandrake, MIT, Siltech, Symo, Transparent, Van den Hul, WBT and others.

... the RIGHT cables  
... in YOUR system  
... for YOUR ears  
... in YOUR home

Contact us by phone, fax, or letter and we'll do our best to help you achieve your goal.  
(Auditions may be subject to a handling charge)

CONNECTIONS

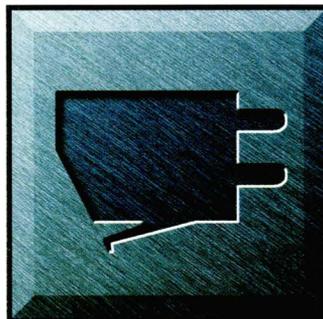
13 John Princes Street, London W1M 9HB (A division of Connection 90' Travel Ltd.)

CONTINUED

# Cables

STATUS

PRODUCT	(€)	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						ISSUE NUMBER	FACTSBACK NO.
			SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	DIG SILVER		
<b>Gale XL315</b>	2	A little lacking in detail but plenty of life and excellent value							1800	157
Gale XL160-2	2.50	Rhythmic and bouncy-sounding bi-wire cable. Can be slightly manipulative							1800	157
Goertz M2	32	Remarkably detailed, smooth, neutral and with excellent bass; check amplifier compatibility	●				●	●		168
Heybrook Heywire	3.5	This well-meaning facsimile of earlier ribbon cables ends up sounding lumpy and uneven					●	●		109
Hitachi LC-OFC	7	Very crisp, very clear and very confident. In the right system would be very expensive to better	●				●	●		109
Kimber 4TC	19.6	A well-balanced cable with good performance in all areas	●				●	●		168
Kimber 4VS	9	A good mix of virtues including particularly fine bass	●				●	●		183
Linn K20	4	Seems to work best with lively, unobtrusive music - can be dry and edgy	●				●	●		183
Naim NACA 5	5.5	A 'dinosaur of a cable', this stiff wire rod doesn't belong outside Naim systems, where it works a treat					●	●		109
Nordost Octava	3	Fair bass but confused treble and some coloration	●				●	●		168
Ortofon SPK100	3	Grey-sounding - strips instruments of their natural richness and resonance. A bit bass-shy, too					●	●		133
Ortofon SPK200	4.99	Good strong bass and fair detail, only slightly marred by a little dryness	●				●	●		183
Ortofon SPK300	8	Tremendously open and atmospheric, with robust, full-blooded bass - if slightly bright at times					●	●		133
Precious Metals SL102	10	Unusual construction gives rather strained sound, only really cheering up with simple musical textures	●				●	●		183
Puresonic 7845	1.95	Big, weighty sound - but too messy and bloated for its own good	●				●	●		183
Puresonic 7891	2.85	Chunky cable design; shame about the sound quality	●				●	●	1800	157
QED Qudos	2.25	Despite high-tech design and excellent Air-Loc plugs, its music-making failed to gel					●	●	1800	157
QED Profile 4x4	9	Good midrange and treble balance, but bass is rather slack and detail not outstanding					●	●		168
QED Qudos Silver	5	Basic figure-8 cable adds value with silver plating, to generally smooth and detailed effect	●				●	●		183
Silver Sounds 12 gauge	15	Basic 'homemade' construction gives fairly neutral sound. Price not outstandingly competitive	●				●	●		168
Sonic Link S300	18	Happiest with simple music; tends to smudge detail in complex pieces	●				●	●		168
SonicLink AST50	1.95	It may look like bell-wire, but AST50 sounds detailed, ordered and balanced					●	●	1800	157
SonicLink AST150	3.95	Slightly plummy bass and a useful way of holding musical strands together					●	●	1800	157
<b>Straight Wire Quartet</b>	8	A good all-rounder with full tone, clear detail and natural ambience	●				●	●		183
Supra Ply 3.4	6.95	Clean sound which stays together well at high levels, with full bass - perhaps a touch of treble restriction	●				●	●		183
Tara Labs Klara	2.95	A good budget cable with an even spread of virtues - and very minor vices - across the board	●				●	●		183
van den Hul Gold Water	7	Bass becomes shy when there's a lot happening, and detail could be clearer	●				●	●		183
van den Hul The Clearwater	7	Despite its evocative title, the Clearwater turns out to be a disappointingly murky-sounding cable					●	●		109
van den Hul The Magnum	38	Touted as vdh's most prestigious twin-lead cable, Magnum sounds soft and old fashioned					●	●		109
van den Hul The Wind	40	'The Wind' kicks up a storm with its lush midrange and bone-crunching bass!					●	●		109
van den Hul Revolution	76	Silver-plated OFC combined with carbon fibre prompts a sombre character with an easy and relaxed treble					●	●	1726	133
XLO Pro Type 625	4	Lively but natural and relaxed-sounding - a hint of congestion at frequency extremes					●	●	1726	133
XLO Pro 600	16.60	Basically neutral tonality but can become aggressive and two-dimensional	●				●	●		168



# Cartridges

Cartridges fall into two groups: high output MM (moving magnet) models, capable of working directly into most phono inputs; and generally more expensive low- and very-low-output MC (moving coil) models. MC cartridges usually have better mechanical integrity, tighter tolerances and give better performance. Many amplifiers are no longer equipped with the necessary phono input for a cartridge, and a separate phono stage is necessary. Phono-input-equipped valve amps need a transformer to cope with MC cartridges. ■ Even basic high-output MM cartridge designs will benefit from a customised amplifier input load. Consult your dealer for further details on this topic.

## KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **MM:** Moving-magnet cartridge with a normal output, suitable for all amplifier phono inputs.
- **MC:** Moving-coil cartridge with a low output, only suitable for high-sensitivity MC amplifier phono inputs.
- **REPLACEABLE STYLUS:** Most MM cartridges have a stylus (needle) that can be removed and replaced when worn out.
- **OUTPUT (MV):** Cartridge output in millivolts.
- **MASS (G):** The mass of your chosen cartridge.

affects the choice of partnering tonearm. Consult dealers or manufacturers to establish which arms and pickups work well together.

- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on p145 of the magazine.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of H-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared.

**H: High End Review**

**B BEST BUY** **R RECOMMENDED** **E EDITOR'S CHOICE**

STATUS

# Cartridges

PRODUCT	(€)	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				ISSUE NUMBER	FACTSBACK NO.	
			MM	MC	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	OUTPUT (mV)			
<b>Audio Technica AT-95E</b>	20	Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced			●	2.8		48	
<b>Clearaudio Signature</b>	1,495	A great all-round performer with fine dynamic vitality and a seductive midband intimacy			●	0.55	11.5	2142	175
<b>Denon DL110</b>	70	A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well			●	1.0	6		48
Denon DL160	90	Although listeners just preferred the 110, its brother here survived lab tests and is still 'thoroughly competent'			●	0.1	6		43
Denon DL103	100	Good performance in bass and good 'life'. Is seriously let down by its spherical stylus which kills subtle detail			●	0.1	6		103
<b>Denon DL304</b>	200	Uncoloured, detailed, tracks superbly. Top notch altogether, and a bargain at the price			●				103
Dynavector Karat 17D2 mk2	450	Clean and controlled sound with taut, tuneful bass. Detailed and musically cogent			●	0.15	5.3		158



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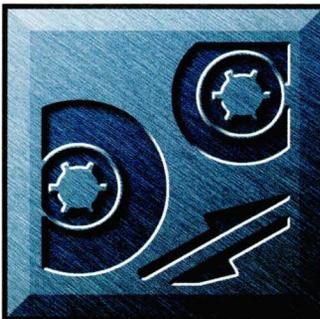
# Cartridges

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

REPLACEABLE STYLUS  
MM MC  
OUTPUT (mV)  
MASS (g)  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	MM	MC	OUTPUT (mV)	MASS (g)	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Dynavector Te-Kaitora	1,698	A real smoothie, but pricey. Worth checking out for its delicate laid-back transparency and low needle-talk	●			0.25	8.5	2142	175
Dynavector XX-1L	998	Very clear, very detailed; a response lift around 20kHz seems to do no harm	●			0.25	12		84
Dynavector XX-1	998	Good, but not immensely competitive at the price, and not helped by comparison with the low output version	●			2.0	12		84
Goldring Elan	19	A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM apparently based on Nagaoka MM4 body	●			5.0	7		67
Goldring 1012GX	79	Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency colouration apparent	●			6.5	7		85
Goldring 1022GX	99	As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved	●			6.5	7		85
Goldring Eroica LX	110	Not the most subtle cartridge in the world: can sound edgy at times, but lively and informative	●			0.5	8		84
Goldring 1042	120	Not terribly subtle, and not such good value alongside 1012 and 1022. Quite lively, though	●			6.5	6		91
Goldring Elite	220	The basics are right, and it will cheerfully tackle any source material, but its sound is not the cleanest	●			0.5	8		103
Goldring Excel VX	525	Good bass drive but dull and imprecise higher up. An old-fashioned sound that falls short of the true high end	●			0.45	8	2143	175
Grado Prestige Gold	149	Rich sounding with an unusually refined top-end for a moving magnet-type cartridge	●			4	6		158
Grado Reference	995	Loads of tracking headroom but treble is limited. A prospect for mid-oriented valve amp users	●			1.7	6.5	2143	175
Linn K9	125	Linn improved this model by beefing up the Basik's bodywork and adding a super stylus	●			4.5	5		Col
London Decca Maroon	259	Now manufactured under the London brand name, this Decca cartridge is as iconoclastic as ever	●			5.0	6		67
London Decca S Gold	399	Immediate and detailed, but coloured and nonlinear, with a questionable effect on records	●			5.0	6		84
Lyra Lydian	649	Superbly capable all-round musical performer that improves markedly when its body cover is removed	●			0.3	7		158
Lyra Clavis Da Capo	995	A stable tracker, and one of the finest cartridges we've heard	●			0.1	7		143
Lyra Parnassus D.C.t	1,895	A real little jewel of a cartridge, with many good qualities, but handicapped by a rather too obvious treble peak	●			0.22	10.5	2144	175
Ortofon 510/P	38	For the price, a good blend of virtues – weight, clarity and neutrality	●			3.0	5		85
Ortofon 520/P	65	Sensitive to load capacitance, but the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound	●			3.0	5		67
Ortofon MC3 Turbo	130	The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but unsubtle – take it as it comes!	●			3.3	4		103
Ortofon MC15 Super II	130	A good all-rounder, with outstanding resolution, if slightly bright and close up	●			0.35	7		103
Ortofon MC25E	180	An excellent upgrade for a mid-price turntable	●			0.5	11		139
Ortofon MC25FL	250	A bit too stark and honest, but faithful to what's on the LP	●			0.5	11		139
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	525	Highly detailed and even-sounding cartridge that has a special affinity with female vocal recordings	●			0.5	10.7		158
Ortofon Rohmann	1,000	A class act in nearly every respect, with fine groove security and a very smooth and even-handed sound	●			0.25	8.5	2144	175
Ortofon MC5000II	1,100	A real ear-opener. Nothing to criticise anywhere – one of the very best	●			0.12	10		84
Ortofon MC5000	1,500	Limited tracking ability, bright and forward sound, but good stereo	●			0.12	10		91
Rega Bias	39	Difficult to mount in some arms due to its shallow body, but the Bias offers a gentle, refined sound	●			5	4		67
Rega Elys	85	Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is more detailed, accurate and convincing	●			5.0	5		67
Roksan Corus Black	130	Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but smoother and more civilised	●			6.5	5		91
van den Hul MM-1	250	If woody midrange could be tamed, imaging and security would pull it through	●			5.5	6		103
van den Hul DDT-II	600	Outstanding stereo imaging and neutral balance are appealing, but rhythmically the DDT-II is a bit lazy	●			0.35	7.6		158
van den Hul MC-10	750	A neutral, balanced performer, gives fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass	●			0.4	6		60
van den Hul MC-One	900	This extends all the positive qualities of the 10, but adds greater authority and scale – worth all the extra money	●			0.4	6		60
van den Hul MC-Two	1,200	MC-Two rewards with a highly detailed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal	●			0.4	6		72
van den Hul Frog	1,500	Seems to control/suppress surface noise better than its rivals. This delicate and subtle performer has great charm	●			0.65	7	2145	175
van den Hul G' hopper III GLA	2,800	Undoubtedly one of the finest cartridges available. It has tremendous bandwidth, energy and finesse	●			0.4	6		122
Wilson benesch Matrix	786	Extraordinarily well balanced cartridge: neutral and detailed yet lively and rhythmically assertive	●			0.58	6		158
Wilson benesch Carbon	1,573	Carbon fibre body contributes to a delightfully clean and open midrange, and a quick, lively and coherent sound	●			0.45	7	2145	175



## Cassette Decks

The compact cassette is still the world's most versatile and ubiquitous music storage medium. Cassette decks hook up to the 'tape loop' inputs and outputs offered by most modern amplifiers. It's worth taking care to choose the best tapes for a specific machine. For example, expensive metal tapes will be a wasted investment for a cheap deck. Many better-specified decks have manual or automatic bias adjustment to get the best from specific samples of tape. Twin decks offer the possibility of copying from tape to tape, playing two cassettes sequentially or recording onto two tapes at once. Autoreverse is a useful feature, but uni-directional mechanisms promise better sound. Dolby S is the ultimate noise reduction system, and three-head decks permit record monitoring off-tape.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **DOLBY B/C:** The first and second Dolby hiss-killers.
- **DOLBY S:** A desirable derivative of Dolby SR professional noise-reduction.
- **DOLBY HX-PRO:** Extends headroom for cassette recording.
- **3-HEAD:** Permits monitoring off-tape while you're recording.
- **TWIN DECK:** Contains two decks for dubbing and continuous play.
- **AUTOREVERSE:** Automatically plays both sides of the cassette.
- **AUTO CALIBRATION:** The deck will automatically set up bias and EQ for any tape.
- **ADJUSTABLE BIAS:** Permits manual optimisation of tape.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on p145 of the magazine.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared.
- **High End Review**

**B** BEST BUY

**R** RECOMMENDED

**E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Cassette Decks

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY C  
DOLBY S  
DOLBY HX PRO  
3-HEAD  
TWIN DECK  
AUTO REVERSE  
ADJUSTABLE BIAS  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NO.

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	DOLBY C	DOLBY S	DOLBY HX PRO	3-HEAD	TWIN DECK	AUTO REVERSE	ADJUSTABLE BIAS	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NO.
Aiwa AD-F450	120	Basic but well-designed deck. Astonishing value; only the poor metering gives the game away	●							1513	136
Aiwa AD-WX727	170	High-class twin for those who want bells, whistles – and music	●							1377	146
Denon DRM-550	160	There are some technical limitations, but this remains a fine-sounding deck, and excellent value	●								158
Denon DRW-580	200	Twin deck: OK for casual use, but will quickly pall with more quality critical applications	●								171
Denon DRS-640	200	Draw-loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well-adjusted sound	●							1591	140
Denon DRM-650S	230	An improvement on predecessors, it offers a wide-ranging, sound. Dolby S is not the best feature	●							1920	164
Denon DRM-740	270	Breathed-on DRM-710, with good external treatment, offers good, if somewhat detached sonics	●							1514	136
Denon DRS-810	310	Draw-loading deck, carefully designed yet lacking in subtlety on audition	●								127

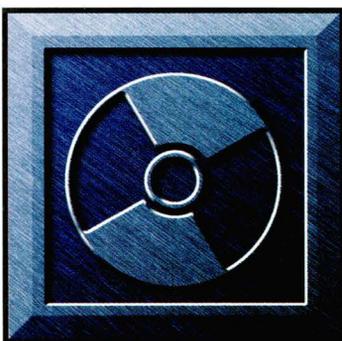
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# Cassette Decks

ISSUE NO. FACTSBACK NO. ADJUSTABLE BIAS AUTO CALIBRATION TWIN DECK 3-HEAD DOLBY BX PRO DOLBY S DOLBY C

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	DOLBY C	DOLBY S	DOLBY BX PRO	3-HEAD	TWIN DECK	AUTO CALIBRATION	ADJUSTABLE BIAS	ISSUE NO.	FACTSBACK NO.
Harman/Kardon TD420	250	Minor inconsistencies detract from a well-conceived, minimum features design	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1592	140
Harman/Kardon TD450	350	Draw loader with poor tape navigation features; good midband but shallow bass	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1920	164
JVC TD-R472	200	Excellent auto-reverse deck which doesn't suffer the usual disadvantages and is very sharply priced	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158	158
JVC TD-V662BK	270	Assured, clean and agile-sounding recorder, if not quite the most refined in its class	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1380	146
JVC TD-W718	300	Twin deck. Good for creative live recording, but no timer standby. Respectable performance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2039	171
Kenwood KX-W6080	200	Modestly decent-sounding twin deck, with some transport instability and ragged bass.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2040	171
NAD 613	230	Rough and ready, but enjoyable sound, though marred by mechanical motor noise	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158	158
NAD 616	300	Twin deck with basic features. No Dolby setting memory, transport is too unstable for audiophile use	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2041	171
Onkyo K-611	460	Cute drawer-loading mini-size component with 3-heads and dual capstan transport	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1384	146
Pioneer CT-S550S	250	Great features, good with cheap low bias tapes, but slightly synthetic sound quality	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1920	164
Pioneer CT-W806DR	300	Had it not been for the iffy transport quality, this sophisticated twin would have been Recommended	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2042	171
Pioneer CT-S830S	500	High-class mechanism, if lacking in battleship externals, and superb sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1385	146
Sony TC-KE600S	300	Mild setting-up problems notwithstanding, this UK-tweaked design has a smooth, open sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158	158
Technics RS-AZ6	200	For those who can't afford the RS-AZ7, clarity over the widest bandwidth thanks to AZ thin-film head	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1920	164
Technics RS-AZ7	270	Thin-film head gives a solid, almost CD-like bass and midrange. A clear advance in state-of-the-art	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158	158
Yamaha KX-490	200	Electrifyingly transparent and capable deck whose only flaw is a trace of audible wow and flutter	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158	158
Yamaha KX-580SE	250	Subtle, engaging and transparent deck, with a lightweight tonality, but stability and strong detail	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2043	171



## CD/DVD Players

All CD players offer a basic selection of facilities, and some can keep you entertained for hours as you programme in disc names and track orders. All but the excessively inexpensive feature remote control. Most CD players can be upgraded by adding an outboard DAC (see below). To do this the player needs a digital output of either electrical or optical type. The former is preferable for the ultimate sound. A CD player can be split into two basic components; the disc drive or transport, and a device which converts the disc's digital bitstream into an analogue audio signal. This is called a digital to analogue converter, or DAC. Although most players are contained within a single box, expensive players are usually two-box affairs. The first new DVD players have not excelled with CD software.

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT:** For electrical connection to an outboard DAC.
- **AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUTPUT:** Balanced digital output to be used with similarly equipped DACs.
- **OPTICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT:** For optical connection to an outboard DAC.
- **ST OPT DIG OUTPUT:** High-speed optical output to be used with similarly equipped DACs.
- **BAL ANALOGUE OUTPUT:** Balanced analogue output for amplifiers equipped with balanced inputs.
- **HEADPHONE SOCKET:** For 'car' users.
- **VARIABLE OUTPUT:** Remotely adjustable output level (usually non-audiophile).
- **MULTI-DISC:** Equipped with a carousel or multi-tray system for continuous play of multiple discs.
- **DAC TYPE:** BS - Philips Bitstream; MB - multibit; Hyb - hybrid of multibit and bitstream technologies; 1bit - single bit types eg MASH, bitstream, PWM, etc; CC - constant calibration.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full information, see the Factsback advert on p145 of the magazine.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared. Factsback information page.

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STATUS

# CD/DVD Players

ISSUE NUMBER FACTSBACK NO. DAC TYPE MULTI-DISC VARIABLE OUTPUT HEADPHONE SOCKET ST OPT DIG OUT BAL ANALOGUE OUT OPTICAL DIG OUT AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	ELEC DIGITAL OUTPUT	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPTICAL DIG OUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DAC TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER	FACTSBACK NO.	
Acurus ACD11	899	First-rate if costly player, which combines a delightful transparency with an uncontrived naturalness	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	1962	166	
Acoustic Precision Eikos	1,850	Seriously customised Pioneer with extraordinary resolution and world beating imaging and bass	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	165	165	
Alchemist Nexus APD32A	597	Refined treble, constrained yet capable bass and attractive all-round presentation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hyb	169	169	
AMC CD8A	150	Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	2071	172	
AMC CD9/DAC8	200	Beer-budget two-box system (player + DAC) is smooth, attractive and easy on the ear	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	CC	2261	179	
Anthem CD1	1,595	Unusual combination of high-end player, complete with HDCD, and changer. Good, but noisy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	2219	178
Arcam Alpha 7	330	Mildly rehashed favourite comes up smelling of roses.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	1872	179	
Arcam Alpha MCD	450	Excellent bass and natural midband, but just a touch of treble dryness, from this very listenable changer	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	2220	178
Arcam Alpha 8	520	Refined, intricately detailed but a little cautious. Should be broadly compatible with a variety of amps	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	1873	163
Arcam 8SE	600	Excellent (and very reasonably priced) HDCD-compatible player is a strong all-rounder	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1-bit	176	176	
Audiolab 8000CD	1,000	Developed from the Green Cross Code of digital audio. Superseded by TAG McLaren audio products.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	1874	163
Audio Research CD1	3,290	Suspends disbelief with a real yet obviously coloured sound. A rare proposition among CD players	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	1875	163
AVI S2000MC2	899	A chip off the old block. This model's in-yr-face balance obstructs an otherwise finely detailed sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	2179	176
AVI S2000MC Reference	1,399	Lean, dry, high resolution player, built to outlast most of us. A fine performer in a sympathetic system	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	169	169
Cambridge Audio CD4	150	Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hyb	1268	147
Cambridge Audio CD4SE	200	Among the best encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than the CD4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	1877	163
Cambridge Audio CD6	250	A sharp, articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	159	159
Copland CDA-266	1,199	Simple yet elegant design is unexpectedly sophisticated under the skin, and effective in execution	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	2183	176
Copland CDA-288	2,199	A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	1880	163
Cymbal CDP12	1,299	Clean, detailed and airy HDCD-equipped player with minimal trappings	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hybrid	2184	176
Denon DCD-625	200	DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	1269	147
Denon DCD-825	240	Despite extensive revisions, this player still sounds like a typical 18-bit Denon - great!	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	1531	137
Denon DCD-1550AR	350	Disappointing bland and ploddy sound from an immaculately constructed, high tech player	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	2266	179
Denon DCD-1015	350	Excellent, mid-range player - fast, fluid and lean	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	1599	141
Denon DCD-3000	1,000	Sings with the temperament of a huge orchestra under the baton of a timid conductor	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	1881	163
Denon DCD-635	180	Modest presentation gives little clue to the thoroughbred electronics ticking away inside	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	2075	172
Eclipse CD101a	80	If you want to know the sound of high order distortion, this is probably as good a place to start as any	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	144	144

CONTINUED

# CD/DVD Players

SPECIFICATIONS								ISSUE NUMBER
AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPTICAL DIG OUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DAC TYPE	

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPTICAL DIG OUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DAC TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
harman/kardon HD710	200	A player of integrity, but can sound a bit hard and rough when extended, and is amplifier fussy	●						●		1bit	159
harman/kardon HD730	300	Competitive at the price, with a coloured but dynamic and outgoing sound, good features	●						●		BS	1957 166
harman/kardon FL8300	300	Generally capable changer with relaxed sound and firm bass. Just a hint of roughness on occasion	●						●		MB	2220 178
Helios Model 2	950	This player may not be to everyone's taste, but it is an individual, with some interesting things to say	●								1bit	2180 176
JVC XL-V184BK	120	Excellent budget player, well presented, a little opaque, but its heart is in the right place							●		1bit	2072 172
JVC XL-V284BK	140	Featuring a new set of bitstream innards, this flexible player has a refined sound	●						●		1bit	1270 147
JVC XL-Z574	250	Strong resolving power, good midband and dynamics, but slightly raw and thin							●		1bit	159
JVC XL-Z674BK	300	Even-handed, but glosses over the most intimate moments	●						●		1bit	1637 151
Kenwood DP-3080	170	Bold, dynamic and outgoing sound, though somewhat aggressive. Poor build quality and finish							●		1bit	159
Kenwood DP-4090	250	Focuses a clear, wide aperture lens on the music – and has CD Text tool	●						●		1bit	2076 172
Kenwood DP-5090	300	Disappointing senior brother to the excellent DP-4090, but surface interface is good	●						●		1-bit	2267 179
Kenwood DP-7090	400	A lively and compelling performer with an even-handed and coherent disposition	●						●		MB	1885 163
Linn Mimik	875	Useful multi-room features matched to strong bass, but poor imagery and transparency	●								Hyb	1762 155
Marantz CD-63MKII Ki Sig	500	It's the quintessential sound of Marantz – warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault	●						●		Hyb	169
Marantz CD-67SE	350	Refined, enjoyable player, though ultimately a little soft-centred	●						●		BS	1958 166
Marantz CD-67 Mk II	250	The digital equivalent of a safe pair of hands. Smooooth	●						●		BS	2268 179
Marantz CD-48	200	Somewhat inconsistent, middle ranking player which hints at better things	●						●		1bit	2077 172
Marantz CD-17	800	Fabulous packaging and an excellent all round performer: smooth, detailed and consistent	●								BS	1763 155
Marantz CD-17KIS	1,100	Minor QC problems aside, this is a superbly turned-out machine, but ultimately a little bland	●						●		BS	2181 176
Meracus Tanto	1,395	Believable tonal colours and textures, refinement takes preference over dynamics – but it's not cheap	●								DS	169
Mendian 506	1,100	Revised 506 includes MSR remote and a new D/A chip, which makes it livelier and more detailed	●								1 bit	2182 176
Meridian 508 (20-bit)	1,995	Combines a delicate mid and treble with rich, opulent bass and has impressive low-level resolution	●					●			BS	1886 163
Mission Cyrus dAD3	598	A relaxed style of delivery that convinces with guile and subtlety rather than orchestral ordnance	●								BS	1887 163
Mission Cyrus dAD3Q	898	Lucid, transparent and uncontrived sound quality, superb build, and readily upgradeable						●			MB	1887 169
Monrio Privilege	995	Costly and well-engineered, but ultimately rather heavy-handed and dull, if refined player	●								MB	1963 166
Musical Fidelity E60	300	This entry-level player lacks proper stereo localisation and clarity	●								BS	1959 166
Musical Fidelity A2	500	Warm (too warm), attractive and open player, a great improvement on (related) E60	●								BS	169
Musical Fidelity FCD	1,500	A forward disposition makes this perfect for Fenders but less appropriate to Guarneris	●					●			BS	1888 163
Myryad MC100	700	A little extra get-up-and-go wouldn't go amiss, but its sheer maturity and composure ensure listenability	●								BS	1889 163
Myryad MCD500	1,300	Well-built, attractive player, showing much promise, but can be a little heavy-going, on audition	●								1bit	2185 176
NAD 522	170	Crude, mechanical sounding player fails to tickle the music buds									1 bit	2262 179
NAD 510	200	Pale version of NAD's senior CD players with a stripped-down feature count									1bit	2078 172
NAD 512	250	Simple, well-focused presentation, and articulate with it. Hard-nosed quality is not everyone's cup of tea	●								1bit	159
NAD 523	250	Nothing seriously amiss with this classic NAD 'no-frills' changer, but it lacks that vital spark									Hyb	2222 178
NAD 514	370	Boisterous sound, but undeniably attractive	●						●		BS	1639 151
Naim Audio CD3	1,000	The idiosyncratically packaged CD3 is solid and highly articulate. Always has its feet on the ground									MB	1765 155
Naim Audio CD2	2,000	Provides bags of detail with a solid stereo focus but not all the romanticism we know to be possible									MB	1890 163
Onkyo DX-7210	260	Well-bred CD player features an unusual digital filter, is smooth and cultured without appearing boring	●						●		BS	1273 147
Onkyo DX-7510	400	Strongly flavoured, assertive sound	●						●		BS	1640 151
Orelle CD-100EA	649	Excellent imagery, timing and transparency, and readily upgraded or reconfigured	●						●		MB	1964 166
Philips CD-721	130	Surprisingly well-sorted, articulate if slightly glossy and attractively presented sound. Captive signal lead									1bit	159
Philips CD751	150	Inconsistent and occasionally opaque and scrawny sounding cheapie	●						●		1bit	172
Pioneer PD-S705	300	This machine was loved by some for its articulacy and disliked by others for sounding too impressive!	●								BS	1891 163
Pioneer PD-F906	350	Interesting appearance and concept, but this changer's sound is lacklustre and ergonomics frustrating	●						●		1bit	2223 178
Pioneer PD-S904	400	Too much legato – literally – in sound, but a very smooth performer	●								1bit	1641 151
Pioneer PDS-06	550	Technologically sophisticated. Pioneer's first multi-bit player for years is polished and capable	●						●		MB	2176 176
Pioneer PD-S505 Precision	460	Assured, fluid-sounding player, with great spatial coherence	●						●		1bit	1965 166
Quad 77	900	A true thoroughbred combining a penetrating insight into detail with poise rarely found at the price									Hyb	1893 163
Revox Exception E426	2250	Very stylish with a light, agile sound that extends superbly and has fine timing	●					●			BS	1 8 2
Roksan DP3P	1,495	Dramatic and compelling. Classical listeners should be ready to 'air conduct' when auditioning	●								BS	1896 163
Roksan Caspian	895	Solid, articulate, and fundamentally well-engineered player, but with some subtle low-level limitations	●								Hyb	169
Rotel RCD-970BX	375	A combination of solid build, useful facilities and an attention-grabbing sound make this a winner	●								BS	1897 163
Sherwood CD-4030R	180	Easy on the ear, smooth-sounding player, with limits set by the slightly soft, compressed quality							●		BS	159
Sherwood CD1	1,100	A very neutral, even handed sounding player with a rather flat, lifeless sound. Beautiful construction	●								BS	1899 163
Sony CDP-XE310	140	Excellent value and bright as a button, but can sound OTT in some systems							●		1-bit	179
Sony CDP-XE510	180	Souped up CDP-XE500 which tells a rather bland and unengaging story							●		1bit	172
Sony CDP-XE900E	300	Refined and analytical disc scavenging tool, some distinctive colourations make auditioning vital							●		BS	159
Sony CDP-XA20ES	450	High tech, with a long list of gadgets, oddly configured player that ultimately sounds less than compelling	●						●		1-bit	2177 176
Sony CDP-X3000ES	500	Shoebbox format player, looks to die for, switchable digital filters to tweak the already excellent sound	●						●		BS	169
Teac CDP-3450SE	200	For once a budget player where gadgets take second place to respectable, budget amp-friendly sonics	●						●		1bit	1960 166
Teac CD-5	350	Bright, breezy and up-beat – but short in the trouser department	●						●		BS	1643 151
Teac VRDS-7	599	Although bold and outgoing, this player can sound both intrusive yet lacking in fine detail	●								BS	1769 155
Teac VRDS-9	700	Well-presented. This Teac is crisp, yet shallow, and inconsistent in sound quality and partnering skills	●								1-bit	2178 176
Teac VRDS-10SE	850	Superbly built and presented, but rather leaden bass, with an over-prominent mid/top	●								BS	169
Teac VRDS-25	1,300	A solid player in all respects, combining powerful sound with state-of-the-art technology	●								MB	1903 163
Technics SL-PG480A	130	Full driving sound, but somewhat uneven in balance with a subtle, slightly harsh top end	●								1bit	159
Technics SL-PS670D	200	Fine, middle ranking player which sounds solid, sometimes even a little stolid	●						●		1 bit	2264 179
Technics SL-PS770D	250	High tech and well built technology battleship which smoothes the rough edges off the music	●						●		BS	2080 172
Technics SL-MC410	250	If you fancy a CD player that holds 111 discs, this one's cheap, pretty capable, and easy to use									Hyb	2224 178
Trichord Genesis	549	Breathed-on Pioneer is warm and mellifluous, but ultimately lacks drive and authority.	●						●		Hyb	169
Trichord Revelation	799	Well-ordered and clean sound that may be a little too refined for some, images well	●						●		1bit	1966 166

CONTINUED

# CD/DVD Players

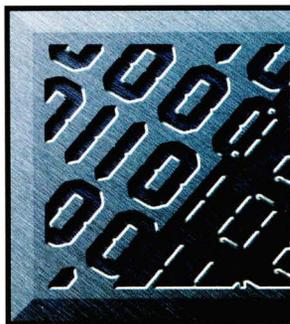
SPECIFICATIONS

AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT  
ELEC DIGITAL OUTPUT  
OPTICAL DIG OUT  
ST OPT DIG OUT  
BAL ANALOGUE OUT  
HEADPHONE SOCKET  
VARIABLE OUTPUT  
MULTI-DISC  
DAC TYPE  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	ELEC DIGITAL OUTPUT	OPTICAL DIG OUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DAC TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
XTC CDP-1	1,250	Bright and sometimes abrasive, but detailed player	●									MB 2186	176
Wadia W830	3000	Envelope busting dynamics, power and imaging in a rather unexciting box (digital volume control)										MB	183
<b>Yamaha CDC-665</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>This player offers many features and highly listenable sound, with tidy and tuneful bass and good imaging</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit 2225	178
<b>TRANSPORTS</b>													
<b>Arcam Delta 250</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>This model is based on a Philips CDM9 transport. Specification includes Sync Lock facility</b>	●		●							-	1491 130
Audiolab 8000CDM	1,400	Super-slick transport and basically very honest sound. Superseded by TAG McLaren Audio products	●	●	●							-	1867 162
Linn Karik	1,850	Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing	●	●								-	1323 144
Meridian 500	1,245	When used with the 563 DAC, we found the combination is thin, brash and uncomfortable	●	●								-	1103 133
<b>PS Audio Lambda</b>	<b>2,250</b>	<b>With Ultralink Two, sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail</b>	●	●								-	1106 133
Roksan Attessa ATT-DP3	1,295	Not the most detailed or refined but capable of sounding exciting with the right material	●	●								1bit 1867	162
Teac VRDS-T1	550	Superb quality engineering is mated to tidy and composed sound (tested with D-T1)	●	●								-	1325 144
Theta Data Basic II	2,397	Uses a Philips CDM9 Pro mechanism and works a treat with more lively DACs	●	●								-	1494 130
Thorens TCD2000	999	Lively presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble. (Tested with TDA 2000 DAC)	●	●								-	1867 162
<b>Trichord Digital Turntable</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer</b>	●	●	●	●						-	1867 162
Wadia 8	3,195	Budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case; too expensive for the performance on offer	●	●	●	●						-	1495 130
<b>DACS</b>													
<b>Arcam Black Box 50</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>Measured and sophisticated sound from a DAC that leaves plenty in reserve for future upgrades</b>										Hyb 1506	133
Arcam Black Box 500	500	Sophisticated unit with sync lock and discrete DAC										BS	1519 136
Audio Note DAC1	675	Oddball DAC with manual de-emphasis switch. Needs a high preamp input impedance or bass will suffer										MB	127
Linn Numerik	1,500	A new 20-bit DAC and revised Karik transport have cleaned up; but sounds a bit dry and humourless										MB	1323 144
<b>PS Audio UltraLink 2 HiDCD</b>	<b>2,590</b>	<b>The sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail. (Tested with Lambda transport)</b>										MB 1106	133
PS Audio Reference Link	4,550	Consolidates reputation of PS Audio for high performance digital electronics							●			MB	1069 132
Roksan Attessa ATT-DA2/DS5	1,145	Not the most detailed or refined but capable of good excitement with the right material										1bit 1867	162
Teac D-T1	500	Teamed with VRDS-T1 for test, this superb quality unit is tidy and composed										BS	1325 144
<b>Teac D-700</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>With P-700, the D-700 may lack the resolution, but is bubbly and entertaining</b>										MB	120
Thorens TDA2000	700	Lively and up-front presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble										BS	1867 162
<b>Trichord Pulsar Series One</b>	<b>1,395</b>	<b>Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer. Switchable phase, dither etc</b>										Hyb 1867	162
<b>DVD PLAYERS</b>													
<b>Denon DVD-3000</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>Enjoyable rather than analytical, includes 24/96 and AC-3/MPEG-2 Audio</b>	●		●							BS	180
Panasonic DVD-A350	700	24/96 converter and AC-3 & MPEG-2 Audio included, well balanced, if slightly blurred and shut in	●		●							BS	180
Pioneer DV-505	450	Plenty of analysis, with a slightly ragged edge. Rescued by the price & S/PDIF capabilities	●		●							BS	180
Pioneer DVL-909	900	DVD and LD player: self-recommending to AV nuts; musically detailed but occasionally seems disjointed	●		●							BS	180
Sony DVP-S715	600	24/96 converter for DAD compatibility, sharp, forward, but slightly unsubtle sound	●		●							BS	180
Toshiba SD3107B	550	Dynamic sound and good stereo which lacks lowest stratum of detail	●		●							BS	180

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## Digital Recorders

Domestic digital recording has been possible since the launch of digital audio tape (DAT) in the '80s. Since then DAT has remained expensive and largely esoteric, favoured only by well-heeled or professional users. Digital Compact Cassette and MiniDisc (MD) were launched in the early '90s but only MD has stayed the course. A little later came domestic CD-Recorders using CD-R discs, while the latest twist is the arrival of rerecordable CDs known as CD-RW discs. The recording quality hierarchy is as follows: DAT, CD-R/CD-RW, MD. MD is probably the most convenient to use, and offers sophisticated editing facilities, while CD-R is ideal for making digital 'clones' of prerecorded CDs. DAT is the medium of choice for high-quality location recording.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **FORMAT:** Type of recorder - see left for descriptions.
- **DAC TYPE:** Digital to analogue converter: BS - Philips Bitstream; MB - multibit; Hyb - hybrid of multibit and bitstream; 1bit - single bit types such as MASH, bitstream, PWM etc.
- **ADC TYPE:** The analogue to digital converter (ADC) converts sound into digits during live recording. Types of ADC are as per DACs (qv).
- **PORTABLE:** Battery operable, but not necessarily personal-stereo-sized.
- **OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS:** Digital sockets for optical cable.
- **ELEC IN/OUTPUTS:** Digital sockets for electrical cable.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on p145 of the magazine.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared.
- **H:** High End Review

**B BEST BUY** **R RECOMMENDED** **E EDITOR'S CHOICE**

STATUS

# Digital Recorders

SPECIFICATIONS

FORMAT  
DAC TYPE  
ADC TYPE  
PORTABLE  
OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS  
ELEC IN/OUTPUTS  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	FORMAT	DAC TYPE	ADC TYPE	PORTABLE	OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS	ELEC IN/OUTPUTS	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Denon DMD-1300	500	Sound sometimes lacks integration but tonal balance is good and it handles loud music with panache	MD	BS	BS		●	●	2193	177
<b>Kenwood DM-9090</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>Slight sibilance and image vagueness do not detract from excellent balance and solid bass</b>	MD	BS	BS		●	●	2194	177
Onkyo MD-121	450	Mid-sized deck that sounds slightly coloured at times, though immediate and lively	MD	BS	BS		●	●	2195	177
Philips CDR-880	500	Philips' second CD-ReWritable deck sets new low price point and banishes its forerunner's jitter problems.	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●		179
Pioneer PDR-04	700	Scaled down version of the PDR-05 with auto level setting but all the socketry and features you need to make CDs	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●		171
Pioneer D-05	900	Second generation 96kHz DAT recorder can offer startling realism	DAT	BS	BS		●	●	1652	152
Pioneer PDR-05	1,000	The first domestic CD-R deck - excellent sound quality	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●	1652	152
Pioneer D-C88	2,000	State-of-the-art portable 96kHz DAT recorder, the size of a lap-top computer	DAT	BS	BS	●	●	●	1431	150
<b>Sharp MD-R2</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>Budget recorder that loses little or nothing in comparisons with much more expensive models - highly capable</b>	MD	BS	BS		●	●	2196	177



## Headphones

There are several different ways of making a headphone. The most expensive models employ electrostatically-driven diaphragms within an open-backed earcup. Most mid-price designs feature dynamic, moving-coil-driven diaphragms in open, semi-open or closed-back designs. An open-backed headphone can sound remarkably transparent, but also permits the ingress of external noise. Closed-back designs keep out unwanted sound, but may be less comfortable to wear and more coloured. The latest development is the cordless headphone using either infrared light or, more recently, radio waves. Quality is improving, but has yet to match the best corded designs.

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **TYPE:** Operating principle: D - dynamic; E - electrostatic.
- **SUPRA-AURAL:** Where a flat pad presses on the outer ear.
- **CIRCUM-AURAL:** Where the earcup encloses the ear.
- **OPEN BACK:** Offers an open sound but lets in noise.
- **CLOSED BACK:** Keeps out external noise.
- **MASS (g):** Mass in grams
- **IMPEDANCE (Ω):** Load offered to the headphone amplifier. Many headphones offer a significantly higher value than loudspeakers, for example, but this does not mean they will be incompatible with the majority of amplifiers.
- **3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR:** Compatible with mini-jacked components, eg personal stereos.
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**B** BEST BUY
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# Headphones

STATUS

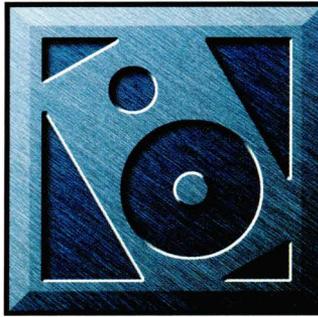
### SPECIFICATIONS

SUPRA-AURAL TYPE
CIRCUM-AURAL
OPEN BACK
CLOSED BACK
MASS (g)
IMPEDANCE (Ω)
3.5mm JACK ADAPTOR
FACTSBACK NO.
ISSUE NO.

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS								
AKG K1000	700	One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs	D	●	●	270	120			99
Audio Technica ATH910PRO	80	The closed back 910s are an improvement on the 909s, with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found	D	●		280	40			55
Beyer DT100	160	Rugged, modular professional design, but bass is woolly and treble lacks detail	D		●	350	600			157
Beyer DT311	50	Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from this otherwise well engineered 'phone	D	●		124	40	●	1098	133
Beyer DT411	63	A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price	D	●		120	250			111
Beyer DT511	106	Superb midband clarity and speed slightly at odds with soft bass. High tingle factor, even so	D		●	200	250		2063	172
Beyer DT531	135	A good buy for serious, heavy-duty music making	D		●	245	250			144
Beyer DT911	170	Probably too revealing for many headphone amps: these are very subtle and fine, if expensive cans	D		●	275	250			111
Denon AH-D550	80	A competent 'phone with integrity, but little panache or charisma. Hard headband causes brain strain	D		●	200	35	●	1801	157
Denon AH-D750	130	Loud and gutsy, meaty bass, good with rock and dance. Can sound thick and clumsy	D		●	250	30	●	2063	172
Grado SR-40	45	Cheap and nasty appearance largely redeemed by cheerful, up-beat sound. Very comfortable	D	●		120	32	●	2064	172
Grado SR-80	100	Open and dynamic with pedantically open mid-band. Crude physical design, rough frequency extremes	D	●		60	8	●	1801	157
Grado SR-225	200	Warm, darkly-coloured tonally and ultimately lacking in clarity, but true to the spirit of the music	D	●	●	200	32		1883	163
Jecklin Float Model 1	79	While very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness	D		●	400	200			55
Jecklin Float Model 2	99	Helmet shaped, but open sounding and comfortable in the long term, despite lack of adjustment	D		●	400	200			63
JVC HA-D910	65	Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colourations	D	●		200	32	●		121
JVC HA-W60	49	Remarkable lack of interference and hiss ameliorates adequate sound of this cordless design	D	●		165	I/R	●		172
Precide Ergo Model 2	140	Still has much of the spaciousness of the Float from which it is derived, but coarse mid/top	D			380	100		1892	163
Philips SBC 3396	70	Remarkably airy for closed-back designs. Fine tonal balance, punchy delivery. Amazing for money	D		●	255	32	●	2064	172
Philips SBC HP900	90	Sharper, snappier midrange than 3396: initially impressive but blows it on balance and listenability	D		●	200	32	●	2065	172
Sennheiser IS 380	55	As close as you'll get to real hi-fi with infra-red phones at this price. Inevitable hiss spoils the illusion	D	●		192	I/R	●		172
Sennheiser HD 455	55	Inoffensive, if nondescript sound; modular, but can become dislodged from head	D	●		185	60	●	1801	157
Sennheiser HD 475	80	Elegant, uncluttered sound and very comfortable but lean bass saps satisfaction	D	●		120	60	●	2065	172
Sennheiser HD 545	125	Fine all-rounder that takes all styles of music in its stride. Ear-damping headband	D		●	255	150	●	2066	172
Sennheiser HD 565 Ovation	150	Wide bandwidth design which is refined, expressive and extremely comfortable	D		●	255	150	●	1801	157
Sennheiser HE 60/HEV70/UK	998	Very nearly a superb electrostatic, with a pure midband, but top end is sibilant and edgy	E		●	260	n/a		1898	163
Sony MDR-CD770	100	Neutrality and comfort make the Sony easy to live with. Correct-sounding too, yet musically unrewarding	D		●	-	-	●	1801	157
Sony MDR-CD1700	200	Astonishingly detailed, uncoloured and free of the usual artefacts from a sealed back headphone	D		●	325	32	●	1901	163
Sony MDR-F1	100	Natural, easy-going sound teamed with great looks and comfort. Shame about the lightweight bass	D		●	300	12	●	2066	172
Technics RP-DJ1200	130	Functional design with head-pulping bass and muggy tonal balance. Good job they're sweat-proof	D	●		230	32	●	2067	172
Stax Lambda Nova Basic	449	Refined, articulate, yet with real presence - and a notable bargain by electrostatic standards	E		●	347	n/a		1902	163
Vivanco IR5800	50	Consistently musical infra-red design. Doesn't reach for sonic heights so hiss can be forgiven	D	●		226	I/R	●		172
Vivanco SR650	50	Unusually comfortable 'phone with excellent detail resolution but aggressive	D	●		175	-	●	1801	157
Vivanco SR750	60	Cossetting physical design, attractive sound, though suffers overhang and lacks ultimate dynamics	D	●		188	-	●	1801	157
Vivanco Cyberwave FMH3000	80	The only cordless 'phone to offer genuine walkabout freedom, but... sounds like a cheap FM tuner	D	●		210	FM	●		172



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## Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

As the last link in the hi-fi chain, loudspeakers are at the mercy of incoming signals. Nevertheless, distortions introduced by loudspeakers (and rooms) tend to be the most obvious. The average loudspeaker comprises an enclosure containing two drive units. Inside the box, a simple electrical circuit (the crossover or dividing network) splits the incoming, full-frequency-range signal into the right portions for specific drive units to handle: highs to the 'tweeter', lows to the 'woofer'. For any given box size, designers must balance the 'sensitivity' of the loudspeaker (how loud it goes for a given electrical input) against bass extension (how low it goes). Subwoofers augment bass and are either passive (unamplified) or, preferably, active (self-amplified).

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **SIZE wXhXd (cm):** Width by height by depth in centimetres.
- **FLOORSTANDER:** Requires no stand support.
- **SENSITIVITY (dB/W):** How much sound results for a given electrical input – the higher the figure, the louder the speaker.
- **IMPEDANCE (Ω):** Impedance, measured in Ohms, indicates how much resistance the speaker presents to an amplifier. As impedance decreases, demands on an amplifier increase.
- **BASS FROM (Hz):** The lowest frequency that a speaker can reproduce effectively.
- **FREE SPACE:** Speakers which should not sit close to walls.
- **CLOSE TO WALL:** Speakers which should sit between 3 and 12cm from the rear wall.

**B** BEST BUY
**P** RECOMMENDED
**E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

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# Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

### SPECIFICATIONS

- SIZE WxHxD (CM)
- FLOORSTANDER
- SENSITIVITY (dB/W)
- IMPEDANCE (Ω)
- BASS FROM (HZ)
- FREE SPACE
- CLOSE TO WALL
- FACTSBACK NO.
- ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (dB/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Acoustic Energy AE200	250	Metal cone miniature has a tendency to shout but is still lots of fun, and well built too	18,5,30,25		87	6	40			2199	177
Acoustic Energy AE109	350	Lots of mass-loaded twin-driver speaker for the money, especially for loud, driving bass	18,90,25		88	4	25			1904	164
Acoustic Energy AE120	500	Attractive presentation and good sonic headroom, but a heavy, uneven overall balance	18,98,28		89	4	25			1904	170
ATC SCM20	1,599	Massively built, invariably informative but the rather forward presentation can be uncomfortable	24,44,31		83	8	28				86
Audio Gem Emerald	540	Pretty compact floorstander with lively if lightweight sound	18,94,21		87	6	40			1905	164
Audio Note AN-J/B	799	Light damping and local unevenness add some coloration, but don't spoil the speaker	38,58,25		93	8	25				110
Audio Note AN-E/B	1,299	Coherent, dynamic and transparent, with extended bass and high sensitivity – but ugly!	36,84,28		94	8	20				106
Audio Physic Tempo	1,999	Tall and unusually-styled floorstander has stunning stereo but suspect bass tuning	22,107,47		88	8	28			1344	143
Audiovector M2	1,399	High-class, smooth and slightly laid-back performer has driving bass. It's upgradeable, too!	20,102,30		89	4	22				180
AVI Positron	899	This 'mini-floorstander' is capable of great precision and delicacy, but in a rather small scale way	17,5,74,24.5		85	6	40			2130	174
B&W CDM2SE	400	Beautifully styled and finished, respectable midband. Lacks definition towards frequency extremes	22,32,25		87	6	40				183
B&W DM302	150	Highly competent and neutral all rounder; clever Prism enclosure	19,32,22		88	4	45			1778	156
B&W DM601	199	Great main driver for the price, entertaining dynamics	20,5,35,5,23		88	6	30			1779	156
B&W DM602	300	Prefers tall stands and space, but offers impressive midband dynamics and musical tension	24,49,31		90	8	30			1654	152
B&W DM305	350	Ridged paper cone gives lively sound, clever box, but a little uneven	22,87,31		89	4	40			1908	164
B&W DM603	500	Squat floorstander with decent dynamics and well-judged, restrained balance; bass could go deeper	23,5,88,29		89	7	45			2030	170
B&W CDM1SE	600	A great looking stand-mount with one of the best midbands around, and a subtle blend of other qualities	22,37,29		88	5	40			2209	177
B&W CDM7	1,000	A combination of serious welly and physical elegance; but a basic lack of midband smoothness	22,97,29		90	4	22			2131	174
B&W Matrix 805 V	1,095	Stylish, remarkable imaging, good balance and low coloration	33,33,21		87	8	30				98
B&W Matrix 804	1,695	A great all-rounder which combines exceptional bass extension with fine sensitivity	26,96,26		88	4	20			1985	167
B&W Nautilus 802	6000	Outstanding example of the high tech speaker builder's art	39,111,55		91	8	34				183
Cabasse Farella 400	950	Exciting but very upfront-and-in-er-face sound. High sensitivity, fine build and good dynamic drive	26,92,32		92	5	28				180
Castle Isis	250	A great miniature at a competitive price. Sound is lightweight but very coherent, with a fine overall balance	17,35,5,21		87	8	45			2019	170
Castle Kendal	500	A beautifully finished compact floorstander with a decidedly forward but communicative sound.	17,76,20		86	6	45			2204	177
Castle Severn 2	539	Carbon fibre cone gives lovely, subtle midband but treble is a bit dull and bass a bit thumpy	21,84,25		87	8	30			2120	174
Castle Avon	730	Lovely box and lovely voices from carbon-fibre composite cone	22,91,28		85	8	22			1909	164
Castle Harlech	880	Handsome big-sounding floorstander, great value and dynamic midrange	20,96,33		88	8	28			1820	160
Castle Howard S2	1,200	Ablly fills the gap between Chester and Winchester; has a rich, laid-back balance	26,104,41		90	8	40			1078	132
Celestion 12i	119	Not without virtue, but the relentless enthusiasm and mid-band colourations can become wearing	19,31,21		88	6	45			2254	179
Celestion 23i	300	Cosmetically flawed, but the bottom end has fine get-up-and-go, and works well with dance tracks	24,86,27		89	6	30			2200	177
Celestion A1	899	Rich, warm and laid-back, but a true quality sound; lovely build	24,41,35		88	6	25			1910	164
Celestion A2	1500	Full scale, big sound from ultra-elegant floorstander. Smooth and slightly laid back presentation	24,93,39		89	6	22				180
Cerwin-Vega VS10	350	Not very refined but extremely ballsy; these rock boxes have no shortage of gung-ho	33,70,29		95	6	37			1758	155
Chario Syntar 100	249	Pretty with a pleasantly easygoing balance, but not the most communicative or exciting sound around	18,32,27		87	6	45			2020	170
Chario Academie	1650	Pricy Italian stand-mount, has high class sound and appearance. Solid walnut enclosures	25,40,31		84	8	40				180
Dali 606	400	A big bruiser at a tempting price. Sounds refined and polite, but also packs some punch	22,97,32		91	4	25			2121	174
Dynaudio Audience 5	400	Follows the Dynaudio tradition for fine midband transparency, but the overall timbre is a bit thin	20,31,26		85	4	40			2205	177
Dynaudio Audience 50	577	This stand-mount doesn't look big, but sound quality can match many models at twice the price	20,33,25		86	4	30			2122	174
Dynaudio Contour 1.8	1,842	Wonderful voice-band delicacy and loads of deep bass from a very elegant and compact box	21,95,29		85	4	20			1986	167
Eltax Linear Response	249	A curiously dumpy shape, this smooth, laid-back performer is easy on the ears, with fine tonal accuracy	25,35,32		85	4	40			2201	177
Epos ES12	499	High quality luxury stand-mount has great midband and stereo imaging	20,38,25		85	8	45			1823	160
Epos ES14	675	Substantial stand-mount delivers delightful midrange focus and delicacy with good bass control	23,49,29		87	8	25				98
Epos ES25	1,655	Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance	24,90,35		88	6	22			1346	143
Faraday Siren	445	High mass concrete cabinet is let down by imbalance of ageing driver combination	25,27,46		90	4	48				94
Gale 2i	140	Unspectacular sound and appearance fail to help this solid little miniature stand out from the crowd	22,40,27		88	7	40			2021	170
Genexa Pro	160	Terrific treble and upper-mid but coloured and cuppy lower-mid and bass. A mixture of genius and grog.	14,27,14		86	8	90			2255	179
GLL Imagio JCI30	500	Lots of speaker for the money, but sound is decidedly dull and shut in	22,112,29		88	4	20			1824	160
Heybrook Prima 2	159	Great openness, speed and timing. Sounds fresh and vital, though sometimes lacks scale and weight	20,29,18		87	6	50			2256	179
Heybrook Heylette	269	Attractive traditional-style near-miniature has fine bass-to-mid integrity, but dull and shut-in top end	19,5,30,20		89	6	45			2026	170
Heybrook Heylios	389	Great all-round performance in a pretty package at a sharp price	24,36,27		87	6	25			1912	164
Heybrook Heylo	439	Good vocal reproduction, but sounds thin and bass seems an afterthought	23,73,19		88	8	30			1658	152
Heybrook Quartet	649	Solid, large bookshelf model with good sensitivity and a lively, forward sound	24,41,22		90	8	48				122
Heybrook Ultima	649	Has the bass wallop to justify its dual hi-fi/home cinema roles, but doesn't excite	22,97,29		89	6	45			2126	174
Heybrook Sextet	1,299	Coherent and highly analytical, partly due to distinct upper-mid forwardness	27,90,20		88	8	25				102
Heybrook Octet	1800	Good-looking but pricy floorstander with novel drivers and a fine ceramic-enclosure midband	24,97,31		90	6	25				180
Infinity Delta 60	700	Striking and massive floorstander, lots of speaker for the price, but seems a victim of its own complexity	16-29,115,41		90	4	25				183
Infinity Reference 1i	150	Although not to our tastes, this is a competent speaker, and decent material value	20,34,20		89	6	50			1403	148

CONTINUED

# Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

**SPECIFICATIONS**

SIZE WxHxD (CM)    SENSITIVITY (dB/W)    IMPEDANCE (Ω)    BASS FROM (Hz)    FREE SPACE    CLOSE TO WALL    FACTS/BACK NO.    ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	SENSITIVITY (dB/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	FACTS/BACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Jamo BX100A	350	Offering a crackling output for their size, these rock boxes can be a bit bright but have decent bass	31,5,54,28	91	8	40	●	●	1758	155
Jamo Classic 8	400	A lot of speaker for the money; good when playing quietly, but boom'n'tizz character sounded crude	22,90,29	●	90	4	28	●	1659	152
Jamo Cornet 195	350	Loads of bass, should have plenty of yooof-appeal – it looks the business, and is price attractively	20,5,91,31	●	90	3	26	●		183
Jamo 477A	500	Very prettily styled, but build and sound quality are disappointing at the price	19,77,28	●	88	4	40	●	1549	138
Jamo 507A	700	Imaginative styling keeps the front view super slim yet still it packs a punch. Glass top is a nice touch	22,94,37	●	88	3	40	●	2126	174
JBL LX2	250	Invigorating, if a touch crude, this good-hearted speaker reproduces music with considerable enthusiasm	22,40,27	●	87	8	40	●	2022	170
JBL L20	700	Pricey, heavy and a bit laid back, but this is a fine rock'n'roller which is dynamic and communicative	26,42,28	●	86	8	30	●	1550	138
JBL SVA1500	700	A distinctive Pro-style bi-radial horn tweeter, with a fun sound, enlivened by a juicy bass thump	17,51,31	●	86	8	40	●	2127	174
JBL L40	1,000	Classic, large, stand-mount three-way is full of vim and vigour, with a superb sense of balance	30,65,31	●	88	4	23	●	1976	167
JBL SVA 2100	1250	Monstrously large and brutish styling, goes very loud as well as deep. Fine focus but some boxiness	37,114,52	●	91	8	<20	●		180
JBL L90	1,500	A classic monitor which communicates with gusto and enthusiasm, though it can sound a bit crude	24,94,35	●	91	6	23	●	1348	143
JBL LX70	550	Bassmeister supreme, shame the rest doesn't match up. Fine sensitivity but an itchy scratchy treble	26,5,94,30	●	91	4	33	●		183
JM Lab Spectral 909.1	1,375	Multi-driver array in a large and very substantial enclosure. Good scale but lacks delicacy and sweetness	27,107,35	●	90	4	20	●		180
JMLab Tantal 515	495	Lively and open if bright. Sound is entertaining and informative, but presentation is nondescript	20,94,26	●	92	5	32	●		183
Jordan Watts JH400	565	Piano-finish hexagon has controversial sound, with uneven balance but delightful mid	28,38,21	●	86	8	50	●		106
JPW Mini Monitor	60	Ultra-cheap miniature works well in a limited way	18,27,175	●	86	8	50	●	1781	156
JPW Gold Monitor	80	More informative than Mini Monitor – but fiercer too	18,27,175	●	86	8	50	●	1782	156
JPW ML510	130	Lots of good-quality speaker for the price, but not an ideal match for cheap budget components	20,34,22	●	88	5	50	●		169
JPW ML710	230	Good material value but disappointingly uneven bass – check out the 510s instead	20,88,30	●	88	5	40	●	2202	177
JPW ML910	330	Loads of speaker for the money, plenty of headroom and loudness capability, but sounds dull	23,104,30	●	91	4	43	●		183
JPW ML1010	400	A seriously substantial speaker for the price, and an obvious choice for those who like their music loud	22,5,115,40	●	91	6	25	●	2031	170
JPW Ruby 1	400	Very pretty but pricey luxury metal-cone miniature has good, if slightly edgy balance	19,32,21	●	87	6	55	●	1572	139
JPW Ruby 4	1,000	Twin metal-cone main drivers improve the dynamic performance and bass extension, with little sacrifice	22,94,26	●	88	8	25	●	2132	174
KEF Coda 7	129	Lovely open voice reproduction, but bass could be tauter; build tougher	18,30,23	●	88	6	50	●	1783	156
KEF Coda 8	189	Outstandingly well-balanced, bass is deep but a little vague	20,32,5,29	●	86	6	28	●	1784	156
KEF Coda 9	299	Uneven budget 3-way floorstander with poor bass definition	20,86,28	●	89	6	30	●	1785	156
KEF RDM One	499	Cute and tiny, nice midband but lack of bass warmth and weight	23,30,24	●	88	6	70	●	1913	164
KEF Reference Model 2	1,599	Classy, large floorstander that has massive headroom and clean mid-to-treble, but limited deep bass	23,103,34	●	89	4	30	●	1987	167
Kelly KT2	700	Chunky floorstander has tacky finish but whopping sensitivity and a very involving, (if characterful) sound	23,89,34	●	94	4	33	●		183
Kelly KT3	1,200	Super-high-sensitivity, hefty floorstander sacrifices smoothness for dynamic realism	25,95,36	●	95	4	28	●	2133	174
Keswick Audio Aria II	379	Confident and dynamic sound, if a little crude and shut in	21,42,24	●	89	8	20	●	1405	148
Keswick Audio Torino	999	Good value, lively contender with distinctive styling. Goes loud and deep but could be smoother	18-26, 93,28	●	90	4	20	●	1977	167
Linn Keilidh Passive	750	Stunning timing and coherence, and awesome bass drive	20,83,28	●	87	4	22	●	1552	138
Linn Kaber Passive	2,000	Dry, bright balance emphasises dynamics and transients, but can sound unforgiving	20,90,28	●	87	4	25	●		118
Living Voice Auditorium	1,500	Pretty, compact floorstander has wonderful coherence, high sensitivity and fine dynamic integrity	21,5,98,29	●	91	4	25	●		180
Magnat Vector 77	450	Tall, dark and a lot of speaker for the money. Beautiful balance, but lacking in subtlety and transparency	22,115,29	●	89	5	30	●		183
Magnat Vintage 720	1200	Slightly crude in some respects but lots of heart, fine scale, decent dynamic coherence and integrity	29,113,32	●	88	4	20	●		180
Mission 700	130	A lot of speaker for the money. Good bass weight and extension and goes loud with ease	18,34,26	●	87	8	40	●	2257	179
Mission 731 PRO	140	Cautious balance makes a fine match with budget equipment. A classy baby for smaller rooms	17,5,31,5,20	●	89	8	55	●		169
Mission 750LE	250	Fabulous cosmetics and a great midband carry the day, though size will out and bass is inevitably limited	17,28,27	●	86	7	45	●	2203	177
Mission 733i	330	New tweeter gives a more open sound; a good all-rounder that doesn't sound as big as it looks	20,5,88,30	●	88	8	45	●	2027	170
Mission 774	500	Gorgeous floorstander is an entertaining communicator, despite some balance oddities (bright treble)	18,95,31	●	90	4	40	●		183
Mission 752 Freedom	578	A beautifully judged compromise in the art of combining presentation with a decent sound	20,90,25	●	89	8	45	●	2123	174
Mission 753 Freedom	798	Great styling. New, more restrained tweeter reveals fine midband dynamics	21,90,31	●	89	4	40	●	1914	164
Mission 754 Freedom 5	1,298	Tall but exceptionally elegant floorstander gives fine midband projection; goes loud but limited deep bass	22,111,31	●	88	4	40	●	1981	167
Monitor Audio Monitor 3	400	An exceptionally discreet floorstander; sonically uneven, but capable of fine results	16,91,21	●	88	5	30	●	2032	170
Monitor Audio Monitor 4	500	An oddball balance but an entertaining sound, and a good looking real-wood-box at a realistic price	20,87,24	●	84	6	23	●	2210	177
Monitor Audio MA700 PMC	600	Good-looking luxury compact with all-metal diaphragms: lovely midrange, but occasionally edgy	22,35,26	●	89	8	45	●	1661	152
Monitor Audio 702PMC	700	A good all-round stand-mount with intimate midband focus	20,40,25	●	87	8	30	●	2128	174
Monitor Audio MA703 PMC	800	Lovely but pricey floorstander has up-front, coherent, 'shiny' sound	20,89,27	●	88	8	50	●	1826	160
Monitor Audio Studio 12	1,000	A real looker, but sound and content are a bit on the small side for the price	17,92,20	●	90	8	28	●	1349	143
Monitor Audio 705PMC	1400	Beautifully finished compact floorstander with fine midband coherence, but limited bass and top end	20,94,28	●	89	4	25	●		180
Mordaunt-Short MS10i	140	Up front, bouncy and a whole lot of fun	18.5,30,5,20	●	86	8	50	●	1789	156
Mordaunt-Short MS30i	275	Slightly shut-in and coloured quality is offset by fine bass and impressive communication	25,43,28	●	90	8	28	●	1662	152
Musical Technology Kestrel SE	300	Brighter and drier-sounding than the standard Kestrel (and not the better for it)	20,84,19	●	84	5	50	●	1915	164
Musical Technology Harrier	400	Very pretty package, good measured performance and even sound. Sensitivity is low, and dynamics limp	25,80,23	●	86	8	25	●	1663	152
Musical Technology PM15	450	A subtle, understated but very involving example of the 'classic' luxury-finish compact standmount.	20,41,27	●	88	5	38	●		183
Musical Technology Condor	1,000	Lots of clever ideas in a floorstander, which places transparency and smoothness ahead of dynamic drama	25,91,23	●	85	4	28	●	2134	174
Musical Technology Hawk	1250	Strikingly original, purposeful and attractive enclosure, but upper midband is decidedly shut in	20-36,93,24-38	●	87	5	23	●		180
Naim Intro	660	Great dynamic range and info retrieval, but thin, lacks warmth	24,89,27	●	89	6	30	●	1916	164
Naim Credo	1,060	Involving sound, but rather forward and cold. Good clarity, but some coloration and a lack of richness	24,89,30	●	88	8	28	●		180
Naim SBL Passive	1,970	Lively and punchy – smoother but more upfront than before	27,89,27	●	88	6	25	●	1352	143
Neat Critique 2	445	Contemporary standmount has a clean, crisp sound with lovely natural midband voicing	22,32,24	●	86	6	50	●		183
Neat Mystique Mk2	575	This elegant package delivers a fine overall sound quality; some might find the top end too insistent	20,86,18	●	85	6	23	●	2211	177
Neat Petite II/Gravitas	2,000	Beautifully presented miniature/subwoofer combo with ribbon tweeter gives smooth, laid-back sound	23,105,40	●	85	6	25	●	1988	167
Origin Live Conqueror	1,650	Chunky floorstanding three-way has lovely cabinetwork and lively sound, but limited deep bass	24,94,27	●	88	8	30	●	1989	167
PMC TB1S	430	Pro-audio version of TBI	20,41,30	●	87	6	40	●	2207	177
PMC TBI	482	A classy, laid-back performer that likes going loud and loves the bass guitar	20,40,31	●	87	8	45	●	1830	160
PMC LB1	935	Delightful smoothness and transparency, though bass and treble are both limited	18,53,25	●	89	4	33	●		110
PMC AB1	1,496	Lovely panel-like transparency, slightly shut-in balance, needs a big room	26,79,43	●	89	6	22	●		114
Polk LS50	800	No enthusiast tweaks here, but powerful and beautiful balance	27,83,29	●	89	8	25	●	1155	138

CONTINUED

# Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

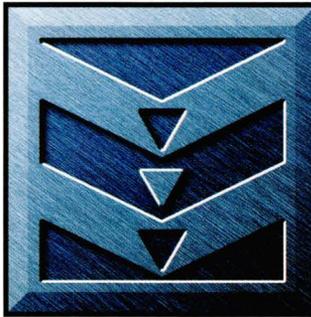
SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WHxHD (CM)    FLOORSTANDER    SENSITIVITY (db/W)    IMPEDANCE (Ω)    BASS FROM (HZ)    CLOSE TO WALL FREE SPACE    FACTSBACK NO.    ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SIZE WHxHD (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (db/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	CLOSE TO WALL FREE SPACE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Polk RT16	799	Bass rich, lively and powerful, but suspect top end; big and not very pretty	22,105,39	●	91	4	22	●	1831	160
Polk LS70	1,200	High sensitivity, but balance has too much midbass boom; mid-top is laid back	31,94,37	●	90	8	22	●	1084	132
Proac Response 2.5	2,700	For aspirant high-enders looking for seriously good boxes, this speaker should be first port of call	22,107,25	●	86	8	30	●	1457	149
QLN Signature	1,000	Attractive pyramidal stand-mount with heavy, laid-back balance but remarkably unboxy sound	27,37,36	●	83	4	25	●		167
Quad ESL-63	3,450	Classic electrostatic lacks punch, but has strengths some can't live without	66,93,27	●	86	8	34	●		60
Rega Kyte	198	Has splendid timing and coherence, sounds very explicit and informative	19,31,19	●	87	8	50	●		114
Rega EL8	298	Kyte drivers in compact floorstander give more bass but less coherence	17,72,20	●	86	8	55	●		122
Rega ELA Mk II	498	Pretty and smooth, the latest incarnation has a superb midband and excellent communicative skills	30,80,20	●	87	8	40	●	1578	139
Rega XEL	1,040	Looks and sounds great: balance bright but even, with delightful coherence and timing	20,82,30	●	89	6	40	●	1083	132
Rehdeko RK 115a	1,700	Single-driver system has limited bandwidth and obvious coloration, but wondrous dynamic coherence	34,42,27	●	95	8	55	●	1982	167
Revolver Colt	139	A good all-rounder, if a little bland, and excellent value for money	30,19,22	●	88	6	48	●	1407	148
Revolver 250	250	A nice price for a floorstander, but over-bright sound balance has potentially fatiguing consequences	21,85,25	●	87	8	22	●	2023	170
RMS Revelation Series 1	1,299	Innovative metal-box compact with integral port/stand – clean with good timing but very laid-back balance	20,99,24	●	81	8	22	●	1983	167
Rogers GS1	179	Classy looking small box with equally classy, if slightly over cautious sound	19,30,17	●	85	8	45	●	2258	179
Rogers dB101	250	This shapely sub-miniature is fast and agile but lightweight and forward: great voices; lacks bass	20,26,20	●	88	6	45	●	2024	170
Rogers LS3/5A	699	Clever AB1 stand/subwoofer helps the classic 3/5A monitor give its best shot	19,31,17	●	82	12	45	●	1354	143
Rogers C6/28	1,399	Large floorstander with carbon-fibre tweeter. Sounds better than it looks, especially through the midband	25,103,29	●	88	6	20	●		167
Roksan ROKone	595	Large stand-mount is musically very communicative if a little coloured	21,45,33	●	89	6	30	●	1834	160
Roksan Ojan 3 Black	795	Squat, stylish and black, great bass extension and somewhat uneven balance	28,76,46	●	88	8	20	●	1082	132
Roksan OJ3X Black	995	Innovative low-line, 2-way floorstander with decoupled tweeter; great bass and fine dynamic range	28,79,46	●	84	8	20	●	1979	167
Royd Minstrel	275	Not much wellie or loudness but fine coherence and timing; a bit bright	18,69,12	●	86	8	30	●	1167	135
Royd Doublet	485	Great value compact floorstander: lively and very informative, if a little uneven	18,93,19	●	90	4	28	●	1835	160
Royd The Sorcerer	595	Extremely musical and communicative speaker that's fun to listen to. Aesthetics could be better, though	20,31,18	●	86	8	35	●		139
Royd Abbot	695	Dynamic and fine transient qualities are hampered by a rather coloured mid-forward balance	20,81,30	●	90	8	43	●		118
Ruark Epilogue	269	Beautifully finished miniature with a lively balance and plenty of charm; best suited to smaller rooms	17,29,23	●	87	8	47	●		183
Ruark Sceptre	599	'Traditional' cabinetwork with classy veneer and shiny gilt fixings, hampered by rather wayward sound balance	21,38,31	●	87	8	40	●	2129	174
Ruark Talisman II	749	Less ideologically committed than some, strength lies in fine all-round coherence	23,84,32	●	88	8	30	●		118
Ruark Crusader	1,599	Elegant luxury three-way with wonderfully even-handed, if rather laid-back balance	24,94,31	●	85	6	22	●	1990	167
Ruark Equinox	1,849	The primary strength of this speaker is its ability to vanish behind the music	25,88,34	●	88	6	45	●	1227	140
SD Acoustics SD3R	649	New SD3 has the agility and charm of a quality miniature, good bass and low sensitivity	20,38,30	●	87	8	25	●		106
SD Acoustics SD5	1,549	Bass suspect but forward midband is delightfully smooth. Has ribbon tweeter	20,110,30	●	88	8	30	●	1081	132
Sequence 400	329	Clever hang-on-wall panel is well voiced, though bass isn't too great	25,100,7	●	86	8	45	●	1917	164
Shahinian Arc	1,875	Occasionally wonderful, small, floorstanding omnidirectional design: bright but coherent and revealing	35,69,25	●	88	6	24	●		110
Silverado Raider	695	Beautifully built audiophile compact: neutral if bright, tough work for amps	20,40,25	●	83	3	30	●	1918	164
Spendor 2030	599	Discreet slimline floorstander with delicately coherent, laid-back sound	18,89,27	●	87	8	30	●	1836	160
System Audio 1130	499	Super-slim, super smooth, involving experience, but not ideal if you like your bass deep and loud	3,100,21	●	89	4	43	●		183
Tangent Monitor 5	80	An uneven performer best suited to small rooms and generous volume levels	175,27,18	●	83	8	55	●		169
Tangent Monitor 9	150	Budget floorstander that motors when the music demands, with a solid bass but occasionally raw treble	19,5,75,5,22,5	●	90	6	45	●	1926	165
Tannoy Mercury M1	120	Sounds much bigger and expensive than it is. Solid, tuneful bass, wide open soundstage, excellent imaging	17,30,20	●	87	8	50	●	2259	179
Tannoy Mercury M2	140	A fine all-rounder with big box and deep bass for the price; could be sweeter and tighter	20,5,38,28	●	87	8	25	●		169
Tannoy Mercury M3	230	Good-looking floorstander; very neutral and evenhanded, with fine midband but weak dynamics and drive	20,5,87,28	●	87	7	20	●	2025	170
Tannoy Precision P20	400	A creative and attractive design with time-aligned drivers, but the sound lacks sufficient excitement	21,80,30	●	88	5	25	●	2208	177
Tannoy D300	999	Gorgeous-looking compact floorstander. And a fine all-round performer, too!	16-24,85,23	●	87	6	26	●		167
Tannoy D500	1,999	Plenty of muscle and stereo, but short of poise and delicacy. Hard work for amps	31,93,34	●	91	6	20	●	1355	143
Tannoy Westminster TW	6,600	These awesome horn-loaded speakers are remarkably controlled and impressive	large	●	99	8	38	●		C93
TDL RTL3SE	450	A touch of boom'n'tizz might be to taste, but this is a lot of box for the money, with floor-shaking bass	20,91,39	●	89	6	22	●	2124	174
TDL CF100 Chiltern	450	Tiny but classy monitor has a laid-back balance, a fine midband and a surprising bass; but needs space	20,29,23	●	85	8	50	●		183
TDL CF200 Cotswold	650	Fine midband tonality and dynamic range, but less happy towards the bandwidth extremes	22,5,78,23	●	86	6	40	●	2212	177
TDL T-Line 3	700	Plenty of bass and treble, but broad midband is rather repressed	20,97,38	●	86	8	20	●	1921	164
Technics SB-M20	200	Well-balanced with natural perspectives and fine midband coherence, but bass is a bit boxy and uneven	20,32,23	●	70	8	50	●	1413	148
Technics SB-M500	450	This model offers a clean, open sound, offset by midbass, heavy balance and low sensitivity	25,78,37	●	85	8	25	●	1666	152
Totem Model One	1,195	Utterly delightful but exasperatingly expensive luxury miniature sets the benchmark for its size	17,31,23	●	87	4	28	●		122
Vandersteen 2Ce	1,395	Elegant staggered baffle contributes to a refreshing freedom from boxiness	41,101,27	●	88	7	23	●		86
Wharfedale Diamond 7.2	140	A good-hearted, lively and up-front performer that's a little lacking in subtlety and smoothness	19,29,5,23	●	88	4	45	●		169
Wharfedale Valduis 400	200	Very loud with a minimum of amplification, but the sound is thick and uneven, with a heavy upper bass	25,80,26	●	91	8	30	●	1414	148
Wharfedale Valduis 500	300	These rock boxes can move plenty of air, albeit not as subtly as alternatives	25,108,26,5	●	91	4	40	●	1758	155
Wharfedale MFM-3	350	Smooth broad midband gives fine voice rendition; bass could be better	22,89,28	●	87	8	40	●	1922	164
ZYP AI	199	Cute metal-cased micro-miniature is quite coloured but great fun	14,22,12	●	88	8	30	●		110
<b>SUBWOOFERS</b>										
Acoustic Energy AEI 08S	299	Lots of loud subwoofer for your money, though ultimately more film than music oriented	50,42,43	●			20	●	2247	179
B&W ASW1000	499	(Active) Very competently engineered all round, and goes (unnecessarily) very loud	54,47,48	●			20	●	2248	179
B&W AS6	500	(Active) Good material value with a fair amount of low bass from 100W design	45,51,45,5	●			30	●	1736	154
Celestion CS135	139	Compact hideaway passive sub lacks deep bass for high sensitivity speakers	52,19,34	●	86	8	45	●		128
Jamo SW600	530	(Active) Has some neat styling touches and remote control, but deep bass is limited	38,41,53	●			30	●	1736	154
JPW SW60	349	A real heavyweight, sounds clean and transparent, if perhaps a little understated. Usefully flexible	55,47,39	●			20	●	2249	179
KEF Model 30B	499	(Active) Commendably discreet with good sense of timing but limited extension	38,5,37,43	●			45	●	1736	154
KEF AV1	2,499	(Active) Works well, looks great, shakes the windows but costs a lot and is bulky	56,43,50	●			45	●		128
M&K VX-7B	450	(Active) Baby of a big range; this active design delivers deep, plentiful bass but lacks transparency	35,25,37	●			40	●	1736	154
M&K MX70	900	(Active) Justifies cost and belies its diminutive size, with an agility that makes sense of the toughest material	25,5,46,35	●			25	●	2250	179
REL Q50	375	(Active) Genuinely deep, clean bass from an attractively compact and cost effective package	40,41,42	●			20	●	2251	179
Rogers AB1	549	Subwoofer-cum-stand designed as partner for LS3/5a or similar miniatures	19,57,16	●	82	8		●	1354	143





## Stands & Supports

Hi-fi supports are more important than you might imagine – they can have very subtle effects on the sound of your system! There are two kinds of support: those for equipment and those (stands) for loudspeakers. Equipment supports keep vibrations and resonances from affecting electronic components, while speaker stands hold enclosures stock-still and ensure they are at the correct height for your ears. Equipment supports may be rigid affairs fabricated from steel or more exotic materials; or they may have a form of suspension. Speaker stands come in a variety of sizes and styles to suit different models, and vary between open-frame and solid-pillar types. Always check with speaker and electronics manufacturers to see which supports they recommend.

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **HEIGHT (cm):** How tall is your support?
- **TOP PLATE SIZE (cm):** Dimensions of top surface on stand or equipment support.
- **FILLABLE:** Some speaker stands can be mass-loaded with sand or lead-shot to improve sound.
- **WELDED:** The better stands and supports are welded together rather than just bolted.
- **NUMBER OF SHELVES:** The number of tiers on an equipment rack or support.
- **SHELF TYPE:** The material from which shelves are made. Wood generally means Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF).
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

H: High End Review



# Stands & Supports

### SPECIFICATIONS

TOP PLATE SIZE HEIGHT  
FILLABLE  
WELDED  
NUMBER OF SHELVES  
SHELF TYPE  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	HEIGHT	TOP PLATE SIZE	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS</b>										
Alphason GR 17/17-AS	275	Great looks but sound can be bettered at this price	36	60,39			4	Glass		181
Elemental Isotube x 4/Ref	1199	Blockbusting size and build. Super sound quality	92	45,49	●		4	Marb		181
Fi-Rax R4	399	Lively, exuberant sound, slightly weak bass					5	Glass	1633	151
Frameworks H500/H175	404	Two-shelf stand and isolation platform combo in tubular steel – made a spectacular impression on audition	70	52,34	●		3	Glass	1952	166
Ixos Deadrock 704	250	Looks unassuming but sound is full and inviting		46,39			4	Resin		181
Kudos Corinthian	599	True heavyweight that doesn't quite manage knockout sound	91	46,38			4	Wood		181
Mana Acoustics Ref. Table	350	King of its type: angle iron, chipboard and glass combine to make a significant difference to sound quality	56	49,39	●		1	Glass		147
Mana 5 Tier Sound Table	600	Infinitely upgradeable. Persuasive and thrilling glass and angle-iron design that adds speed and bandwidth	91	49,39	●		5	Glass	1633	151
Optimum Int 2000 OPT490	299	25kg stand with shelves between variable-height tubular uprights. Sounds smooth and relaxed with sturdy bass	50	60,40			4	Glass	1953	166
Optimum Int 2000 OPT660	349	Glitzy style isn't reflected in sound, which is wholesome	82	60,52			5	Glass		181
Quadraspire Q4	250	Easy to live with, tonally neutral	54	40,49			4	MDF	1633	151
Sound Organisation Z038	135	Too lively and lacking order – but inexpensive	50	84,40	●		5	Wood	1633	151
Sound Organisation Z560	160	Welded and bolted members give structural integrity. While performance is not up with the best, it's great value	90	46,36	●		5	Wood	1954	166
Soundstyle X100	230	Looks lovely, sounds lively but slightly bright	64	49,28	●		4	Glass		181
Soundstyle Select 6105	290	Respectable sonics: structurally solid and smart	78	43,36			5	Glass	1633	151
Soundstyle Finewoods W105	320	Veneered shelves clamped between tubular uprights. Delivers with classical material	82	48,27			4	Wood	1955	166
Sound Organisation Z545	150	Budget gem from the stalwarts of sound supports	70	46,36	●		4	Glass		181
Soundstyle X100	150	Looks lovely, sounds lively but slightly bright	64	49,28	●		4	Glass		181
Stands Unique Sound Tower	289	Wooden uprights combine with glass shelves to provide a fresh, forward sound, but bass could be quicker	81	72,42			5	Glass	1633	151
Target B5	175	Free of colorations, fine grip and good value	81	49,36	●		5	Wood	1633	151
Townshend Seismic Stand	1245	It's big, it wobbles and it's pricey. But this is the ultimate equipment support	72	58,45	●		3	Wood		181
Wilson besench Asside	590	Sounds even better than it looks. And it looks wonderful	72	37,50			4	Wood		181
<b>SPEAKER STANDS</b>										
Alphason NC I	45	Filled single-column design without threaded spike holes, that's appropriate for non-critical applications	40-60	16,16	●				1373	146
Alphason NCII	84	Tall, slim and elegant, though sound and value are unexceptional	40-60	17,17	●					159
Alphason Titan	125	Excels in the midband and allows voices to come across in a detailed and expressive fashion	40-60	16,16	●	●			1373	146
Apollo AZ6	80	Fine engineering value, but sound is unexceptional and top-plate small	66	15,13	●	●				159
Atacama BD21	55	Good-looking and good value, but doesn't match the SE24's sound quality	56	15,17	●					159
Atacama SE24	70	Stands out from the budget crowd because of the consistency and overall quality of its performance	61	19,57	●	●			1373	146
AVF Tower 400	35	Ridiculously cheap and much better than no stand at all	54	17,20						159
Kudos S50	100	Better sound than the budget stands, particularly in low-frequencies	60	15,21	●					159
Kudos S100	270	The best all-round stand around... Probably...	63	15,21	●					159
Mana Soundframes	125	For use under floorstanders and equipment racks, these make music effortless and natural. Can be stacked	5				●		1373	146
Revolver RS1	70	A good blend of performance and appearance for the price	53	18,18	●					159
RMS/Stands Unique Vivus	349	Pricey carbon fibres give ultra-clean sound with exceptional voices	50	N/A						159
Stands Unique HP	220	Real wood disguises high-performance tuned technology	59	22,23						159
Target R1	280	Truly high-mass four-pillar design with superb weight and speed, giving music delicious attack	53	15,21	●	●			1373	146
Target TR60	68	Lively, dynamic midrange and detailed treble from a less-than-audiophile-oriented, twin-column design	60	15,15	●				1373	146

## OUTSTANDING CABLES ...

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## Tonearms

Less expensive turntables are usually supplied with a matching tonearm (and often a 'starter' cartridge, too). However, hard-core vinyl fans should invest in a more expensive separate motor unit with specialist tone-arm – the only way to make the most of vinyl LPs. It is essential to achieve operational synergy between such components, so this is one area of hi-fi where the skills of a knowledgeable dealer are invaluable. The quality of a tonearm's construction and design affect sound quality significantly. There are three basic arm designs listed in the key, and each has strengths, but pivoted designs are the most popular, being usually the most practical and affordable.

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **EFFECTIVE MASS:** This relates to cartridge compliance. Generally high mass arms are suitable for low compliance cartridges and vice versa.
- **PARALLEL TRACKING:** An arm which allows the cartridge to track the disc in a linear fashion.
- **PIVOTED:** Arms which allow the cartridge to describe an arc as they traverse the record.
- **UNI-PIVOT:** Pivoted arms with a bearing that allows movement in two planes.
- **EFFECTIVE LENGTH (CM):** Length of arm from bearing to cartridge mounting.
- **ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT:** Important for accurate cartridge set-up.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faved review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY   **R** RECOMMENDED   **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Tonearms

### SPECIFICATIONS

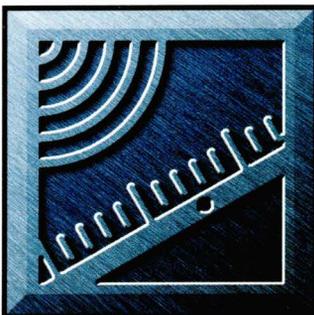
- PARALLEL TRACKING  
EFFECTIVE MASS  
PIVOTED  
UNI-PIVOT  
EFFECTIVE LENGTH (cm)  
ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	PARALLEL TRACKING	EFFECTIVE MASS	PIVOTED	UNI-PIVOT	EFFECTIVE LENGTH (cm)	ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Kuzma Stogi Ref	1,250	Large, solid and well-made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness	High	●	●	●	229	●	67	79
Linn Ekos	1,500	Superb, state-of-the-art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths	Medium	●	●	●	229	●	67	60
Moth Arm	95	The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural	Low	●	●	●	237	●	60	67
Rega RB300	174	Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high-end turntables	Low	●	●	●	237	●	60	60
Roksan Tabriz Basic	275	Targeted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arm in many cases – a touch bright though	Low	●	●	●	240	●	91	60
SME Series IV	983	Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low coloration	Low	●	●	●	233	●	60	60
SME Series V	1,461	Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standards for pivoted arms, regardless of price	Low	●	●	●	233	●	60	60

# WRITE TO HI-FI CHOICE

NEED TO AIR YOUR THOUGHTS? WRITE TO US BY LETTER, FAX OR E-MAIL. FIND ALL OF OUR ADDRESSES ON PAGE 5.



## Tuners

TV has stolen radio's status as the foremost broadcast entertainment medium, but with its Radio Four plays and Radio Three music, the BBC still makes a potent case for audiophile reception equipment. For how much longer, under the cost-conscious Birtist régime, remains to be seen. Another new imponderable is the arrival of digital radio broadcasting, though reception apparatus is currently non-existent outside of the in-car market. These days tuners play second fiddle to hi-fi sources like CD, but in many ways they are a greater engineering challenge than digital equipment, and thus higher price-tags clearly equate to superior performance. High-quality, roof-mounted antennae are essential for audiophile listening, so factor them into your budget.

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **WAVEBANDS:** FM – (VHF), M – MW, L – LW.
- **PRESETS:** Number of station frequencies that can be stored.
- **RDS:** (Radio Data System) was originally designed for in-car applications. RDS tuners can identify and display the name of the radio station being received, traffic news and other information about broadcasts.
- **REMOTE CONTROL:** Infra-red control handset supplied.
- **SIGNAL STRENGTH METER:** Indicates strength of signal from aerial – useful for aligning your 'twig' during installation.
- **ROTARY TUNING KNOB:** Experience has shown that this analogue throwback is ergonomically far superior to the button-based approach.
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**B** BEST BUY   **R** RECOMMENDED   **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

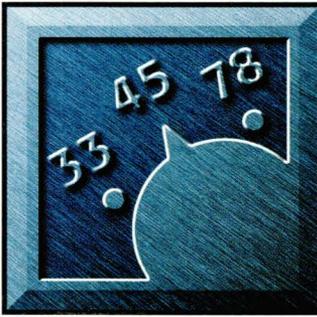
# Tuners

### SPECIFICATIONS

- WAVEBANDS  
PRESETS  
RDS  
SIG. STRENGTH METER  
REMOTE CONTROL  
ROT. TUNING KNOB  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	SIG. STRENGTH METER	REMOTE CONTROL	ROT. TUNING KNOB	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
AMC T7	130	Performance adequate but price is sharp, especially with remote control. Some hum	FM, M	30	●	●	●	●	1945	166
Arcam Alpha 7	230	Indifferent RF performance but a touch of audiophile sound quality with clean, strong signals	FM,M,L	24	●	●	●	●	1946	166
Arcam Delta 280	300	Fine sound quality marred by mild synthesiser whine; RF performance only average. Remote £60 extra	FM	20	●	●	●	●	120	120
Audiolab 8000T	800	Unusual combination of fine sound quality and RF performance (inc AM), and superb ergonomics	FM,M,L	39	●	●	●	●	1254	142
Denon TU-260L	120	Careful minimalist design promises a surprisingly open and vivacious sound	FM,M,L	20	●	●	●	●	93	93
Denon TU-425RD	200	A fine all-rounder with advanced RDS, good RF performance and decent sound. Remote extra	FM, M	40	●	●	●	●	1947	166
Harman/Kardon TU950	200	Bulky but effective, delivering fine RF performance and good sound for the price	FM,M,L	30	●	●	●	●	1948	166
Linn Kremlin	2,600	Controversially good sound at a very high price.	FM	80	●	●	●	●	1254	142
Magnum Dynalab FT101	825	Although fairly expensive given its minimum set of facilities, its excellent sound provided ample compensation	FM		●	●	●	●		72
Micromega Tuner	750	Has digital output but even without the Micromega DAC, this provides exceptional sound quality. Looks good too	FM	39	●	●	●	●	1810	157
Mission Cyrus FM7	400	Open, generous soundstaging gives the music plenty of foundation, if a touch shut-in at the top	FM	29	●	●	●	●	1254	142
Musical Fidelity E50	300	Sounds involving if coloured and with a subjectively larger-than-life presentation	FM	20	●	●	●	●	1810	157
Naim NATO1	1,730	There may be better sounding tuners in the world, but we have yet to hear one	FM		●	●	●	●	1254	142
Pioneer F-504RDS	250	Cable-friendly with advanced RDS and excellent RF performance; slightly disappointing sound	FM,M	40	●	●	●	●	1949	166
Rotel RT-935AX	160	Good ergonomics and sound quality at a realistic price, but limited features and RF selectivity	FM,M	20	●	●	●	●	1950	166
Sony ST-SA3ES	250	Clean, lean presentation but needs a quality aerial to perform at its best	FM,M,L	30	●	●	●	●	1810	157
Technics ST-GT350L	130	Decent RF performance is offset by sound quality more typical of a mini/midi system	FM,M,L	30	●	●	●	●	1254	142
Thorens TRT2000	499	Not exactly neutral sounding, but nonetheless makes listening fun	FM,M	59	●	●	●	●	1810	157



## Turntables

Specialist turntables are at the heart of high-fidelity sound. CD players may offer ultra-low noise and a flat frequency response, but they can't match the dynamics and superlative rhythmical timing taken for granted by serious turntable users. Less expensive turntables are usually supplied with a matching tonearm (and often a 'starter' cartridge, too). Still better quality is found at higher prices among the separate motor units and tonearms. Because turntables are mechanical devices, designed to retrieve micron-small modulations engraved into vinyl, engineering quality is of paramount importance. This is also the reason why turntables cost as much as they do, and require the finest equipment support systems.

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **MANUAL:** You do all the work.
- **AUTO:** The record player does all the work.
- **SEMI-AUTO:** You put the needle on, the turntable lifts it off at the end of the record.
- **SPEEDS:** In RPM to correspond with long-playing records or seven/12-inch singles.
- **SUSPENDED SUBCHASSIS:** Sprung suspension to minimise structural interference.
- **EXTERNAL PSU:** Outboard power supply; generally indicative of higher-quality performance.
- **SUPPLIED WITH ARM:** Many turntables do not come with a tonearm fitted, but if this category is checked, the deck is already thus equipped.
- **SUPPLIED WITH CARTRIDGE:** If a turntable comes complete with arm and cartridge.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
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H: High End Review



# Turntables

### SPECIFICATIONS

MANUAL  
AUTO  
SEMI-AUTO  
SPEEDS  
SUSP. SUBCHASSIS  
SUPPLIED WITH ARM  
EXTERNAL PSU  
SUPPLIED WITH ARM  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NO.

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	MANUAL	AUTO	SEMI-AUTO	SPEEDS	SUSP. SUBCHASSIS	EXTERNAL PSU	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NO.	
Clearaudio Reference	3,990	Opulent beast tested with Souther TQ-1 arm. Tends to gloss over detail, but can sound bold	●							33/45		1328 144
▶ DNM Rota 2	5,600	Tonally slightly bleached, but extracts detail like few others. Works well on its own table	●							33/45	●	1328 144
▶ Dual 505-4 UK	250	Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in oomph				●				33/45	●	103
▶ Kuzma Stabi/PS	1,950	(Tested with Stogi Reference) Solid oak plinth; sound is very clear, detailed and extended	●							33/45	●	91
▶ Linn LP12 Basik	1,100	Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc still top rank	●							33	●	103
▶ Linn LP12 Lingo	1,750	The classic reference is improved by the Lingo, but charming character remains	●							33/45	●	91
▶ Michell Gyrodec	875	Sweet and natural-sounding player, well matched to Rega RB300 arm	●							33/45	●	55
Moth Kanoot	329	Rather coarse-sounding deck that requires decent isolation and comes with a Rega RB300 arm	●							33/45	●	1907 164
▶ Notts Analogue Spacedeck/Arm	750	No frills, just a first-rate, outstandingly natural-sounding deck that will last forever	●							33/45	●	159
▶ Pink Triangle Anniversary	2,500	Possibly the most detailed, clear, neutral-sounding deck around. Likeness to master tape is uncanny	●							33/45	●	91
▶ Pro-ject 2	300	Remarkably effective at the price, with decent timing and a generally well defined sound	●							33/45	●	1907 164
▶ Pro-ject 6/Sumiko	850	Don't think of this as a deck with a good arm, but as a scaled-down Oracle Delphi – it's that good	●							33/45	●	138
▶ Rega Planar 2	214	A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident	●							33/45	●	48
▶ Rega Planar 3	274	Sounds musical in a balanced manner, needs decent isolation and suffers a little pitch instability	●							33/45	●	1907 164
▶ Reson RS1	600	Supplied set-up and ready-tuned, this unconventional deck is packed with mid-band detail	●							33/45	●	159
▶ Roksan Radius 3/Tabriz zi	890	Elegant-looking turntable with a tidy, ordered sound. Bright and breezy if a shade lightweight	●							33/45	●	159
SME Model 20A	4,863	Supplied with Series V arm. Engineered to last a lifetime, giving excellent stereo and detail retrieval	●							33/45/78	●	118
▶ Thorens TD 166 VI/UK/RB	400	Refined, solid sound with well-focused imagery; suitable for use with good MM/MC budget cartridges	●							33/45	●	103
Thorens TD2001	700	Balances convenience and sound well, but deck lacks detail and bass could be better controlled				●				33/45	●	159
▶ Well Tempered Record Player	1,850	Intriguing and challenging. Musically not ideal, but its limpid quality and lack of artificiality set standards	●							33/45	●	1180 136

## THE HI-FI CHOICE WEBSITE

FOR MORE IN-DEPTH INFORMATION ON REVIEWED PRODUCTS, CHECK OUT OUR WEB SITE AT [www.hifichoice.co.uk](http://www.hifichoice.co.uk)



# HI-FI CHOICE



## HI-FI CHOICE HELP

FOR ASSISTANCE IN FINDING THE ULTIMATE SYSTEM, CHECK OUT THE HELP SECTION ON OUR WEB SITE AT [www.hifichoice.co.uk](http://www.hifichoice.co.uk), OR WRITE TO US AT: 'HELP', HI-FI CHOICE, 19 BOLSOVER STREET, LONDON W1P 7HJ

# Five Stars

Paul Messenger explains why you should visit an independent

*Why use a specialist hi-fi dealer? The short answer is because he knows one hell of a lot more about hi-fi than you do. And if you've gone to the trouble of picking up a specialist magazine on the subject, you're obviously interested in something rather more than a mini system from the nearest electrical superstore.*

You've probably bought this magazine for one of two reasons. You're looking for advice (presumably unbiased and good) on choosing and using your hi-fi system, and/or you're checking out the ads to decide where to go and buy it.

The independent specialist dealer doesn't know everything, and he doesn't know much about you, but if music's an important part of your life, he's the only guy around who's able (and hopefully willing) to help you choose the equipment which will give you the best long term satisfaction.

## **Power of the Press**

Dealers sometimes moan to me about the power of the press, and the disproportionate influence of its 'Best Buy' and multi-star ratings. Well, I've been in the press for twentysomething years, and still feel more ignorant than powerful.

The more I mess around with hi-fi gear, the more I become aware of our lack of real understanding of the subtleties involved, and the more I appreciate the importance of the dealer's skills and experience, in bringing together components so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

We hacks get paid to write words, often about components in isolation, because individual product reviews are still the staple diet of the press. They can sometimes provide a useful guide to the way a product performs, but only under the particular circumstances in which the review was conducted.

The hi-fi reviewer attempts, with varying

degrees of success, to evaluate a particular component, and find something interesting (and hopefully positive) to say about it. That's about the end of it, and it's on to the next product.

The magazine prints the review, and that very process magically confers a measure of authority. Experienced hi-fi enthusiasts, who read reviews over a period of years and try out various products themselves, soon start to realise the limitations of that approach. Some reviews are better than others, but none can get to grips with the real heart of the problem - whether a given product will improve your musical satisfaction, in your system and your room.

## **The Role of the Dealer**

The dealer's role is very different, and potentially much more valuable. He has the chance to talk one-on-one. If he's good at his job, he'll use that opportunity to find out what you as an individual are looking (or listening) for.

His motivation is very different too. Sure he wants to make a sale. That's the lifeblood of any shop. But he also knows that if something he sells really does deliver long term satisfaction, there's a very good chance you'll come back again to see if he can repeat the trick some time in the future.

If you go into a shop and demand a particular CD player, on the basis that it got seven stars (out of five) in last month's magazines, the shop will probably simply take the line of least resistance and sell it to you. (Or switch-sell you to a similar price alternative, if he's fresh out of stock

# For Value

**specialist dealer if you are searching for real hi-fi satisfaction**

of that particular flavour-of-the-month.)

If you go in and say you're looking for a CD player, and want his advice on what to choose, things are liable to become more interesting. The onus is now on the dealer to show what he can do. His first task is to ask the right questions to try and get some idea of what you might be after.

Asking the questions is the easy bit. The real skill comes in using the information to come up with a shortlist of likely contenders, and then conducting a demonstration so that you have a real chance to play a central role in the decision making process.

Putting together a successful hi-fi system might not be as difficult as it was twenty or thirty

*"If music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority."*

years ago, but it's just as easy to make a mess of things. Put the 'wrong' combination of components together and it'll still sound a lot better than any cute little mini system package. It might even rate a five star review. But it won't match the potential of a carefully balanced and properly installed system, and it certainly won't cater for your own particular preferences and personality.

We British are notoriously indiscriminating consumers, at a mass market level at least. The majority of the population don't even bother to drive a car they're thinking of buying, never mind take the trouble to listen to hi-fi equipment.

The majority will therefore end up with hyperstore mediocrity, and hi-fi that's about as tasty as supermarket bread. But if music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority.

You know full well that your music collection is as individual as your wardrobe, and just as

precious too, so it's worth taking the time and trouble to search out the dealer and equipment that will make that collection come alive, and give you a new buzz every time you play your favourite discs.

The independent specialist may not beat the chain store on price, but he continues to thrive in a hostile environment because real hi-fi is so much more than a matter of price. The people who work in these shops are themselves enthusiasts, often with many years of experience in meeting customer's needs, and the very necessary expertise to ensure that the whole thing is properly set up to deliver the best results.

The better the hi-fi, the more important it is to get the fine details right at the installation end of things, but even the least expensive equipment can be made to sound a whole lot better if good care is taken over the fine details - the support furniture, the cabling, the positioning of speakers and so on.

Without expert assistance even high class hi-fi can give mediocre results. With it you'll stand a very good chance of ending up with something rather more than a consumer durable - something which will be a source of considerable pleasure and genuine emotional satisfaction for decades to come.

***I agreed to write this signed piece, irrespective of the specific sponsors, because I believe the independent specialist dealer plays a vital role in giving customers long term hi-fi satisfaction.***

**Paul Messenger**

*The specialist Dealers listed here are professional and enthusiastic.*

*Give your nearest a ring for a demonstration.*

## STAR QUALITIES

value for money  
service  
facilities  
verdict



### LONDON

#### **N1 GRAHAMS HI-FI**

190a New North Road  
0171 226 5500

#### **SW11 ORANGES & LEMONS**

61/63 Webbs Road, Battersea  
0171 924 2040

#### **W4 MARTIN-KLEISER Ltd**

109 Chiswick High Road  
0181 400 5555

### SOUTH

#### **Ashford, Kent**

#### **SOUNDCRAFT HI-FI**

40 High Street  
01233 624441

#### **Chelmsford RAYLEIGH HI-FI**

216 Moulsham Street  
01245 265245

#### **East Grinstead**

#### **AUDIO DESIGNS**

26 High Street  
01342 314569

#### **Kingston-upon-Thames**

#### **INFIDELITY**

9 High Street Hampton Wick  
0181 943 3530

#### **Lakeside Retail Park**

#### **RAYLEIGH HI-FI**

Dansk International Furniture World  
01708 680551

#### **Rayleigh, Essex**

#### **RAYLEIGH HI-FI**

44a High Street  
01268 779762

#### **Southend-on-Sea**

#### **RAYLEIGH HI-FI**

132/4 London Road  
01702 435255

#### **Uxbridge UXBRIDGE AUDIO**

278 High Street,  
01895 465444

### MIDLANDS

#### **Banbury OVERTURE**

3 Church Lane  
01295 272158

#### **Birmingham SOUND ACADEMY**

152a High Street, Bloxwich  
01922 493499

#### **Leicester CYMBIOSIS**

6 Hotel Street  
0116 262 3754

#### **Northampton LISTEN INN**

32 Gold Street, 01604 637871

#### **Shrewsbury CREATIVE AUDIO**

9 Dogpole 01743 241924

### NORTH

#### **Cheadle (Stockport)**

#### **AUDIO COUNSEL**

14 Stockport Road  
0161 428 7887

#### **Oldham AUDIO COUNSEL**

12/14 Shaw Road  
0161 633 2602

#### **Sheffield MOORGATE**

#### **ACOUSTICS**

184 Fitzwilliam St  
0114 275 6048

### SCOTLAND

#### **Edinburgh**

#### **RUSS ANDREWS HI-FI**

34 Northumberland Street  
0131 557 1672

#### **Glasgow STEREO STEREO**

260 St. Vincent Street  
0141 248 4079

Choosing a good hi-fi dealer is the most vital step in acquiring the system that is right for you. This unique directory gives full information on dealers able to help in your area.

# DEALER Directory

Members of the British Audio Dealers Association are able to offer:



- Two year guarantee, transferable to another BADA dealer should the purchaser move more than 30 miles from his/her original address
- low cost five year guarantee option
- proper demonstration facilities
- seven day exchange or refund scheme if the dealer's advice is taken on product selection
- fully guaranteed service work
- customer complaints procedure in the event of problems

For more information, contact BADA on ☎ (0171) 226 4044

## BATH/BRISTOL

**AUDIO EXCELLENCE**, 65 Park Street, Bristol. Tel (0117) 9264975. All that's best in Hi-Fi carefully selected and demonstrated by friendly knowledgeable staff, at prices to suit all budgets. Delivery and installation, home dems, part exchange, in-house workshops, full credit facilities with interest free on selected items. Tues-Sat 9.00-5.30. Closed Mon. **BADA**

**THE RIGHT NOTE**, Tel (01225) 874728. Give your ears a new reference point for the best sounds at any price. Forget reviews and trying to put together a system like a patchwork quilt with the 'best' bits around. It's our job to do the assessing, you judge the results. Come here, or we'll come to you, and plan a system for the future, even if you spread the purchases. Leave "upgrade-itis" behind, save money and enjoy music. Just listen, and you'll know. Ask also about our ex-demos and mint used items if you must! Our credentials - CD: Acurus, Audio Synthesis, Classé, Enlightened Audio Design, Meracus, Oreille, Wadia, XTC. Vinyl: Basis, Graham, Michell, Sumiko. Amps: Arcurus, Audio Sculpture, CAT, Classé, DNK, Kora, Lumley, Meracus, Michell, Oreille, Sirius, Sonnesteer, XTC. Speakers: Audio Artistry, Audio Physic, Ethos, Harbeth, Lumley, Magnephanar, Mirage, NEAT, Spondor, Totem. Tuners: Fanfare, Magnum Dynalab. Cables: Chord, DNK, Silver Sounds, SonicLink, Tice. **BADA**

**V AUDIO**, 36 Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1EJ. Tel (0117) 9686005. Alon, ATC, Audiomeca, AVI, Cable Talk, Cadence Valve, Chord Amps, Electrocompaniet, Exposure, Goldring, Harman Kardon, Heybrook, Jamo, LFD, Lyra, Mesa Baron, Michell, Opera, Oracle, Ortofon, Pink Triangle, Pro-Ac, Project, REL, Ruark, Shearman Audio, Silver Sounds, SME (inc 20A), Sonic Link, Stax, Townshend, Triangle, Trichord, Unison Research. Demos including home cinema by appt only, home trial facilities, free installation, service facilities. Access, Visa. For full product listing please see Dealer Guide.

## BEDFORDSHIRE

**RICHARDS AUDIO VISUAL**, 4 Greyfriars, Bedford, Tel (01234) 365165. Stockists of Arcam, Audioquest, Beyer, B&W, Bose, Cabeltalk, Celestion, Cyrus, Denon, Marantz, Mission, Moth, Ortofon, Pioneer, Pro-ject, REL, Rotel, Ruark, Sennheiser, Soundstyle, Stands Unique, Talk Electronics, Target, Teac, Van den Hul & more! Hi-Fi Listening Room. Free credit available. Open 6 days 9.30-5.30.

## BERKSHIRE

**AUDIO T**, 4 Queens Walk, Broad Street Mall, Reading, Tel (0118) 9585463. Fax (0118) 9566417. Open Tues-Sat 9-5.30. Evening dems arranged by appointment. See our main entry under Oxford. We also sell AVI, Linn, Michell, Naim, Rega, Royd & Ruark. **BADA**

## BIRMINGHAM

**GRIFFIN AUDIO**, Birmingham, for music and pictures at home. Forty five years experience in quality sound and vision. For expert and friendly advice call Bob Griffin on 0121-622 2230. We are agents for Arcam, Chord, Denon, Dynavector, Linn, Musical Technology, Naim, QED, Quad, Quadraspire, Rega, Sennheiser, Shaminian, Stands Unique, Stax and Teac. Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 5.30pm at 94 Bristol Street, Birmingham B5 7AH.

**MUSIC MATTERS**, 351 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B17 8DL. Tel (0121) 429 2811. Rotel, Denon, Lexicon, Tannoy, Ruark, Alchemist, Exposure, Pioneer, Roksan, Nakamichi, Arcam, Audiolab, Musical Fidelity, Mission/Cyrus, Meridian, KEF, Monitor Audio, Pink Triangle. 2 single speaker luxury demo rooms. Appts nec, home trial facilities, free installation, service dept. Access, Visa, instant credit up to £1000, interest free credit available. Tue-Thur 10.30-6, Fri 10.30-8, Sat 10-6. **BADA**

**MUSIC MATTERS**, 93-95 Hobs Moat Road, Solihull, W. Midlands B92 HJ1. Tel (0121) 742 0254. See main entry under West Midlands. **BADA**

**SOUND ACADEMY** 152a High Street, Bloxwich, Nr Walsall W. Midlands, Tel (01922) 493499/ 473499. Audio equipment from leading and specialist brands, with 3 demo floors, home trials, home cinema with instore demo theatre, evening demo's by appointment. In house service dept. Mail order avail. Int free credit subject to status. Open 6 days 9am - 6pm. Late night Friday. Expert advice, cable dressing and free installation. **BADA**

## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

**NORTHWOOD AUDIO**, 98 Cambridge St, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1BA. Tel. (01296) 428790 (A/P). Selected sounds from Alchemist, Audio Meca, Boston, B&W, Cabeltalk, Castle, Celestion, Chord Company, Denon, D.P.A., Exposure, Harman Kardon, KEF, Marantz, Michell, Micromega, Monitor Audio, Musical Technology, NAD, Pro-Ac, Rega, REL, Rose, Rotel, Ruark, Tannoy, Teac, Thorens Neat Acoustics, Talk Electronics, Chord, Heart, Audio Note, Epos, Klipsch, Acoustic Energy, Stax, Pioneer, D.N.M.. NOBODY EVER REGRETTED PURCHASING THE BEST. Export orders welcome. 2 Dem rooms. Credit facilities available.

**TECHNOSOUND and AUDIO INSIGHT**, 7-8 Granville Square, Wilton, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK15 9JL. Tel: (01908) 604949. Main lines include Meridian, Arcam, B&W, Acoustic Energy, Musical Fidelity, Mission, Ruark, Royd, Teac, UKD. 4 Dem Rooms, Custom Home Cinema, Video Projection and Dolby Digital. Service Department, Free Installation and Home Trial Facilities. Access & Visa accepted and Interest Free Credit available. Open Mon 1-6pm, Tues-Sat 10-6pm, late night Fri till 7.30pm.

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE

**INTUNE PROFESSIONAL AUDIO**, 19 East Street, St Ives, Cambridge P17 4PD, telephone: 01480 468888. Main agents for ATC, Sony, NAD, Denon, Quad, Teac, Project, Yamaha, Monitor Audio, Rogers, Mission, Musical Fidelity, Pioneer, Meridian, Alchemist, also quality In-Car and Computing.

**THE AUDIO FILE**, 41 Victoria Road, Cambridge CB4 3BW. Tel (01223) 68305. See our main entry under Hertfordshire. **BADA**

**UNIVERSITY AUDIO**, 1-2 Peas Hill, Cambridge. Tel (01223) 354237. Acoustic Energy, Mission-Cyrus, Arcam, Rotel, Denon, Meridian, ATC, AVI, Quad, Linn. 3 dems, 1 single speaker. Home trial, free install, Service Department Visa, Access, Amex, Credit. Open 9-5.30.

## CHESHIRE

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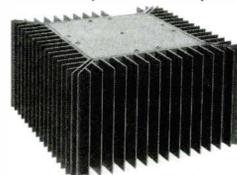
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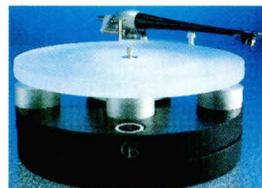
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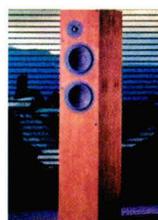
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1990	78-89	Jan, Feb, Jun, Aug, Sep, Dec	Very limited
1991	90-101	Jan, Feb, Aug-Dec	Very limited
1992	102-113	All exc. Mar 92	Very limited
1993	114-125	Jan, Mar, Jun, Sep-Nov	Very limited
1994	126-137	Jun-Aug, Nov	Very limited
1995	138-149	All exc. Feb	Very limited
1996	150-161	Jun, Jul	Limited
1997	162-173	None sold out	Good
1998	174-185	None sold out	Good

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**THE DECEMBER 1998 ISSUE OF HI-FI CHOICE WILL BE ON SALE THURSDAY OCTOBER 22, 1998. DON'T MISS IT!**

# DAVID VIVIAN

A DVD deck that sounds like a turntable? What on earth is going on? Meet Denon's DVD 3000.



Two Denon boxes turned up on my doorstep recently. One contained the company's new budget CD player, the £280 DCD-835. The other, in a rather more battered carton, its much-acclaimed £700 DVD-3000 DVD player. It was time for one of those Jeremy Clarkson moments where you slap your palms together, rub them vigorously and – suppressing a wicked chuckle – utter just one word: "Right"...

Arguably hi-fi's hottest question at the moment is if DVD machines make a better fist of playing conventional CDs than ordinary players. Some commentators say DVD players sound superior at a fundamental level, others that there are so many micro processors in there, generating unwanted noise, that the opposite is true. This is with good old 16-bit silver discs, of course. Audio discs encoded with 24-bit/96 kHz information should be a different matter.

Another factor counting against DVD is that its first generation products are pricey. Subsequent players will become cheaper and better, as we already know from the way CD players have improved in quality and decreased in price. Indeed, standards continue to improve so rapidly in the CD arena that newness is probably a better signifier of sonic ability than expense.

I warmed up the DCD-835 and ran a comparison with my resident Arcam Alpha 8 SE (£600). It didn't sound quite as rich and

- ◊ Denon DVD-3000: a lovely relaxing CD player.
- ◊ Denon DCD-835: a snappy budget CD player.



organic as the Arcam but it was just about as good – more or less what I'd expect given its newer design and the imperative for excellence driven by a fiercely competitive market sector.

### SOMETHING FOR NOTHING?

The secret of the 835's low-level resolution is claimed to be the NPC digital filter used in conjunction with dual-mono 18-bit Burr Brown DACs. In addition to a liberal sprinkling of components chosen purely on the ground of sound quality, other features are said to include a large transformer, 10 separately-regulated power supplies and high-quality Burr Brown op-amps used downstream of the DAC. According to Denon, the latest Silmic capacitors are present both in the DAC and audio sections, and the output stage is direct-coupled.

Now, I wouldn't know a Silmic capacitor from my elbow, and neither would you. But you've got to assume it works because you can hear the difference. I've used an old 825 as a budget reference for many months.

Few sub-£300 machines have such a bold, colourful, vibrant sound. Next to the 835, though, the 825 is rougher than Richard Harris after a night on the town.

What I want to know is whether it will be blown out of the water by DVD. (Other scribes have attempted this investigation, for example Alvin Gold in *HFC* 184, who also tested the DVD-3000 against a selection of its competitors. – Ed) For my comparison I used AVI amplification, Quad 7710L speakers and tracks including the excellent *Timber* by Coldcut and Hexstatic. This is a tight, fast and rhythmic piece with a complex mix and taut, deep bass synth sweeps.

“ Rhythms seemed less forced; bass weight and drive less obvious, but more addictive. ”

On the 835 it had a truly epic feel and cruised along in a loose, relaxed manner.

There was a wealth of midband detail and imaging was almost tangibly solid. The whole presentation was clean, energetic and impressive.

The same wouldn't have been true of the DVD-3000. Cosmetically it sounded a little dull and over-polite.

The tang and freshness seemed to have gone. In fact, it didn't sound like CD at all. But the longer I listened the more I liked it. Although it wasn't as explicit as the 835, it was more coherent. Rhythms seemed less forced, bass weight and drive less obvious, but more addictive. I played more CDs and the DVD's ability to produce richer textures and sweeter tunes grew. Sound familiar? It should. This is what a good turntable sounds like.

I wouldn't pretend to know what's going on here. DVD's 'sound' could be a result of superior technology or little understood aberrations. Don't know, don't really care. Maybe, as some have said, it's a different flavour of CD. I'd just call it tasty.

Denon Brochureline z (01234) 741200

### EDITOR'S NOTE

The DCD-835 will appear in next month's CD player mega test. At press time, Technical Editor Paul Miller was reporting some interesting results from his lab test. Read next month's issue to find out more!

## HIGHLIGHTS OF NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE ...

### IN POLE POSITION...

TAG McLaren Audio's new hi-fi range (below) is the most exciting story in hi-fi this year. The company has an amazing pedigree in motor racing, but will its first electronic components break new records? We'll take an in-depth look at the new CD20R CD player, 60iRV integrated amp, PA20R pre-



amp, PPA20 phono preamp and 125 monoblock power amps. Vroom!

### DIGITAL VS ANALOGUE HOME RECORDERS:

How do the latest cassette decks compare with MD and CD-R for CD dubbing convenience? Under scrutiny: cassette decks from TEAC and Marantz, MiniDisc (MD) recorders from Denon, Sony and Sharp, plus CD-R/RW decks from Philips and Pioneer (below).



### 11 CD PLAYER MEGATEST — MODELS PRICED £250-£800.

Arcam Alpha 9, Denon DCD-835, Marantz CD-67mkII OSE, Musical Fidelity X-RAY, Myryad T-10 (above), Parasound CDP-1000, Pioneer PD-S707, Rotel RCD 971, Sony XB-720, TEAC VRDS-8, Yamaha CDX-993

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