

# HI-FI CHOICE

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FEBRUARY 2000 REF 264



# A Perfect Ten...

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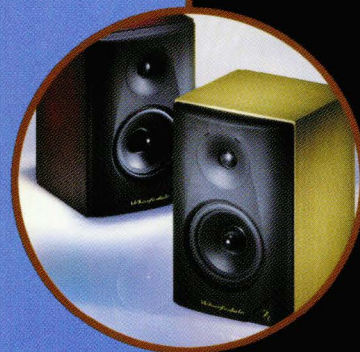
Sound Quality



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Diamond 7.2*	£129.95
Diamond Anniversary	£149.95



# HI-FI CHOICE

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ISSUE 199 • FEBRUARY 2000

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Media with passion



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

**JK** celebrates the survival of the millennium and discovers some great sounds on the airwaves.



It looks like our hi-fis have survived the dreaded millennium bug – after all, electronics don't get 'flu do they? Even my ancient 386 PC seems to be happy so far. Was it all a con, or are we celebrating too soon?

I decided not to mingle with the riverside crowds in London for new year's eve, but got together a suitably OTT system for a party with family and friends instead. I borrowed horn speakers of the Air Partner inclination and bolted a couple of 12-inch bass units into a wooden wall. The limitation was inevitably the Technics turntables and mixing desk, but the end result was most entertaining and certainly the best sounding 'club' system I've heard. I even got to spin a few discs, and by the second stint had figured out what people will dance to – it would seem you can't be too populist when catering for a party crowd.

### THE FUTURE

Logo spotters among you may have noticed that *Hi-Fi Choice* is no longer published by Dennis Publishing, but has been acquired by Future Publishing. In effect all this means is that we (the staff) will be moving to new offices once this issue has gone to press – note the new e-mail and snail-mail addresses in the panel on this page. Inevitably there is some concern that our new masters may wish to change the magazine's style, but initial suggestions are that they feel that our angle is about right if, perhaps, a little downmarket.

If you'd like to add your own opinions and influence the way *Hi-Fi Choice* develops in (and at) future, please fill out the reader survey bound into this issue (p82) – there's even an incentive in the form of B&W 603 S2 speakers up for grabs.

### BROADCAST NEWS

Richard Black has been assessing a small group of DAB tuners for us this month. You may remember that his first encounter with the medium, in the form of Arcam's DAB 10, was not terribly inspiring. He felt that the medium didn't offer enough of an improvement over FM. He's still not entirely convinced, but managed to single out the better of the options currently available.

Personally, I feel that while DAB may not offer the state-of-the-art sound quality that we would like to get off air it's still going to be a major upgrade in a lot of situations. The real advantage is that you don't need an external aerial in most circumstances, you get clean, interference-free reception from something the size of a mobile phone car antenna. I had to erect a substantial 17 element 'twig' to achieve that with FM, and I'm in a well served part of the country (reception-wise).

What Richard is after is CD quality sound for free but, as he points out, that would be a godsend to pirates at a time when the music industry is more and more sensitive about such issues. So while we would love a higher quality digital radio system, this one is still in its infancy – and you'll remember how bad CD sounded when it first put in an appearance. So I remain optimistic that digital radio will bear tasty audio fruit in the near future.

It would certainly be handy for recording BBC Radio 3's excellent *Late Junction* show. This is the only national broadcast I'm aware of that plays a genuinely eclectic selection of non-pop, non-classical material. A mix that includes world music, ECM-style jazz, folk and many more genres that need greater exposure but are not considered commercial enough for most stations. If your tastes stretch beyond the usual confines I can highly recommend it, R3 10.15-11.30pm on weekday evenings.

*JK*

### EDITOR'S CHOICE



#### WADIA 860x

I have long been impressed by Wadia's CD players and, having spent a few weeks in the company of its flagship one-box model, I'm a total convert to the cause. The 860x is very expensive for a hi-fi component, but its ability to turn the contents of silver discs into living, breathing music is the greatest I have encountered. The best excuse to buy CDs I've heard in years.



#### MANA STEALTH MA-1

Mana goes a long way back with *Hi-Fi Choice*. I remember reviewing its lovely turntable spirit level way back, and recall the effect that sticking one of its stands under Paul Messenger's record player had on him and his partner. So it's appropriate that we should get first dibs on Mana's latest diversion: power amplification. It sounds like Paul has finally found a competitor for his stalwart Naims.





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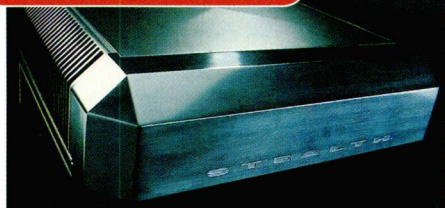
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# NEWS & VIEWS

Ooh, we're just bursting with news. Tim Bown and Lee Dunkley press the release button.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



**B&W** has introduced a range of colourful multi-purpose loudspeakers. The Leisure Monitor (LM1) offers numerous installation possibilities and is even weatherproof for outdoor applications. Priced at £200, the two-way speaker employs a 12.5cm mid/bass driver a 2.5cm tweeter and is available in metallic silver, burgundy, turquoise, pearl white and matt black.

☎ (01903) 750750

**GAMUT AUDIO**, formerly known as Sirius, chose January's CES show in Las Vegas to announce the introduction of its M 250 monoblock amplifier. The company claims the M 250 employs a large power supply capable of 250 Watts into an eight Ohm load. For the full Gamut range and contact details see its Website. [www.ampspeker.com](http://www.ampspeker.com)

**QED** has introduced the Genesis Silver Spiral Bi-Wire speaker cable following the success of its two-core Genesis Silver Spiral. Manufactured from the same silver-plated 99.999 per cent OFC conductors the cable claims further benefits to bi-wireable set-ups and retails at £60/m.

☎ (01276) 451166

**SAMSUNG** has announced plans for a new version of its Yepp MP3 players that will allow music videos to accompany MP3 music files. The Motion Yepp should be available by the summer. The same company has also unveiled a mobile phone that doubles as a portable MP3 player. It was only a matter of time – how long will it be before we're using our mobile phones to download music and movies direct from the Net to entertain us on the train home from work?

☎ (020) 8391 0168

**CERWIN-VEGA** has launched its LS Series of loudspeakers. Featuring three floor-standing models. The LS-15, LS-12 and LS-10 are all three-way designs, while the LS-8 is a two-way bookshelf model. The AV range features the LS-6 and LS-5 models and the LS-6C and LS-5C centre channel models. All speakers are currently available and distributed exclusively in the UK by Lamba plc. Prices range from £130 to £700.

☎ (01727) 840527



## Tannoy revamps Mercuries



Tannoy's hugely popular Mercury range of speakers has been discontinued – and replaced with an all-new line-up called Mercury mX. The three models are claimed to offer performance substantially better than their acclaimed predecessors.

One of the biggest changes is the switch from plastic to paper for the main driver's cone. According to Tannoy, this is "coated with a ceramic film to improve stiffness and widen the sound dispersion at the top end of the frequency range by increasing the speed of sound through the cone body". The 25mm soft dome tweeter is also new, and much is made of the speakers' build quality – tongue and groove joints on the rear panel combined with a glued and screwed front baffle, internal bracing and additional mass damping, all in aid of reducing sonic coloration.

The range starts with the 29.8cm high mX1 at £120, with the 33cm mX2 weighing in at £150 and the 85cm floorstanding mX3 at £230. Each is available in a choice of light maple or dark oak finish, with a new silver-grey grill and matching Tannoy badge tweaking things aesthetically. All should be available by the time you read this. The more costly Revolution range, as featured in the Marantz/Tannoy system on p73, continues in its original form – for the time being at least.

Tannoy ☎ (01236) 420199



Tannoy Mercury mX.

**Sony DVP-F11:**  
saving valuable  
bookshelf space.



## DVD knocked sideways



Sony's latest DVD-Video player puts a space-saving spin on the booming sound and vision format. The DVP-F11 is an ultra-compact machine designed to operate on its side, taking up no more space than a medium-sized hardback book. It takes its styling cue from the forthcoming DVD-playing Playstation II video games console, and is compatible with all current surround sound formats – Dolby Digital, dts and MPEG 5.1. It incorporates a 96kHz/24-bit audio DAC, though it whether its performance will match a good quality horizontal remains to be seen. Price is expected to be around the £450 mark.

Also new from Sony is the DVP-CX850D, a 200-disc DVD multi-player with an estimated price tag of £600. It allows the user to store, organise and play back up to 200 DVD-Video and CD discs within the unit itself. Both players are available now.

Sony ☎ (0990) 111999

## DAB gathers pace



The UK's first two digital-only radio stations are now on air, launched on 15 November 1999 by Spice Girl Mel C. Planet Rock and Core are broadcasting nationally with programming that encompasses "classic rock" and "contemporary hits" respectively. A further five new stations are to follow shortly, including Capital UK, while 'simulcasts' of three existing FM commercial stations are already operating nationally – Virgin, Talk Radio and Classic FM.

In London, it's now possible to get more than 20 stations pilot broadcasting on DAB. From the BBC, there are the national Radios 1 to 5 Live, Radio 5 Live Sports Plus, the World Service, Parliamentary coverage and regional station GLR. News stations are represented by LBC, WRN and News Direct, while contemporary music is covered by Heart, Magic, Capital Gold, Kiss and Xfm.

Website: [www.ukdigitalradio.com](http://www.ukdigitalradio.com)

▷ Turn to p63 for our DAB tuner Super Test.



Mel C: much smaller than she looks on the telly.



# MF's "best amp ever"

Musical Fidelity has added a new preamp and power amp to its ever-swelling ranks. The A3<sup>CR</sup> is touted to be "among the best in the world, regardless of price"; MF is never shy about hyping its own products, but given the firm's recent track record it got an excuse to blow its own trumpet.

Both the preamp and the power amp are dual mono designs, putting in a performance alleged to be in line with the bandwidth requirements of SACD – stretching out to 100kHz. Low distortion, massive dynamic range and three-dimensional imaging are also claimed. Stripped to bare bones, Musical Fidelity attributes such performance to three factors: painstaking PCB layout, high quality circuit components – resistors, transistors and capacitors – and the use of substantial, choke regulated, dual-mono power supplies. The A3<sup>CR</sup> power amp is rated at 160 Watts per channel, while the preamp supplies five line-level inputs, including a

tape loop and one labelled 'SACD', together with a phono input. The price is £999 for each unit.

Musical Fidelity boss Anthony Michaelson claims they combine to make his best amp ever. When we've heard it, we'll let you know if we agree with him.

Musical Fidelity ☎ (020) 8900 2866

**MF A3<sup>CR</sup> pre/power: talked up, but can they get down?**



## Awesome analogue

Clearaudio's state-of-the-art turntable has been unleashed in the UK. The Master Reference costs a whopping £8,510 if bought outright, plus a further £3,620 for the Master TQ-I linear tracking tonearm. However, its maker's upgrade philosophy means you can get there in stages – start with the entry-level Solution turntable and work your way up!

The Master Reference uses a silicon/acrylic platter resting on an inverted bearing made from bronze and hardened steel. The chassis is described as "resonance optimised", owing to its geometry and use of materials, while a high grade power supply delivers distortion-free voltage. Wow and flutter is minimised by trio of separate, synchronised motors and there's even room to accommodate up to three tonearms should you so wish.

The Master TQ-I tonearm is a stunning design, massively constructed from acrylic, brass and lead anti-mony alloy. Both turntable and arm are available now. Audio Reference ☎ (01483) 575344

Master Reference:  
as seen in *Blade  
Runner*.



## She's so modern

Ruark has revamped its Contemporary range of speakers, incorporating a brand new design and substantial upgrades to almost all existing models. The result is the Contemporary R Series, the 'R' standing for 'Reference'.

The new speaker is the Prelude R, an 82cm tall floor-stander featuring an 18cm paper-coned mid/bass driver and a 25mm silk dome tweeter. Effectively replacing Ruark's long-running Templar II, it costs £749.

Then there's the Epilogue R (£375), an improved version of the existing Epilogue standmounting speaker, sporting upgrades to its crossover, input terminals and cabinet construction. It is joined by the Epilogue R Stand (£199), a matching, mass-loadable support.

The range-topping Prologue One R floorstanding speaker (£949) has received a new tweeter and an improved crossover, as well as visual enhancements, and the Dialogue One R centre channel speaker (£379) is now fully wood veneered and features an improved cabinet.

All Ruark's 'R' designated products come with the option of a new aluminium front baffle, while the Epilogue, Epilogue V and Log-Rhythm subwoofer continue unchanged at £249, £289 and £750. The standard Dialogue One also continues at a price of £329, but is now enhanced with a new tweeter, crossover and grille. Ruark ☎ (01702) 601410



Ruark's 'Log pile, a nice bunch of Rs.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



**SHARP** has unveiled a new MiniDisc personal player claiming 15 hours playback time from the supplied rechargeable battery. The MD-MT831H (above) is the company's smallest MD recorder yet and features gold-coloured casework, LCD stick remote control, anti-shock memory, easy to use editing controls. It costs about £258.

☎ (0800) 262958

**LOUD & CLEAR**, the Glasgow based hi-fi and home cinema retailer, has recently opened a new store in Edinburgh.

Situated at 26 Hamilton Place, Stockbridge, the store offers demonstration rooms, service and repair facilities and an extensive stock range. Opening hours are Mon to Fri from 10am to 6pm.

☎ (0131) 226 6500

**SACD** software update: Jazz label

Challenge Records is the latest music software producer to commit to the new high-quality SACD format. Its first release is already available, and it plans to release a further 15 hybrid SACD discs before the end of the year. "Jazz fits SACD very well," said the label's MD, Anne de Jong. "The music calls out for the wonderful dynamics of this new recording format." British classical label Hyperion Records has also climbed aboard – it has already completed 20 recording projects using SACD's Direct Stream Digital system.



**CUSTOM DESIGN** has unveiled the e'lite range of hi-fi and AV equipment supports and speaker stands (above). Designed and manufactured in the UK, all equipment supports are modular for future expansion and come in three styles of finish. Speaker stands come in standard or chrome finish.

☎ (0191) 262 4646

**SONY** has introduced two new computer CD-RW drive kits. The CRX140E-RP and CRX140S-RP are being touted as the fastest CD writers on the market with 32x CD-ROM read performance, 8x CD-R and 4x CD-RW write

speeds. They are supplied with the software you need to create and record music, images, video and data, as well as back-up CDs. Prices are expected to be about £225 and £244 respectively.

☎ (0990) 111999



## NEWS IN BRIEF

**NORDOST** has launched a new, high-performance electrical digital interconnect. The Silver Shadow is touted as a state-of-the-art cable offering significantly reduced jitter and timing errors for fast, accurate delivery of digital signals. Available as a 75 Ohm version at £284.95, or a 110 Ohm balanced version costing £334.95.

☎ (01352) 730251



**TANNOY** has unveiled two Super Tweeter models. The Prestige ST100 is designed to complement the Prestige speaker range, but is also at home with other Tannoy dual Concentric design speakers. The Universal ST200 model is designed to complement other quality speakers. Both models employ a 2.5cm titanium dome and are finished in solid wood with brass and gold fittings.

☎ (01236) 420199

### BRISTOL HI-FI SHOW update:

Among the products debuting at the Sound & Vision Show will be Arcam's FMJ range, Cyrus' CLS 70 speaker, Exposure's new CD player and power amps from Naim and Quad. There will also be plenty of opportunity to hear the SACD and DVD-Audio formats for yourself. The show runs between 18 and 20 February at the Marriot Hotel, Lower Castle Street, Bristol. Entry is £6 for adults, £3 for concessions and free for kids under 16. Visitors can also take the opportunity to visit a smaller high-end hi-fi show in Bath, timed to coincide on Saturday 19.

☎ Bristol (01865) 760844  
☎ Bath (01225) 874728

**ERRATUM:** Last month, pesky thieves broke into our office and stole some stars from the review of Roksan's Caspian DSP/5-channel amplifier. It appeared with three stars for sound, build and value; it should have been four for each. Our reviewer was very impressed with its performance, as anyone who read the piece will know, and it thoroughly deserves the Recommended tag it received.

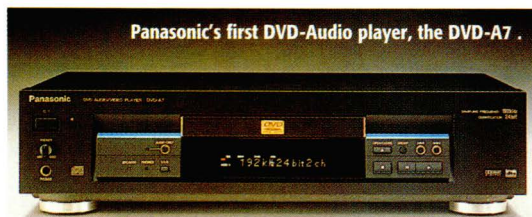
**CLEARSOUND** has unveiled the Speaker Hood, a five-sided cabinet lined with acoustically absorbent material. Designed to fit over conventional speaker cabinets, it is said to reduce unwanted vibrations, improving sonic performance. Currently designed for B&W 601s (£99.50 plus postage), other hoods follow shortly.

☎ (01684) 833155

**TUBE TECHNOLOGY** has revamped its Fusion and Fulcrum CD players, following less than favourable reviews in *HFC*. It claims adjustments it made to filter values just prior to shipping for review inadvertently affected performance. Both players are now being rebuilt – samples expected soon.

☎ (01932) 821111

## No DVD-A until late 2000



The murky waters surrounding the delayed launch of DVD-Audio are beginning to clear, and for UK buyers it's not good news.

Matsushita Corporation has announced significant delays to the European launch of its Panasonic and Technics players, as reported in *HFC* last month, and Pioneer has followed suit. It now appears there will be no DVD-Audio players in the UK or US until Autumn at the earliest – Matsushita had promised early 2000, while Pioneer was gunning for Spring.

The delay has been caused by a Norwegian hacker, who cracked DVD-Video's Content Scrambling System (CSS) using a PC and a DVD-ROM drive. DVD-Audio's copyright protection system uses a CSS variant called CSS2, and major music labels have insisted they hold back until a more advanced system is developed – that could take six months to a year.

However, Pioneer has gone ahead with its plans for a Christmas 1999 hardware launch in Japan to comply with demand. The company points out that its DVD-Audio machines are also upmarket DVD-Video players, so there is no shortage of usable software at launch.

Also, as the use of encryption is optional for software producers, Pioneer is supplying non-encrypted DVD-Audio discs to support the launch, and expects a number of music labels to do the same. When a suitable encryption technology is approved, Pioneer will offer a free upgrade service for those who bought players early.

But this is not a worldwide ploy. Customers in Europe and the US will have to wait until the copyright problem is solved before hardware or software eventually appears. How damaging this may be for the format is debatable; Sony and Philips' rival SACD format will get a useful head start, with Sony's two-channel players already in the UK and multi-channel models expected from Sony and Marantz during the course of this year.

However, problems with software authoring would have led to a shortage of DVD-Audio discs had the original hardware launch dates been hit. Encryption is carried out in the final phase of manufacture, so labels can now continue to mix and author discs ready for a more concerted hardware/software launch later in the year.

### The more costly of Pioneer's two DVD-A players, the DV-AX10.



## Roksan makes Caspian speakers

Roksan has delved back into the world of speakers for its latest addition to the

Caspian line-up. A new two-way model has joined the ranks, designed for use in both two and multi-channel systems.

Each speaker features two polypropylene-coned 13cm mid/bass drivers sourced from Spendor, with a 20mm soft dome tweeter positioned between them. The cabinet is made from MDF, measures 15.6x48x28.5cm (WxHxD) and comes in 'video grey' to match TV finishes. You can buy them individually at £330 per speaker, or purchase a complete multi-channel set-up – four speakers plus one centre – at the special price of £1,600. The centre unit is built from the same components and is acoustically matched to the standard model. It costs £350 if bought separately and comes complete with an angle-adjustable stand.

Roksan ☎ (020) 8900 6802



Roksan Caspian speakers.

## FM headphone give-away!

Vivanco's FM technology has brought new found freedom to the world of cordless headphones. Unlike infra-red technology, FM transmission will operate through walls – just place the transmitter next to your hi-fi and you can wear the accompanying headphones anywhere around the house. They'll even work in the garden!

Now Vivanco has launched a new pair of FM headphones, as reported in last month's *HFC*. The FMH 7780 features a new compact size, LCD display and a 100m transmission distance. It costs £70... that is, unless you're one of the first four *HFC* readers to write in and claim one, courtesy of Vivanco.

Simply send your name and address to Vivanco Give-away, *Hi-Fi Choice*, Future Publishing Ltd, 99 Baker Street, London W1M 1FB, and who knows, you might just get lucky.

Vivanco ☎ (01442) 403020





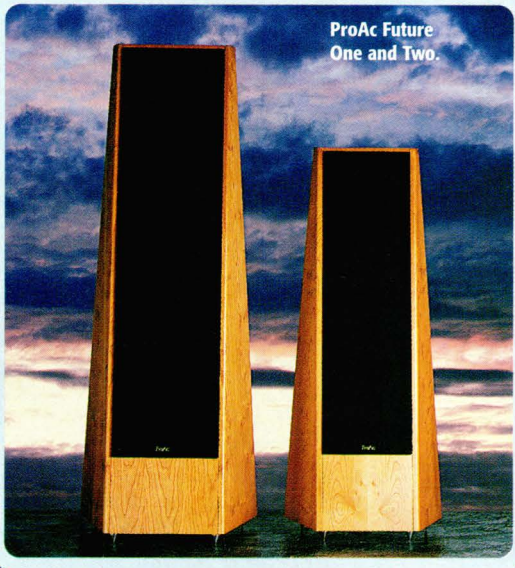
## ProAc's Futures



ProAc has announced the launch of two new high-end loudspeakers. The Future One and Future Two are both floorstanding models priced at £5,800 and £10,500 respectively. The unique cabinet design is a departure from the more conventional box design speakers and employs an asymmetrical bass chamber for reducing standing waves a downward-firing port and an open-backed midrange driver.

The Future One stands at 122cm tall and employs a ribbon tweeter with an 12.5cm polypropylene cone mid driver and an 18cm carbon-fibre cone bass driver.

The Future Two is the larger model standing at 153cm tall and employing a ribbon tweeter with a 15cm woven glass fibre mid driver and two 18cm carbon fibre bass drivers. Impedance for both speakers is rated at eight Ohms and sensitivity is 87dB and 88dB respectively. Finished in a wide range of real-wood veneers both models are available in the shops now. *Celef Audio International* ☎ (01280) 700147



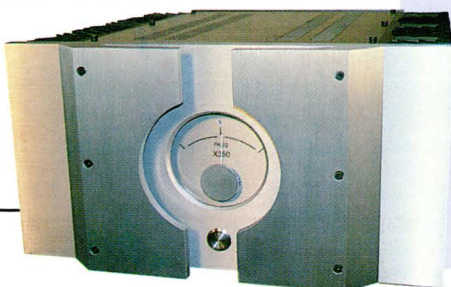
## Passing fancy



California-based high-end manufacturer Pass Labs has revealed details of a new stereo power amplifier. As part of the company's X Series range, the X350 features among some of the most powerful amplifiers in its product line up. Distributed by Zentek Music in the UK, the X350 has an output stage that employs 24 MOSFETs per channel offering 350 Watts a side and claims a dynamic range of greater than 150dB likely to benefit 24-bit recordings. The X350 is a substantial size and the front panel sports a meter indicating the total current being drawn by the power supply for both channels.

Available in the shops now, the X350 retails at £9,950.

*Zentek Music Ltd* ☎ (01892) 539595



**X350: danger, Will Robinson, danger!**



## PAUL MESSENGER

Paul gets all misty-eyed about his first love.

**A**s a vinyl lover at heart, I've had fifteen years to practice clutching at straws. I've got pretty good at it by now, and every month seems to bring new ones within reach. It makes me chuckle to recall an argument I had with a Sony exec back in the mid-1980s, who'd tried to tell me vinyl would be dead by 1990...

We vinyl fans owe a big debt of gratitude to the DJ scene, which has done much more than the hi-fi sector to keep the cutters and stampers busy. The rather less palatable corollary is that large numbers of potential young hi-fi customers have instead moved towards the DJ mix scene, creating a market which is starting to rival 'real' hi-fi, and is now big enough to develop its own technologies.

"Grab your MP3 files off the net, and then cut them onto vinyl!" is the extraordinary claim made in an ad which recently appeared in British DJ magazines. CD-burners, eat your hearts out! Whether DIY vinyl-cutting has any real relevance to the hi-fi is doubtful, but the very idea of this machine is intriguing enough to deserve a few column inches. It uses a new, softer vinyl compound than that used for commercial releases, but which lasts much better than acetates. Cutting direct to vinyl avoids the need for mothers, metalwork and the like, which is fine for one-offs (and great for DJs), but no use for duplication.

Vestax is the Japanese specialist DJ scene manufacturer, and the VRX-2000, due out soon, is expected to cost about £5,000. A working prototype was demonstrated (albeit in mono only) at the Autumn PLASA '99 pro-audio show in London, so the technology does work, but clearly needs some refining. Other tentative advance details include blanks at £25 for three discs, a record/play time of 24 minutes per disc, and a sapphire cutting head with an 80 hour life and a £50 price tag.

Much more relevant to the hi-fi scene is the news that turntable sales in Britain seem to be on the rise. I mentioned this in my November column, quoting statistics from market researchers GfK showing that 1998 turntable sales grew by 10 per cent (by volume, 6 per cent by value) during '97, and that 1998 was the third successive year to record double digit growth.

1998 sales totalled 88,000 units, but at an average selling price close to £150, so there must be plenty of budget models in the mix. That 'year-on' figure had crept up to 91,000 by the end of September 1999, but such bald figures don't show the full picture. Nearly half of those are actually midi-/mini-size budget players,

presumably purchased as accessories to midi-/mini-size systems, and these have actually been responsible for most of the growth. Sales of 'full-width' (430mm) hi-fi turntables have been more or less static (outside the 'bedroom DJ' sector).

One guy intending to change that, however, is Laurence Armstrong, of distributor Henley Designs. In a recent interview in the British Audio Journal trade magazine, Laurence quoted some pretty spectacular growth rates for the Czech-manufactured Pro-ject turntables and (Danish) Ortofon cartridges Henley distributes. I rang him to confirm the figures and work out the fine detail, giving him an excellent excuse to escape from unloading the 40-foot container which had just arrived from Czechland. Very hands-on, is Mr Armstrong.

And very proactive too, in the way he's taking the turntable scene by the scruff of the neck. The Ortofon growth is partly fuelled by the hyperactive DJ scene, which is understandable, but a claimed 48 per cent increase in turnover on Czech-built turntables requires closer scrutiny.

Some of it comes down to recent price cuts of some 30 per cent. Henley is taking something like half of Pro-ject's production, which naturally puts it in a strong bargaining position. But it's probably more to do with the budget models which have come on the scene. Pro-ject now has three models in the £100-£200 band which actually look like real hi-fi turntables (I can't comment on the performance, as I haven't tried them). Technics apart, there's not a lot of competition: Regas start at £207, and Dual's new UK distributor Yello has only been operating since the Autumn.

The big success seems to be the new Debut, which costs just £110 on its own, or £150 bundled with an Ortofon OM5 cartridge and an MM/MC phono head amp. That's no more expensive than replacing a dozen or so LPs with CDs, Laurence points out. He's particularly chuffed to find some Debut customers are so pleased with the results they're already coming back to upgrade to one of the 'posher' models. All of which has to be good news for vinyl fans.



You're looking at  
the Future...



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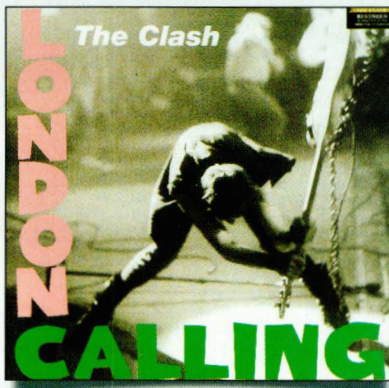
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Tel: 01280 700147 Fax: 01280 700148 Website: [www.proac-loudspeakers.com](http://www.proac-loudspeakers.com)



## PREVIOUSLY UNHEARD

**Phil Strongman** digs out rare and classic tracks appearing on CD or virgin vinyl for the first time. Go strut your funky stuff...



### THE CLASH *London Calling/Super Black Market Clash*

*London Calling* is one of Guy Stevens' finest productions, perhaps because the Clash were probably the world's greatest rock band at the time, circa 1979. The energy is so contagious it's easy to overlook some sparky soundstaging and songs like *Spanish Bombs* and *Jimmy Jazz* as well as a blistering cover of Vince Taylor's *Brand New Cadillac*. *Black Market* is a 10-inch single containing the raw 1977 and the reworked *Capitol Radio*. Simply Vinyl 180g double LP  
Music ★★★★★ Sonic ★★★★★

### VARIOUS *The Big Green Experience*

The BGE is an informal party using some surprisingly loud, solar-powered amps, this is the 'class of '98' CD. The most appealing cuts are the magically strange efforts by the accordion-led *Praying For The Rain*, the touching *Space Goats* and Dave Goodman's chilled-out *New Age Radio*. Oh yeah, and there's a beautifully arranged *Headhunters* number featuring some violin work by one Nigel Kennedy. For more info on this one, call (020) 8761 3288. *Green Futures CD*  
Music ★★★★★ Sonic ★★★★★

### BILL BROONZY *The Bill Broonzy Story*

Over 200 minutes of blues, work songs, spirituals and standards recorded in one boozy session by the man who influenced Big Boy Crudup and Elvis Presley. Unique. Verve triple CD  
Music ★★★★★ Sonic ★★★★★

### NINA SIMONE *Piano!Silk and Soul*

*Silk And Soul* is the jazzy soul diva in Stax territory, style-wise, while *Piano!* is the 1970 album that, despite being erratic, has a terrific version of *The Desperate Ones*. Camden CD  
Music ★★★★★ Sonic ★★★★★

### SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE *Best of...*

A hybrid of Hendrix, Mayfield and JB, young Sly was finally undone by the addictions which led him to PCP – and to mixing tapes until they crumbled. The irresistible *Dance To The Music* and the radio-friendly *Thank You* are among the surviving gems. Simply Vinyl double LP  
Music ★★★★★ Sonic ★★★★★

### LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA *French Favourites*

This is a mix of LSO performances and various solos – by Catherine Lenett, Adrian Leaper et al – all of which are superb. Part of a 'bluffer's guide to classical' series that includes Ballet, Russian and Baroque. ABM CD  
Music ★★★★★ Sonic ★★★★★

### ANIMALS ON WHEELS *nuvul i cadira*

A mass of cutting-edge beats, breaks, vocal samples and ambient soundscapes, this is somewhere in between background and foreground. Fans of the Herbaliser-Coldcut-DJ Food gang won't be disappointed. Ninja Tunes CD  
Music ★★★★★ Sonic ★★★★★



## King Canucks



Canadian speaker brands Mirage and Energy are set for a new push in the UK, following the creation of an Ipswich-based subsidiary of their manufacturer, Audio Products International – one of the largest speaker manufacturers in the world. Mirage has received limited distribution here for the past five years, but API (UK) is seeking to raise the profile of the brand that pioneered bipolar loudspeakers. Meanwhile, Energy is returning to the UK following a lengthy hiatus.

The current Mirage line-up is headed by the OM-Series, consisting of five floorstanders, two centre speakers and a pair of surrounds. Their design is Omnipolar, the intention to create an omnidirectional sound field. Also available are the more affordable FRx-Series and the home cinema-specific High Definition Theater range.

Energy is a more traditional brand, fronted by its entry-level e:XL line-up – two standmounters, three floorstanders, a centre channel and a rear speaker. Next up the price ladder comes the Connoisseur Series, with the Veritas range representing the high end. Watch out for a review of the e:XL-26 in the next issue of *HFC*.  
API (UK) ☎ (01473) 240205



Energy e:XL-28.

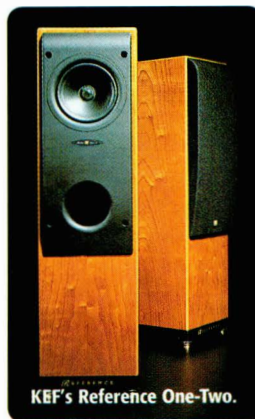
## Reference revisited



KEF has announced details of its revamped Reference Series of speakers. First from the traps is the range's entry-level Model One-Two, a three-way floorstander priced at £1,350 per pair.

Incorporated into its 86cm tall cabinet is one of KEF's now familiar Uni-Q drive units, featuring a 16cm polypropylene-coned midrange driver with a 25mm soft dome tweeter at its centre, a configuration which is said to result in more accurate imaging. Deeper bass frequencies are handled by a third driver with a 16cm paper cone.

Compared with the model it replaces, the crossover circuit has been improved with the use of new polypropylene capacitors for "a lower loss factor and a purer sound". Finish options have also changed – all the new generation Reference speakers are available in black ash, cherry and rosenut.



Also new from KEF is the Cresta 1, a budget 'bookshelf' speaker which joins the Cresta 2 at the other end of the company's price range. Included in its vinyl-covered cabinet is a 25mm silk dome tweeter and 10cm mid/bass driver, reflex loaded via a rear firing port. It's available at £100.  
KEF ☎ (01622) 672261





dAD 3 Q24:  
familiar looks,  
new strengths.

## CYRUS dAD 3 Q24 £900.00

*Jason Kennedy clocks the latest CD player from the Cyrus stable.*

If the two CD players I've been trying this month are anything to go by, the battle against jitter that started with Trichord's Clock modification in 1993 is still in progress. Both the Wadia (p60) and this Cyrus have been recently upgraded with new clocks, the latter now named dAD 3 Q24. We reviewed its Q predecessor in '97 and were impressed enough to Best Buy it, and next month this model braves the Mega Test to see if it can repeat the feat.

The main changes from the dAD 3 Q are introduced by the Q24 module, and include two more regulated power supplies, anti-jitter circuits, a 24-bit filter and a four-pole, post-DAC filter – elements which will have contributed to the fine measured results Paul Miller found in the lab.

The player is typical Cyrus fare: a slim 'shoe-box' shape formed by a die-cast, non-magnetic chassis, in this case with an ABS plastics base and alloy top and front. This and the star-earthing would hint at the hand of Dennis 'DNM' Moorcroft. He prefers metal-free casework, but practicality doesn't appear as important to his thinking as it does to Cyrus' need for broad appeal. The dAD 3 Q24 is surprisingly lightweight for a £900 player, but there has rarely been a suggestion that mass and sound quality go hand-in-hand with disc-spinners.

The features on this player appear to more extensive than usual for a domestic machine, and some of the legends on the remote are almost runic. Still, familiarity should help in this respect. Unusual keys include memory and phase invert, the latter being quite a scarce option outside of the high end these days, largely because you need high-end ancillaries and bat-like hearing to appreciate the effect it produces. There's also Cyrus' excellent MC-bus integrated system control connection for owners of other Cyrus components.



### SOUND QUALITY

I should say that I'm not, generally, a critical user of CD players in this price band or even near it. So it's a credit to the Cyrus that I needed to get in a few points of reference to find out what its failings were.

Its strengths seem to centre around an ability to disappear from the equation of replaying music. This is particularly the case at higher frequencies, where most affordable players either smooth things out to the point of dullness or add a degree of insistence that can fatigue. The dAD 3 Q24 remains clean – that filter must be working.

This Cyrus has a light, fresh balance that covers most of the bases in effortless fashion. There's plenty of bass weight combined with nimbleness that keeps timing firmly on the ball. A few more expensive players will outgun it in this respect, but you could never accuse it of lagging behind the musical moment.

Imaging is also handled well. The dAD 3 Q24 tends to project instruments and voices further forward than (again dearer) players whose strengths lie in this domain. It can lack a little in solidity by absolute standards, but without comparison you don't feel depth is restricted. And width of soundstage is up with the best of them.

It strikes me as a pretty analytical player: detail is presented in a coherent fashion, however dense the material. It instills confidence that whatever you play through it will come out in a tidy manner. That's not to say it neutralises the music, it just refuses to get flustered and become uncomfortable, the way certain players can.

Another point that struck me was the sheer silent darkness of backgrounds on sparse material. I don't know why you can hear what are often small differences in already vanishing levels of noise with various players, but it is one respect in which listening tallied with measurements on this occasion.

### CONCLUSION

My first 'affordable' CD player review for some time turned out to be a pleasurable one thanks to this nimble little Cyrus. I wish it well in next month's group test showdown.





## AR Status S 10 £129.99

*Tim Bower* tests a budget-friendly blast from the past.

**B**ack in the early '80s, a legion of British hi-fi fans cut their sonic teeth on Acoustic Research speakers. This US brand kick-started the entire 'budget box' trend, a sector several British firms have since made their own, and created a hi-fi design classic in the process. The AR 18 was in a class of its own for first-timers – buy a pair, hook them up to an NAD amp and add a Rega turntable. The alternatives were negligible, the choice simple.

By the mid-'80s, AR's achievements had been overshadowed by rivals like Mission. Its products clawed their way through to the '90s, but eventually disappeared from our shores, seemingly for good. However, huge US firm Recoton has resurrected the brand, marking its return with an all-new portfolio. The S 10 is the most affordable of the lot at a distinctly 'budget' £130.

The design offers nothing new, but is attractive enough and solidly built. Its main cabinet is dual-density chipboard, with an MDF front baffle, a 25mm silk dome tweeter and a 13.5cm mid/bass driver, held in a moulded ABS basket and sporting a coated paper cone. Around the back there's a small bass reflex port, tuneable via a pair of supplied foam bungs, and a set of reasonably solid single-wire cable terminals. Vinyl finish options are black ash or cherry.

### SOUND QUALITY

Making a budget speaker is a delicate juggling act, weighing up budgetary compromises until you get a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts. The S 10 achieves this, conveying a sound that's smooth yet crisp and relatively detailed. It's not the most dynamic speaker under £150, nor is it particularly weighty in the bass, yet it treads the line between easy-going and invigorating with considerable poise.

Matched alongside Tannoy's Mercury M1 (£120), both speakers showed strengths and weaknesses. The Tannoy delivered greater bass weight and showed a more effusive voice band. But the AR has better high frequency definition, giving a greater sense of 'air' and fine detail. This attribute is particularly appreciable with classical material: the Tannoy sounded more open with choral elements, but the S 10 ensured instrumental timbre was better defined; the character of brass, string and percussive instruments was more easily discerned.

This is AR doing what it does best – definitely one for the shortlist.



The Complete amp: a rather gentle giant.

## AUDIO REFINEMENT

### Complete integrated stereo amplifier £699.00

*Tim Bower* courts controversy with Yves-Bernard André's latest offering.

**E**very industry needs its characters, and hi-fi has more than its share: that's one reason why this business is so fascinating. Take, for example, Yves-Bernard André, creator of French brand YBA and proponent of many unconventional sonic theories.

Those familiar with André's work may be surprised to hear the word "mainstream" uttered in reference to his latest project. He's created a brand called Audio Refinement, targeting a wider audience and allowing YBA to concentrate upmarket. To that end, Audio Refinement products aren't hand-built; they're mass-produced in Taiwan.

So far there are three components – a CD player, a tuner and this amp. It's a conventional class AB design featuring a mix of outsourced and custom-made components, and YBA's traditional trio of aluminium feet for additional isolation. There are six line-level inputs, including two tape loops, and a remote control is available as a £40 option.

The amp's power is rated at 50 Watts per channel, although that's actually slightly conservative – we whipped it into the lab and measured it at 53 Watts into 8 Ohms. We also found distortion through the mid-band to be notably higher on the left channel than the right.

### SOUND QUALITY

Whatever one thinks of André's theories, the proof is in the listening. This amp proves something of a gentle giant, a component with a broad sound and a soft heart. There's no shortage of bass weight, although it's rather bloated and sluggish, and the overall effect is a transistor amp playing music with a warm, smooth gush, not unlike the stereotypical character of a valve amp.

However, unlike the best valve designs, this amp isn't particularly open and airy in the mid-to-treble. Alongside Musical Fidelity's excellent X-A1 (£498), it's considerably looser and less well-defined in virtually all departments. Although avoiding the trappings of harshness, it fails to propel rock and dance tracks with sufficient energy and gives a rather cloudy vision of individual instruments in an orchestral context.

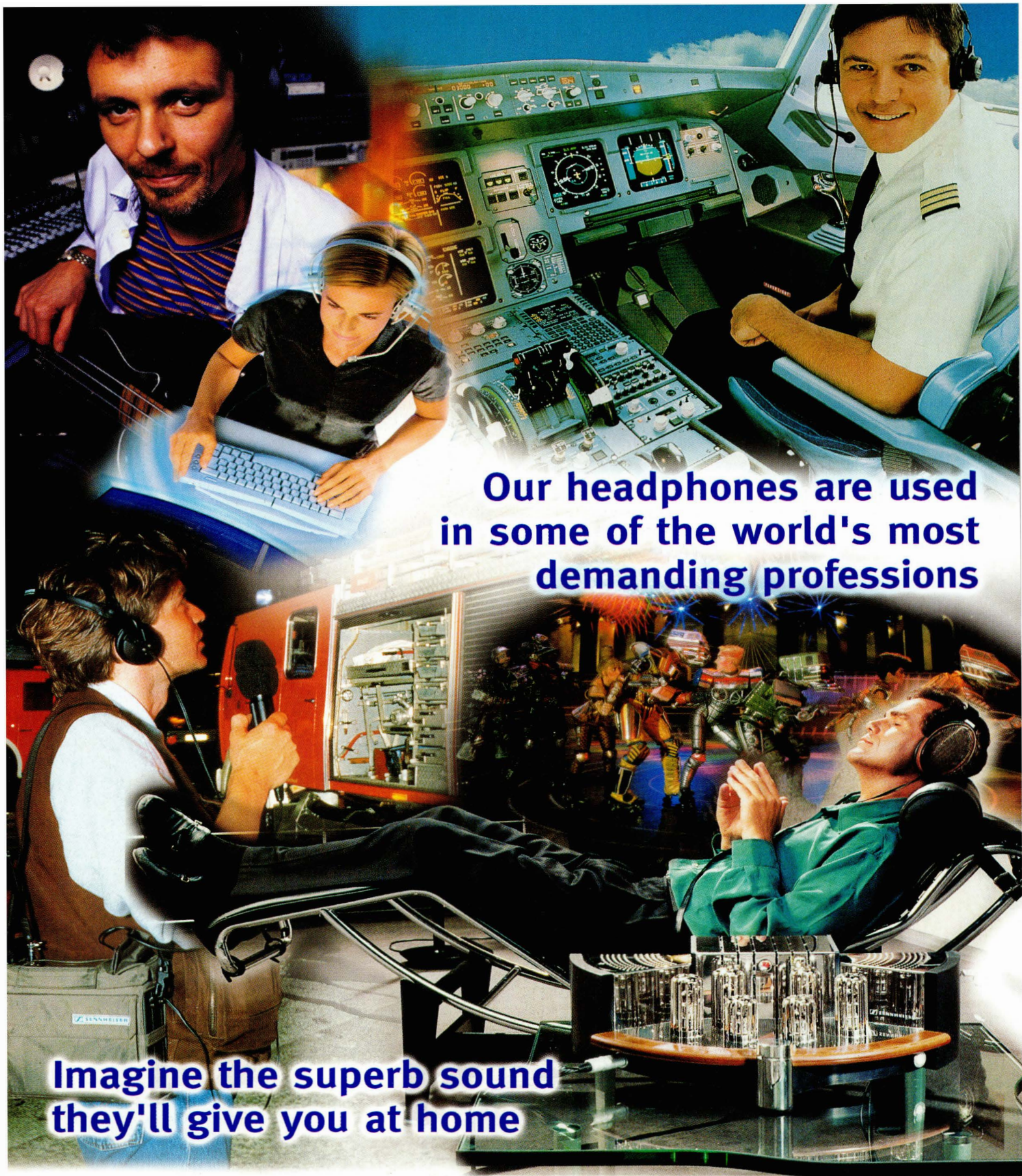
But the comparison is closer with a gentle slice of female vocal – this AR seemed to suit Maria McKee's *Nobody's Child*, presenting a well-focused image, good soundstage depth and a rich swell as the track entered the chorus. This is an amp you might love, or may well hate. It seems André will always be controversial.



S 10: a solid performer, solidly built.







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## ACOUSTIC ENERGY

Aegis Three £349.00

*Paul Messenger's been waiting aegis for a speaker like this...*

**T**he £150, standmounted, two-way Aegis One was tested and Recommended in HFC 187, while the £250 Aegis Two is essentially a One built into a floorstander (most of which acts as a stand). This £350 Aegis Three, on the other hand, has a proper bass driver operating alongside the other two drivers to add some extra weight and scale.

In fact, this review arose because the Three performed so creditably as part of AE's Aegis Surround speaker package (tested last issue). A neat, vinyl-clad floorstander, it comes already mass-loaded, supplied with a plinth and decent 8mm spikes to improve the stability and the appearance still further.

This type of speaker – where an extra drive unit augments the bass region of a basic two-way – is a very popular compact floorstander recipe. But whereas most simply duplicate the driver used for bass/midrange, the Aegis Three intelligently uses a larger, paper cone driver for the bass only, and a smaller, metal cone unit for bass/midrange. Both operate in separate port-loaded chambers, and the whole thing has been most skilfully tuned to give an exceptionally even bass alignment and in-room frequency balance, impressively smooth throughout, surprisingly deep in the bass, and well integrated from mid to treble too.

And that's exactly what it sounds like. Smooth, open, coherent, and subjectively 'bigger' than one expects from a speaker in this price range. Neutrality isn't the only important factor in sound quality, but it's arguably the single most important one, and here the Aegis Three is quite outstanding. It's also, sensibly, a little more ambitious than the Aegis One, delving significantly deeper into the bass and balancing this with a brighter and more open top end.

This speaker's budget status is more obvious in some lack of dynamic vigour and expression. However, the dynamic range itself is pretty good, while the sound as a whole, and the imaging in particular, are reassuringly solid.

Budget floorstanders are just about the most competitive segment of the speaker market, and there's no doubt in my mind that the Aegis Three is right up at the head of the pack, simply because it has the best bass and the best balance I've encountered at the price. A splendid budget loudspeaker – and one that's relatively easy to drive, too.



**PDR-509: high quality results for just £300.**

**Aegis Three: ambitious but effective.**

## HEAT SEEKERS



**PIONEER PDR-509 £300.00**

*Paul Miller lifts the lid on the latest CD-R from the technology's pioneer.*

**P**artly through the falling price of digital technology and the pressure brought to bear by cheap CD-record drives for PCs, the price of domestic CD-R/RW audio recorders is falling fast. Hence the new PDR-509 from Pioneer. At just £300, it's a third the cost of Pioneer's first domestic CD-R recorder with the added benefit of CD-RW recording and a raft of new facilities.

This slimline recorder will copy HDCD and dts-encoded multi-channel discs, for example, and will either down- or upsample all conventional digital sources to the 44.1kHz required by the CD standard. CD sources are copied without any sample-rate conversion, so jitter is held to a very low 210psec. This is the sort of result expected of a high quality CD player, let alone a CD recorder.

Technically, the PDR-509 provides entirely transparent digital copies. If a CD-R 'facsimile' of a silver CD sounds slightly different in your reference player then this is a function of the CD-R substrate (see HFC 191) and *not* due to any degradation in the data through its recording on the PDR-509.

Of course, although most modern CD players will recognise and play finalised CD-R discs, few are able to deal with CD-RW software, finalised or not. Ironically, many DVD players with twin-laser pick-ups (including Pioneer's own) will play back CD-R and CD-RW discs. Otherwise, your CD-RW copies may only be played back via the PDR-509 itself, whereupon its quality as a standalone CD player is the deciding issue.

In this respect, the PDR-509 is dominated by Pioneer's use of a Legato Link digital filter which provides a gentle treble roll-off but a greater amount of ultrasonic distortion than is typical. This makes the sound of the player (but not its recordings) a little susceptible to choice of music and amplifier but, ideally, can sound very open and unforced. Music with a busy-sounding treble can seem slightly manipulated, but never harsh or fatiguing.

You can always rely on the PDR-509 to sound smooth and enjoyable, if not entirely natural. This, I stress, is a function of the PDR-509's playback and *not* its CD-R or RW recording which, frankly, is about as good as it gets at any price.







essential  
**stimulation**

## European amplifier of the year

Audio specialists of nineteen European countries concluded: "TAG McLaren Audio has succeeded in developing an extremely refined integrated amplifier which combines truly high-end technology, audiophile components, engineering and, most important, audiophile sound - all at a reasonable price."

The 60iRv is shown here with TAG McLaren Audio's ground-breaking analog and digital tuner T32R, both in silver.



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e-mail: helpdesk@tagmclarenaudio.com

www.tagmclarenaudio.com

TAG McLaren



## ZINGALI Colosseum £975

Jason Kennedy wonders if good things come in small packages...

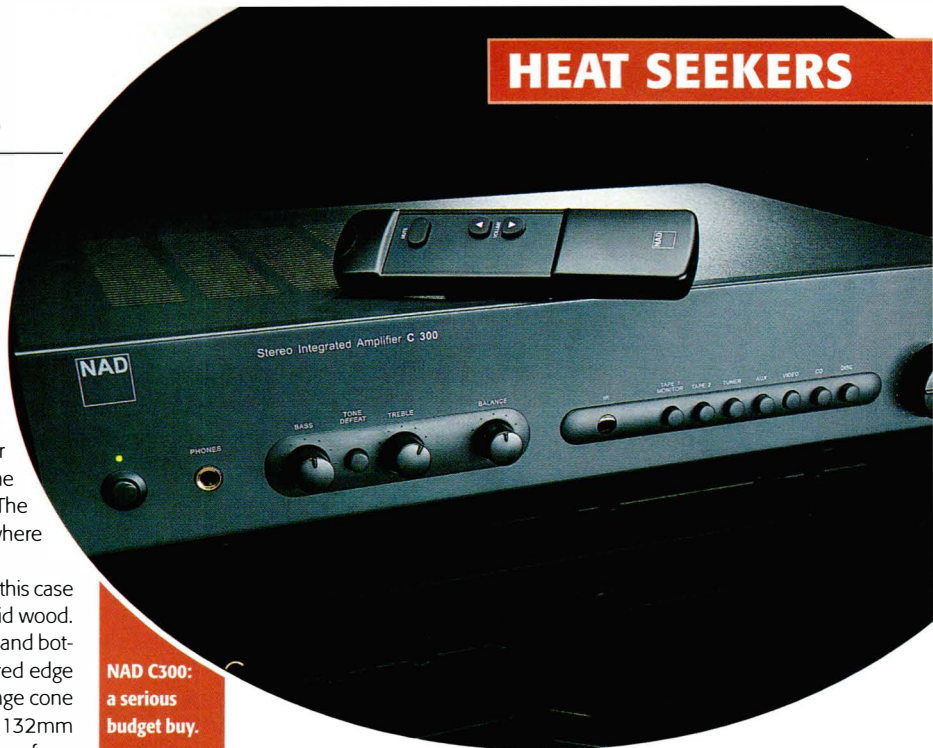
**W**e first came across this distinctive Italian brand in issue 195, when the standmounted Overture 2S impressed us. The Omniray range from whence it came has now given birth to, well, twins. These are in the form of two satellite and subwoofer systems dubbed, rather unimaginatively, Small and Large. We have the tinier of the two, and very cute it is. The satellites appear to have been designed for a paperback book shelf, while the sub is smaller than most air passengers' carry-on luggage. The intention is clearly to bring decent sound to environments where regular speakers would be unfeasible.

The Omniray name relates to the horn-loaded tweeter; in this case it's 2.5 inches in diameter at its largest and carved from solid wood. The same wood graces the back of the satellite and the top and bottom of the sub, the latter's base featuring a pair of chamfered edge ports. The drive unit complement includes a 70mm midrange cone and 19mm dome tweeter on the satellites allied to a brace of 132mm drivers in the passive subwoofer. Both sats and sub are driven from the amp directly, the sub preferring bi-wired operation; in this instance one half of a set of QED Profile 4x4 cables had been split lengthways to feed the sats, with the full width length driving the sub.

### SOUND QUALITY

It is remarkable that speakers this tiny produce anything like decent sound at all. This example was surprising because it did dynamics better than expected, but imaging wasn't as impressive as one might have hoped. This presumably is down to that Omniray horn which tends to affect high frequency dispersion and keep it a little box-bound but enhances coupling to the air which aids dynamics. These are quite fizzy sounding speakers with high energy treble material, but midrange isn't found lacking – often a shortcoming of tiny speakers. The sub is subtle; it doesn't go that far down, but it's well controlled and quite tuneful (if not placed too close to the wall).

I compared the Zingalis with some Dali Royal Menuet IIs – nearly as titchy but less than half the price. The Dalis walked it. The moral is, if you must have bookshelf speakers the Colosseums are a good compromise, but if you can get them onto stands look elsewhere.



NAD C300:  
a serious  
budget buy.

## NAD C300 £145.95

Lee Dunkley stretches NAD's latest wallet-friendly amp to the limits.

**C**ontrary to NAD's recent move into the upmarket arena with its Silverline range of components, this British brand is well established as a no frills, affordable hi-fi manufacturer. Its reputation is further cemented with the company's introduction of a new integrated amplifier. The new super-budget C300 replaces the 310 in NAD's amp line-up and follows the recent success of the popular C320 and C340 (see p74).

A particularly slender looking design, the C300 is finished in NAD's characteristic battleship grey. The minimalist aesthetic design allows the company to spend the money where it counts, concentrating on components under the lid in favour of sound quality. Rated at 25 Watts per channel, the C300 features an entirely MOSFET output stage, large toroidal transformer and impedance sensing circuitry offering maximum performance irrespective of speaker load.

Despite the amp's budget price point, there's no sign of skimping on features. Five line level inputs and two tape loops, one with record monitor, give adequate socketry provision although there's no phono input stage. Speaker connections are via binding posts but don't accept 4mm plugs. Tone controls are bypassable offering benefits to sound quality with shorter signal paths. Other notable features include a motorised volume controlled via the natty supplied remote, which also offers a mute control for convenient arm-chair listening. A headphone socket completes the picture.

### SOUND QUALITY

For all its unassuming looks, the C300 delivers the goods with power and drive. Hooked up to B&W's 602 S2 speakers it has plenty of bass weight, giving William Orbit's version of *Adagio for Strings* plenty of welly, but is perhaps not as well controlled as some. Both ends of the frequency scale are well defined and in good proportion, but can tend to make for a clinical and synthetic sound, with classical pieces at times lacking the balance of some other amps. Joni Mitchell's *Little Green* was portrayed in tremendous detail, capturing the space and openness of the recording.

For a budget amp the C300 is a capable performer across the musical spectrum. From dance to classics this model will appeal to many. Possibly not the most refined amp around, but a serious budget buy nonetheless.



Colosseum:  
smaller than a  
small thing.

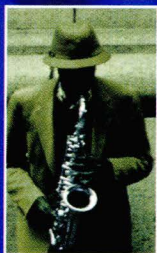




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\*A summary of this research "The Genesis Report" is available on request.

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"Great price, great cable, well made. Nifty name, neat plugs. Five stars. Next..."





# DAVID VIVIAN

**When Mr V forked out on a spanking new DVD player recently, he didn't find it quite as versatile as he'd expected...**

I bought a DVD player the other day. Colleagues were stunned at what they saw as an inexplicable lapse in my unflagging ability to borrow kit on a long-term basis and suggested I lie down in a darkened room.

But I had a hunch it would be enlightening to take the wad option on this occasion. Especially as owning a DVD had suddenly become so... how to put this?... inexpensive.

Everything I read in magazines told me what I needed was a Korean-made Samsung 709, which retailed at a comparatively piffling £279 but was being offered at a wallet-seducing £240 by Comet and Currys. Not the greatest DVD player on the planet, the reviews agreed, but fine picture and sound for the money, a few nicely hidden 'all

**"I bought the *Something About Mary* DVD. Funny film, crammed with special features – a natch for the format. You'd think."**

region' hacks to allow the determined to play discs from across the pond and the Far East, and no glitches. I detected an encouraging 'why pay more?' vibe and concluded that, with DVD still in its infancy, this was probably the right approach.

Better still, the Samsung didn't look cheap. The silver gunmetal sheen of the casing, the generous array of features, the cuddly, ergonomically smart remote all gave the impression of mid-market maturity. No stripped-down budget special this.

And, initially, everything was fine. I should mention I had no intention of using the 709 at the heart of a multi-channel system – the modest home theatre set-up in my bedroom, I'd dismantled to accommodate another bed – but merely as an adjunct to the Panasonic VCR in my main two-channel system in the living room.

Missing the point? I don't think so. What I really wanted from DVD was the sharper picture, digital sound, fast scene access, rock-solid freeze frame and, of course, all those 'special features' you simply don't get with video cassettes. The multi-channel bit

I wasn't too fussed about. Sure, the 5.1 Samsung (909)/Myryad system I'd played with for a few weeks was fun, but not something I couldn't live without. Besides, the Chord amps and AVI speakers in my main system were more than capable of setting up images three-dimensional enough to have you ducking shells – even from a Blockbuster VHS cassette.

What I hadn't bargained on was being unable to generate that sort of impact and excitement with DVD. I don't know about other DVD players, but when the 709 reduces a 5.1 soundtrack to plain PCM stereo it seems to sap much of the life and vitality from it. Turning up the volume doesn't really help – the detail and resolution are impressive, but dynamically even films as kick-ass as

*Contact* and *Starship Troopers* come across as dullards. Disappointing for stereo fans.

Then I bought the *Something About Mary* DVD. Funny film, crammed with special features – a natch for the format. You'd think. Slipped it eagerly into the tray, thumbed 'play' and... nothing. Not even interesting static. The 709 wouldn't so much as look at

it. This struck me as being – as Keanu Reeves might once have said – bogus, dude.

The country's best-selling DVD player was incompatible with the country's best-selling DVD. And talking of Keanu, the Samsung wasn't going to be getting it together with the next blockbuster DVD on my list, either. Which was a pity, because *The Matrix* had figured heavily in my thinking when I made the decision to buy a DVD player in the first place.

I talked to the people at Samsung. This is what they said: "Hybrid DVD-Video/DVD-ROM discs (such as *Something About Mary* and *The Matrix*) are still in an evolutionary phase, and a number of examples have confirmed that they can cause novel situations in some DVD-Video players, such as Samsung's DVD-709, due to code exceptions generated in the transport firmware.

"Samsung has worked very quickly to upgrade its existing stock of DVD-709 players, and is offering a free upgrade to all of its existing DVD customers. Customers need only to return their product to the point of purchase and the dealer will organise the upgrade at Samsung's expense."

Haven't bothered. I returned the DVDs, bought the videos instead and saved myself a tenner. In fact, I'm surprised at how much more I watch videos than DVDs. For the time being my faith in the latter has been rocked. Technical problems happen – and of course, there's a delicious irony that they should do so within *The Matrix* – but why only with the films you really want to watch? Looks like I picked the wrong week to become a consumer.







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# LETTERS

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

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### GOOD EVANS

You have recommended the Pioneer A-300R Precision amplifier so many times through the pages of your magazine that I felt I should listen to one myself. Full marks *Hi-Fi Choice!* I was so amazed by its sound that I bought one. On your recommendation, I gave tweak-meister Tom Evans a phone call to see if he could gild the lily. He was so enthusiastic that I found myself posting off my newly purchased amp for what he called "the full monty".



Pioneer A-300R Precision.

What arrived back was a revelation in every sense. The amp's soundstage is wider and deeper giving tremendous resolution and separation, making me feel as though I could walk around the performers. And bass is satisfyingly deep and tuneful, adding infinite pleasure to jazz double bass lines.

I wonder what Tom Evans could do given a clean sheet and a bucket load of top-quality components?

Denis Clifton, Hull

### MAPLIN MARVEL

Until recently, I have been scrutinising interconnects of various prices to find one of a neutral character that adds nothing of itself to the music. My system is relatively neutral and revealing and suitable for disclosing the true 'character' of an interconnect used within it.

My auditions revealed cables that sounded too warm, lacking attack and resolution, while others sent the soundstage to nothing, ruined the bass and sounded compressed throughout the frequency range. This is pretty representative of the sort of wayward sound my tests have shown and, as you can imagine, I have been tremendously disappointed with their performance so far.

However, I believe I have found the solution to my interconnect pickle with a high-quality 1.5m phono-to-phono interconnect produced by Maplin Electronics, costing just £6.99. I would be very interested to read your findings to see if we agree on its open, spacious, neutral and detailed audio properties.

Christopher Lloyd, via e-mail

*The Editor Replies...* Judging by the amount of letters we receive at HFC on this and other cable topics, this is an area of great interest to many readers. With this in mind, next month's issue carries a Super Test look at ten interconnects ranging in price from £40 to £115.

### 'ONE THING' RADIO

As an avid reader and subscriber to *Hi-Fi Choice*, I would like to draw your attention to a hi-fi component that would perhaps benefit those readers who enjoy listening to radio.

I recently had my old Quad FM II valve stereo tuner serviced and a modern stereo modulator installed inside its compact dimensions. The modulator, called 'One Thing', was supplied by Classique Sounds of Leicester and fitted by Mr Ron Bets of Coventry. This modification has resulted in a tuner that, in my opinion, out performs my resident Naim 101 set-up.

Mike Rodway, Dorset

### SKIPPING CD PLAYERS

In the December issue of *HFC* you published a readers letter entitled

*Mysterious Forces* regarding a problem with CD players skipping. I have read many letters concerning this problem in various hi-fi magazines and would like to offer the following tips:

1. A CD player is extremely sensitive to the surface it is placed upon. This must be stable, flat and hard; glass or marble are ideal material surfaces.

2. CD players are extremely sensitive to components placed on top of them which can cause skipping when an amplifier or tuner is placed on top of a player. Ideally, each component should be supported separately.

3. Always allow sufficient time for a player to read a disc's table of contents (number of tracks and total disc time).

4. Handle CDs with care. If they become dirty, clean them with a specialist cleaning device or a lint-free cloth.

M. Adamic, Croatia

### SPEAKER SATISFACTION

Thank you for the pair of Acoustic Energy AE509 speakers I received as a winner of the competition in issue 192. They are absolutely

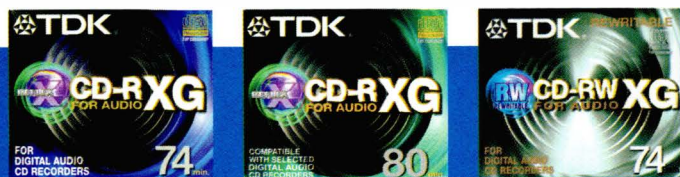
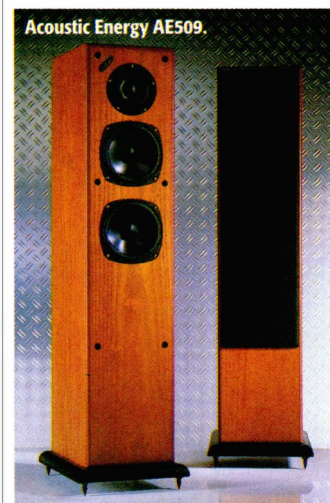
excellent, not only sonically but aesthetically as well. They have stirred my love of music - I have played my entire music collection and have fallen in love with vinyl again as a result.

I was stunned to win a prize in the first place, but especially one that fulfilled my long-held desire for a substantial floorstander. In one fell swoop I had my ultimate speaker upgrade without having to justify it to my family.

But you have, of course, presented me with the problem of an unbalanced system. I cannot hope to do justice to the speakers with my fairly modest front ends and amplifier, and further upgrades are obviously the order of the day (although tri-amping may have to wait).

Although my disparate collection of hi-fi would raise the odd belly-laugh in your office, it does offer a discernible sonic improvement over what I had before. Moreover as the speakers are truly wonderful sights to behold, they have raised the whole listening experience to another level.

Mark Knowles, Worcestershire



TDK's audio CD-R range

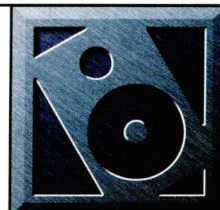
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# ON TEST!



# SPEAKERS

Was one of your new year's resolutions to finally get those new speakers you've been promising yourself? **Pauls Messenger** and **Miller** check out thirteen tempting offerings.

## THE CAST LIST

Acoustic Energy 120SE	£599.95
B&W Nautilus 805	£1,400.00
Dynaudio Audience 70	£1,100.00
Elac CL102 MkII	£599.00
Heybrook Duet	£750.00
Indigo Three	£500.00
JMLab Cobalt 815	£999.00
Mission 782	£699.00
NHT Super Two	£550.00
PMC LB1	£999.00
Tannoy R3	£550.00
South Coast Speakers Lancelot	£895.00
Vienna Acoustics Mozart	£1,500.00

**O**ur price band, from £500 up to £1,500, could be said to represent the broad middle ground of serious loudspeakers. A £500 retail price is sufficiently above the bargain basement to permit the designers and marketers some flexibility in how the budget is apportioned.

There's always been some debate over whether real wood veneer contributes significantly to the sound quality of a speaker

(the veneer laminate is bound to make a given panel stiffer than sticking on a vinyl woodprint, so it's certainly going to have some sonic impact). But there's no denying its important contribution as a 'value-added' feature in the eyes of consumers, which is probably the main reason why ten of our thirteen have real wood finish.

However, real wood also comes in a wide range of grades and finishes, from the relatively plain to the highly figured, and from the 'natural' to the 'high gloss' lacquer, and all these factors play a part in the cost equation too.

Aesthetics has probably had much to do with the steady growth in the popularity of floorstanders in recent years. Speaker stands aren't, generally speaking, the most beautiful of objects, so there's a obvious attraction in bringing stand and speaker together in one object. But the situation with regard to performance is rather more complex. The extra size of the floorstanding enclosure can be an embarrassment, not

only because it may be too large, but also because a tall column is an awkward shape acoustically speaking, while the relatively large surface area involved is likely to increase colorations.

From a purely performance point of view, the standmount speaker clearly still has plenty going for it. Floorstanders might be in the majority in this test group, but it's by no means an overwhelming one. In fact, they represent about 60 per cent – eight out of our total of thirteen models. An important point to bear in mind, however, is that unless you already have suitable stands, purchasing the same will put a significant chunk onto the effective price of your standmount speaker system.

Yet speaker stands do have the notable advantage of flexibility, as different stands can have a quite dramatic effect on the net sound of a speaker. Choosing stands carefully, with the help of an experienced dealer (of course), can work wonders in 'tuning' the overall performance of your complete system.

The other obvious difference between the models in our test group is in the number of drivers they use, and whether they operate as two-ways, 'two-and-a-half-ways' (where an additional main driver gives a two-way an extra helping hand in the bass), and three-ways.

No one configuration is superior to the others – it's all about choices. Stereotypically, the simpler a speaker, the better its total coherence, which favours the two-way, but bass weight and extension can be compromised. The three-way, on the other hand, will offer superior power handling, and probably give lower distortion when it's being driven hard. It's all about choices.

## 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 with separate access terminals to each driver can be driven by separate cable runs between the power amp 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 electrical load that 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.





**GROUP A** £500-£700**GROUP B** £701-£1,000**GROUP C** £1,001-£1,500**HINTS & TIPS**

Standmount speakers require proper stands to ensure stable, predictable support and get the drive units the same distance off the floor as your ears. (Choice of stand can have a big influence on the sound, if you feel like experimenting.) Floorstanders should have spikes fitted carefully – this is a potential weak spot in cheaper models. Finding the right place to position the loudspeakers acoustically (with respect to the room walls) is equally important. Our reviews include suggestions, but every room is different, so take time and trouble experimenting. And don't forget to use decent speaker cable if you want your system to perform at its best.

**SPEAKERS GROUP A**

£500-£700

These speakers are by no means the smallest or lightest here – rather the reverse, since five are floorstanders. All fall within a £500-£700 price band, yet show plenty of variety in configurations, drivers and finish. There are two straight two-ways – the standmount, real wood Indigo and the floorstanding, vinyl-clad Elac. Tannoy and Acoustic Energy are both 'real wood' floorstanders, the former with one extra bass unit, the latter with two. NHT's three-way Super Two follows its own path, with shiny black laminate surfaces, while the Mission is ultra-svelte.

Acoustic Energy 120SE	£599.95
Elac CL102 MkII	£599.00
Indigo Three	£500.00
Mission 782	£699.00
NHT Super Two	£550.00
Tannoy R3	£550.00

**SPEAKERS GROUP B**

£701-£1,000

Group B is another mixture of standmounters and floorstanders, which will again disturb the relative value side of the equation.

All four of these models feature real wood veneer finish, which is another factor to bear in mind when trying to assess relative value for money.

On sheer elegance grounds, the advantage would seem to lie with the floorstander, although the large main drivers used by the standmounters do give them a rather more purposeful air than the twin driver arrangements adopted by the floorstanders.

Heybrook Duet	£799.00
JMLab Cobalt 815	£999.00
PMC LB1	£999.00
SCS Lancelot	£895.00

**SPEAKERS GROUP C**

£1,001-£1,500

A smaller group which actually covers a wider price band than the other two Groups, once again the three speakers have very little in common with each other. Dynaudio's seriously solid Audience 70 puts the emphasis firmly on engineering content, even to the extent of using vinyl finish on an over-£1,000 speaker. B&W's Nautilus 805 is also something of an engineering *tour de force* among two-way standmounts, using various new techniques especially in the enclosure and tweeter. Meanwhile, Vienna Acoustics is a new name to the UK, and the Mozart is undoubtedly one of the best looking floorstanders around at any price.

B&W Nautilus 805	£1,400.00
Dynaudio Audience 70	£1,100.00
Vienna Acoustics Mozart	£1,500.00

**HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE**

The unsighted listening tests were carried out in a room which is a little larger than average – 5.5x4.2x2.6m (LxWxH) – but not excessively so. The speakers were installed one pair at a time behind an acoustically transparent curtain, and positioned according to the results obtained from a series of sinewave sweeps taken in the room itself across the listening arc.

Each presentation took roughly half an hour, covering as broad a range of music as possible, split evenly between vinyl and CD sources.

Care was taken to try to match the

relative volume of each loudspeaker, although differences in frequency balance, bass extension and room drive unavoidably get in the way; grilles are also removed, if possible, to take account of the mild influence of the black net curtaining.

The 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.

The main reference system used for the blind and hands-on work consisted of the usual Mana-supported Naim and Linn components: Linn LP12 turntable, Naim ARO tonearm, Linn Arkiv 2 cartridge, Naim CDS CD player, NAT01 tuner, NAC52 pre-amp and NAP135 power amps. The Mana Stealth MA-1 monoblock power amps were also used (see p56). Speaker cables were NACA5 and Nordost SPM, and speaker stands were primarily Kudos S100s.

Our thanks to the participating panelists: David Inman (Castle); Russell Kauffman (Morel, Densen); Guy

Sergeant (AGI); Ken Weller (B&W); and Stuart Neville (B&W).

**MUSIC USED**

Music used during the testing included excerpts from the following albums (among others). BBC Radios 3 and 4 were also used extensively.

*Rain Dogs*/TOM WAITS (Island)  
*Strictly Personal*/CAPTAIN BEEFHEART AND HIS MAGIC BAND (Sunset)  
*Bring It On*/GOMEZ (Virgin)  
*Mingus*/JONI MITCHELL (Asylum)  
*Brothers Gonna Work It Out*/CHEMICAL BROTHERS (Freestyle Dust)  
*Eallin*/MARI BOINE (Antilles)



# ACOUSTIC ENERGY 120SE

**A** little over two years ago *Choice* reviewed an AE120 (HFC 170), finding a number of flaws in this superficially very attractive design. Now the 120 has returned, prettier than before thanks to a classy real wood veneer instead of a more prosaic vinyl skin, and with an 'SE' suffix on its name. The price has gone up £100 along the way, but £600 still looks very reasonable for the sort of package on offer here (superficially speaking).

Unfortunately, it wasn't that long into the review before it became apparent that the newly veneered box was the only real change, and none of our previous criticisms had been addressed. The likelihood of the 120SE improving on its predecessor seemed remote.

In order to keep the front view attractively and fashionably slim, there are three small main drivers each with 100mm cones, the upper one acting as a midrange only unit, while the lower two operate in parallel as bass drivers, with a combined cone area equivalent to a single 140mm unit. Various ports, front and rear, will also make their contributions. All the drivers are flush-mounted, keeping the front view clean if the grille is left off. The tweeter has a soft fabric dome.

The speaker comes fitted with mass-loading ballast, the 25kg total weight feeling reassuringly solid and stable, the more so because a neat little plinth extends the footprint and accommodates the chunky 8mm spikes. I was particularly pleased to note the 120SE is fitted



with a three-way terminal block, allowing any combination of bi-/tri-/wiring/amping to be explored, now or in the future.

The far-field in-room measurements confirmed the AE120SE is essentially the same as before, with very strong output in the mid- and upper-bass, yet a trace which starts falling steadily above 150Hz

allow its dynamic strengths to shine through. This speaker can pack a punch, it sounds very solid, stable and clean, and is also quite expressive, if a touch coloured, through the voice band.

## CONCLUSION

The AE120SE might look like a persuasive proposition with its

**"This speaker sounds very solid, stable and clean, and is also quite expressive, if a touch coloured through the voice band."**

so it's down by nearly 10dB by the mid treble. Some roll-off on this is expected and desirable, but the 120SE takes things further than usual. Paradoxically, perhaps the bass starts to roll off gently below 100Hz, so close-to-wall siting is at least feasible, although it does tend to make the bass that much more obvious.

## SOUND QUALITY

The listening test findings were clearly hampered by the balance deficiencies, and especially the rather dominant mid-bass character, described variously as "thrummy", "woody" or "honky". One panellist summed it up rather well: "Vocals rather distant... enthusiastic and lively if not especially neutral... Easy 'big' quality with a good sense of scale, but others are more refined."

I guess there may be systems, tastes and rooms which will suit the 120SE's unusually warm and rather dull balance, and that will

imposing row of drivers, real wood veneer and hefty mass-loaded enclosure. But this new version is essentially the same as the original, and suffers from the same basic flaws of a lumpy, heavy balance and a tricky amplifier load.

Acoustic Energy's similar size and shape Aegis Three (see p13) actually offers superior performance at a much lower asking price, albeit without the attractive real wood veneer. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £599.95

Attractive presentation and good sonic headroom, but a heavy, overall balance, and a tricky amp load too.

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

Acoustic Energy, 16 Bridge Road, Cirencester, Gloucester GL7 1NJ

(01285) 654432

## THE LAB REPORT

**T**here are obvious parallels between the AE120SE, the equally weighty AE520 and original AE120 (see HFC 190 and 170). Both use a combination of three bass/mid units, the upper extending from a notional bass crossover point at 375Hz to 'fill in' up to 3.2kHz where the tweeter takes over.

This driver is clearly a bit stretched, for there's an obvious cone mode at 1.3kHz and distortion (typically 0.3 per cent through bass and treble) rises above 1 per cent through the midrange thanks to a strong third-harmonic. Phase and impedance plots are complex, the former with ten swings (max. +40/-45°) from 20Hz-20kHz, the latter with a 3 Ohm minimum at 125Hz. The 120SE would prove very amplifier-dependent.



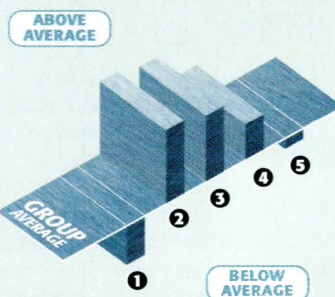
Choosing the right listening position is critical in achieving a lively enough balance from these speakers. They have a slightly depressed mid/treble balance that's clearly exacerbated off-axis and, while raising yourself to listen in line with the tweeter certainly adds some upper treble brightness, it also reveals a depressed lower treble/presence band.

Point yourself at the front-mounted ports (which are largely aesthetic in purpose) to achieve the smoothest balance and healthiest 89.6dB sensitivity (re. 2.83V/1m). The 'real' rear-facing port offers a broad 28-120Hz reinforcement, although the main drivers are extremely peaky in alignment with high-order slopes either side of the 120Hz mark. **PMi**

## HOW IT COMPARES

**A** complex speaker with an equally complex load, suffering relatively high levels of midband distortion but offering a good sensitivity by way of recompense.

1 EASE OF DRIVE	-25%
2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS	50%
3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	45%
4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	25%
5 BASS EXTENSION	-5%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	89dB	89.6dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	8 Ohms	10.2 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	38Hz	41Hz



# ELAC CL102 MkII

A relative newcomer to the UK scene, Elac Electro-acoustic GmbH is a German company that came into existence in 1926, and has been involved in turntable, cartridge and loud-speaker manufacture over the years. The company has operated under the same management since 1981 and is proud of the fact that it makes all the drive units in its upmarket models.

The CL102 MkII is one of a select handful of Elac loudspeakers which are being distributed in Britain by headphone specialist Sennheiser. It's a two-way design with very striking looking drive units, mounted in a generous and substantial floorstanding enclosure, and retailing for £599. That seems competitive in a group context, although you don't get the real wood finish other brands are supplying at this sort of price – nor the multi-driver arrays, for that matter.

Still, at least Elac has paid some attention to the styling, coming up with an interesting two-tone front baffle treatment, which somehow makes it look slimmer than it really is, and provides a further incentive to discard the grille and show off the main driver's shiny, dish-shaped metal diaphragm. Vinyl wood-prints are quite realistic these days, and the CL102 MkII looks fine from a couple of feet away, but what lets this surface down is its feel, which is resolutely synthetic and not nice to the touch.

Elsewhere the detailing is impressive and thorough. The chunky and well-fouled 8mm

spikes are highly polished, and a set of gliders is provided for use with polished wooden floors. The



tweeter uses an alloy dome, integral with the voice-coil dome former for improved heat dissipation, under its own protective mesh grille, while the main driver bonds 0.2mm aluminium to doped pulp fibre. Advanced gas flow techniques were used to design the port. Bi-wire terminals are fitted, permitting bi-wire/-amp operation.

a little weak, although sound is very clean and even-handed. The bass didn't entirely convince. Although there's plenty of ultimate weight and scale, it seemed a little detached from the very well focused midband, and somewhat lacking in 'kick' and 'drive'. Stereo images are well formed and projected, with little boxiness.

**"This is a decent enough loudspeaker, showing plenty of evidence of professional design and high quality manufacture."**

The far-field averaged in-room trace looks very well controlled overall, but with surprisingly strong low-bass output 30-50Hz (corresponding to the port tuning). The midband isn't as smooth as some, but looks well balanced, while the top end is very flat and smooth.

## SOUND QUALITY

A rating close to average in the listening tests is fair enough considering the price, but also indicates that the CL102 is a competent rather than exceptional performer – worthy, but not very exciting. One panellist concluded: "Very competent, not bad, but ultimately unrewarding", while another complained that although it sounded reassuringly solid, it was also rather mechanical and boring, and seemed to struggle with fast, dynamic music.

It has an attractively 'open' balance, albeit one which might be a touch 'shiny' for some tastes and systems, while dynamics seemed

## CONCLUSION

This is a decent enough loudspeaker, showing plenty of evidence of professional design and high quality manufacture, especially in the fine detail and the drive units. But its sonic performance didn't seem particularly inspired, under our listening conditions at least, and that tacky vinyl finish doesn't really measure up to what the competition is offering at this price. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £599.00

Chunky floorstander with classy drivers has a neutral, slightly 'shiny' character, but it could have more punch.

### ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Sennheiser UK, 3 Century Point, Halifax Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 3SL

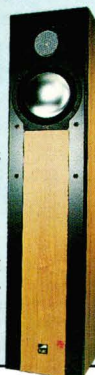
(01494) 551551

## THE LAB REPORT

This speaker's vivid bass/mid cone – a 0.2mm sandwich of alloy and doped pulp – boasts a long throw and high power handling. Indeed, with a 200W capacity, the CL102 MkII will sustain levels as high as 106dBa in-room although its inherent sensitivity is a more modest 88dB/2.83V. The bass alignment is not quite so straightforward, for although the main reflex resonance matches the driver null at 35Hz (dragging the in-room bass extension to 37Hz or so), there's also a secondary output at 165Hz which bolsters the mid-bass. This coincides with a 'blip' on phase and impedance plots, the former providing +/-40° swings through bass, the latter dipping to its minimum of 3.2 Ohms. Elac has the decency to rate its CL102

as a nominal four Ohm load even though it's only slightly tougher than the 'eight Ohm-rated' AE120SE...

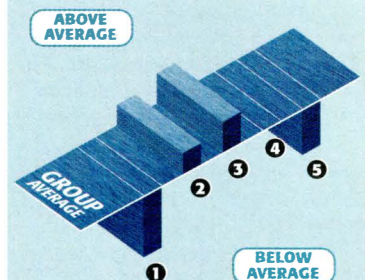
Indeed, the averaged third-octave response shows the speaker to have a very flat, well integrated mid and treble, but there's no mistaking some emphasis of upper bass as far as 300Hz. Off-axis, the mid/treble response looks smoother still (!) but this bass emphasis becomes steadily more prominent until it dominates performance. Bass and midrange distortion hovers around one per cent, decreasing to <0.3 per cent once the alloy tweeter takes over. Incidentally, the tweeter's ultrasonic output is very well controlled with no sharp break-up modes. **PMI**



## HOW IT COMPARES

The toughest speaker to drive in this group, but capable of good loudness with only moderate distortion. Smooth midrange is countered by a strong but uneven bass.

- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | -40% |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | 15%  |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | 20%  |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | 0%   |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | 30%  |



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	88dB	88.0dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	4 Ohms	8.7 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	34Hz	37Hz



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<b>BLACKROCK</b> HM Entertainment 01288 1777	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	<b>GLASGOW</b> Glasgow Audio 0141 332 4707	<b>GATESHEAD</b> Lintone Audio 0191 460 0999	01482 587171	Oranges & Lemons 0171 924 2040	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Global Hi-Fi 0191 230 3600	<b>PRESTON</b> Audio Excellence 01772 253057	01892 547003	<b>WATFORD</b> Hi-Fi City 01923 216269
<b>BLOXWICH</b> Sound Academy 01922 473499	<b>CREWE</b> Cloughs A.V. 01270 257030	<b>GLASGOW</b> Glasgow Audio 0141 332 4707	<b>GATESHEAD</b> Lintone Audio 0191 460 0999	01482 587171	PRC Hi-Fi & Video 0181 470 3499	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Global Hi-Fi 0191 230 3600	<b>PRESTON</b> Audio Excellence 01772 253057	01892 547003	<b>WATFORD</b> Hi-Fi City 01923 216269
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(December '96)

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(August '98)

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# INDIGO Three

**A** new name on the scene, Indigo was created early in 1999 by a group of people with plenty of experience on the hi-fi scene who felt the time was right to try to do things differently. As a result, they've come up with something that's a long way from the usual marketplace stereotypes, and which takes many of its styling cues from the professional monitoring sector.

The marketing buzz-crossover phrase 'Home and Studio' further reinforces the intentions of the range, while the Three's squat, dumpy shape flies in the face of current hi-fi fashion – which only

The most unusual feature of the Three is that internal damping has been omitted. While not unique, this controversial approach requires scrutiny. Internal damping is used to try to absorb the sound waves radiated from the back of the main driver cone, especially the standing waves created between parallel surfaces. But damping adds its own colorations, so some sort of compromise is usually made. Indigo has taken an extreme position, with obvious consequences in the measured and subjective performance.

Far-field in-room average measurements confirm this design's



**“The Three’s intrinsic lack of time-smear confers a rare ability to cut through to the heart of the music.”**

makes it more welcome to my mind, if only because it widens the choice available. The shape reminds me of one of the last of the BBC monitors (I think it was an LS5/9), while the white doping on the main driver's 120mm pulp cone carries echoes of the popular Yamaha NS10 nearfield monitor.

A simple two-way standmount with an internal volume of 15 litres, the whole thing is magnetically shielded. The front baffle is attractively sculpted, and the rest is 21mm thick MDF clothed in real wood veneer. A small port is mounted on the front, as the Three is intended to be sited close to a wall. Twin terminals permit bi-wire/amp operation.

suitability for close-to-wall siting, while the omission of damping results in a decidedly uneven response, albeit one that's fundamentally very well balanced. Bass extension is surprisingly good for such a compact speaker (assisted by the port being tuned to a low 30Hz) but, somewhat surprisingly, the metal dome tweeter rolls off rather rapidly above 10KHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

Playing around with the speakers prior to the formal listening tests, I was really taken by the Indigo's fine timing, crisp dynamics and effortless communication skills. So I was rather disconcerted when the panel awarded it relatively

poor marks – the more so when I went back to give it another whirl, and was again immediately seduced by its charm and a 'fun factor' that in my estimation surpassed the whole test group.

I guess the Three's 'differentness' might have been why opinions were so polarised – that and coming towards the end of a hard day's listening. The sound is more obviously coloured than smoother designs, with some hollow, 'wooden box' and 'cuppy' effects, while the rolled-off top end robs it of a little air and transparency too. However, its intrinsic lack of time-smear confers a rare ability to cut through to the heart of the music, coping admirably with the complex rhythmic interplay of modern dance beats in particular.

## CONCLUSION

Controversially different in presentation, technical and sonic abilities, the Three is nevertheless one of

the more interesting debut loudspeakers to come my way for quite some time. It's qualitatively too different to appeal to all listeners, and the exaggerated sensitivity claim does nothing for its credibility. But fine basic communication skills just makes music of all types interesting and involving, which is ultimately the most persuasive argument of all for a (cautious) Recommended flag. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £500.00

**Cute'n'chunky standmount is an entertaining communicator. Great fun, despite some sonic weirdness.**

**FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE**

Indigo Technologies, PO Box 2, Stonely, Huntingdon, Cambs PE 18 0NY  
(01480) 861175

## THE LAB REPORT

**M**easured on the planet Aardvark, it's possible that Indigo's attractively-coloured model Three may, indeed, achieve its rated 92dB sensitivity. On planet Earth where, in all likelihood, the Three will enjoy the bulk of its sales, a figure some 5.7dB lower (86.3dB for 2.83V/1m) is more realistic. This is equivalent to the difference between a 50W and 185W amplifier, for example, and puts the speaker into the low sensitivity category. At least the average 16.9 Ohm load looks easy enough to drive.

So the Three needs plenty of power, but from 300Hz to 10kHz its response is essentially flat and smooth and the load a 'safe' average of 16.9 Ohms. This makes the large

+50° swing in phase around the crossover region more manageable. Even mounted free of walls, there's some emphasis around 200Hz (providing some subjective 'woomph') and a marked loss of treble above 10kHz. A narrowband analysis shows this is due to a -11dB cancellation notch at 14kHz.

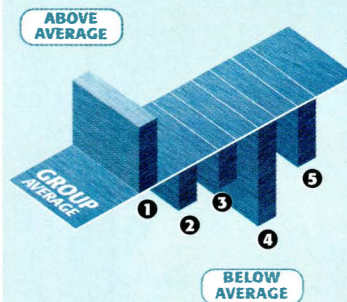
Sharp glitches at 645Hz and 1.15kHz appear on the nearfield traces of both the 170mm bass/mid unit and narrow-gauge port. The bass alignment, meanwhile, is rather peaky up to about 125Hz and is tied to a very broad port output (20-140Hz, -3dB), all of which contributes to a general 'heaviness' in this area. **PMI**



## HOW IT COMPARES

**N**either as sensitive nor as 'loud' as Indigo suggests, the Three nevertheless has a smooth midrange balance. Bass distortion is relatively high, however, and the reflex port very broadly tuned.

- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | 45%  |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | -25% |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | -25% |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | -65% |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | -40% |



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	92dB	86.3dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	8 Ohms	16.9 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	33Hz	45Hz



# MISSION 782

The first to appear of four new 78-series models at the top of Mission's price/performance/presentation ladder, the 782 can be seen as a replacement for either or both of the successful 752 and 753 models. It more or less splits the difference on price, looks smaller than either, yet follows the three-way driver configuration of the larger 753.

The 782 is really a new and radical design, and unquestionably maintains Mission's deserved reputation at the forefront of modern industrial design. It's exceptionally slim from the front because the bass driver has been mounted on the side of the enclosure and the front baffle only has to accommodate the smaller midrange and tweeter drivers.

The speakers are built as mirror-image pairs: you can experiment to figure out whether to mount the speakers with the bass units pointing in or outwards. These bass drivers are mounted alongside their loading ports, low down and close to the floor, to deliver a more even and predictable response in room-coupling terms.

The midrange driver uses a new cone material, Keraform, which Mission has helped develop with drive unit specialist Audax. Much closer to a true ceramic than the surface coatings sometimes applied to metal alloy cones, Keraform impregnates a fibre matrix with a china clay/resin compound, and is then oven-cured, creating a cone that's stiff enough to keep the first break-up mode comfortably outside the required pass-band.

So far so handy, but there are always question marks about new materials, such as whether it's light enough for a decent sensitivity, and how well that out-of-band resonance is damped (or not).



This midrange driver has a small 90mm Keraform cone, while the bass driver's 120mm cone is not a whole lot larger. The tweeter has a 25mm fabric dome. Twin terminals provide a bi-wire/-amp option which is rather inflexible for a three-way design such as this. The far-field, in-room averaged

seemed to lose the plot. The Mari Boine track *Modjas Katrin* is propelled along by its driving bass, yet on the 782 it seemed to lose all sense of direction.

## CONCLUSION

A beautiful and exceptionally lounge-friendly design in the

**"The superb midband will seduce many customers, and also seems sufficient justification for cautious Recommendation."**

responses proved interesting. Sited in free space, the 782 showed a substantial lack of relative output in the upper bass/lower midband (100Hz-250Hz). Best results in overall balance terms were found with the speaker positioned as close as possible to the wall, close-coupling the bass drivers to floor and wall, but that arrangement also created some alarmingly large modal swings.

## SOUND QUALITY

"Nice mid, shame about the bass," was the comment from one pannelist who hit the nail firmly on the head. Another singled out the sweetness of the treble for praise, and there's no disputing the 782's exceptional class through the midband and top end. There's a highly seductive delicacy, coherence, sweetness and transparency here.

But the bass is the Achilles heel, as much for its unpredictability as anything. Sometimes it worked adequately, yet on another disc it

Mission tradition, the 782 follows another company practice in favouring midband performance over the bass. Its performance is uneven (and the claimed sensitivity optimistic), but all things in speaker-land involve compromise. The superb midband will seduce many customers, and also seems sufficient justification for cautious Recommendation. Do take time to experiment with the positioning of these speakers, as optimum bass alignment is not easy. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £699.00

**Love** ultra-compact floorstander has a glorious midband and slightly odd bass.

**Good communication skills.**

**FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE**

Mission Electronics, Stonehill, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6ED.

(01480) 451777

## THE LAB REPORT

The averaged, in-room third-octave response suggests the 782 has a very smooth and even midrange. This is confirmed by a narrowband analysis which shows Mission's latest 'Keraform' ceramic midrange cone is free of the response irregularities that occasionally accompanied its use of Aerogel drivers in the 75 Series. But despite the claimed 89dB sensitivity, my figure of just 85dB (re. 2.83V/1m) indicates that uniformity has been traded for outright level. And rightly so. Mission factors in an additional LF peak to give a higher figure but, Watt for Watt, the 782 quite simply will not play as loud as either the 773 or 774 (see *HFC* 193 and 183 and this month's *Oasis*, p52). It will, however, sound a

lot smoother, even though the bass peak may cause trouble in some rooms.

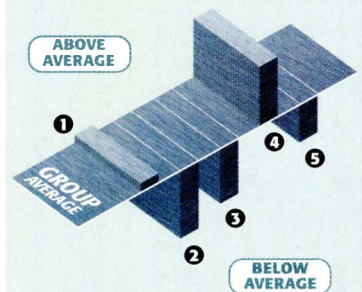
These frequencies (below 135Hz) are handled by a 165mm bass driver, reflex-loaded, side-firing and mounted into its own enclosure. Maximum output occurs at 85Hz with a broader 33Hz-90Hz supplement from the concealed port, bringing the computed in-room response down to a healthy 45Hz or so. There's an additional phase swing here (and five Ohm minimum), but the 'real' minimum of -39° occurs way out at 1.5kHz where the impedance is a 'safe' 14 Ohms. And despite the reduced sensitivity, distortion remains below 0.7 per cent even at high 96dBA levels. **PMI**



## HOW IT COMPARES

Not as sensitive as Mission's earlier 75-series (see *Oasis*, p52) but distortion is pretty low and the midrange appears to be that bit more neutral than before.

1	EASE OF DRIVE	5%
2	RELATIVE LOUDNESS	-45%
3	MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	-35%
4	AUDIBLE DISTORTION	40%
5	BASS EXTENSION	-25%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	89dB	85.0dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	6 Ohms	9.55 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	44Hz	45Hz



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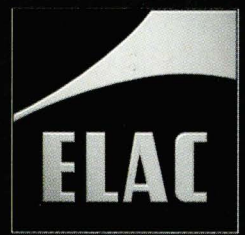
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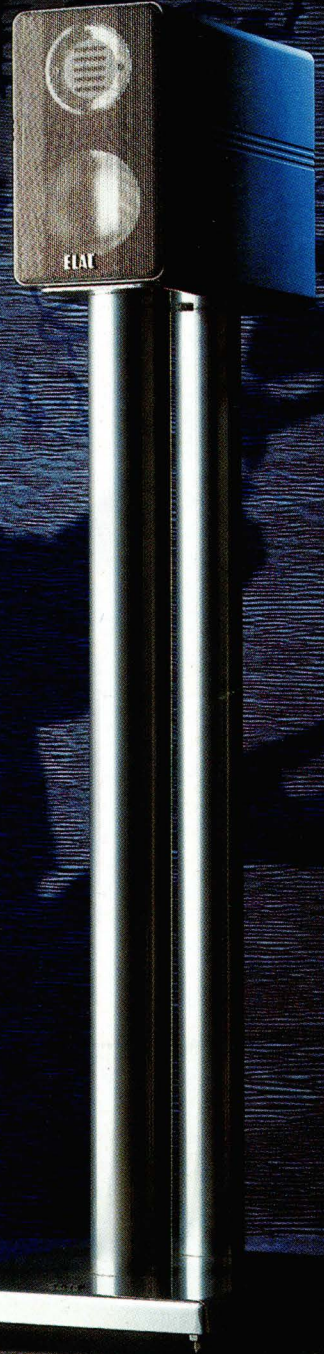
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# NHT Super Two

**"N**ow Hear This" was the challenging slogan that helped build this American brand – along with some rather good loudspeaker designs, it should be pointed out. NHT has since joined forces with a number of other brands in the Recoton group, but so far shows no sign of losing its quirkily effective individuality. Whether that individuality, especially the black, shiny laminate finish, will appeal to the conservative British buyer remains to be seen, but at least it offers something which looks refreshingly different, but also makes good engineering sense.

Choice reviewed NHT's Super One and 1.5 models under a previous distributor, and both did very well. This £550 Super Two three-way is a logical step up from those two smaller models. More specifically, and as the name might imply, it's a larger variation on the Super One theme – essentially a One with built-in subwoofer. Take a Super One, extend its enclosure to the floor, mount a bass driver in the base (firing downwards), and put a large port on the side.

The all-over shiny black laminate doesn't quite match up to a genuine piano lacquer finish, but it serves well enough, and there's no attempt to soften the edges or corners here. But there are clever touches elsewhere, especially in the shaped steel brackets which take the place of plinth and spikes, looking neat, keeping the bass driver the requisite distance above the floor, and ensuring good mechanical coupling with excellent overall stability.

The bass driver is completely hidden from view – the port is on the rear panel – so the Super Two looks quite understated, even

though its midrange driver's 120mm pulp-cone is as large as most bass units these days. The tweeter is a soft fabric dome affair, 25mm in diameter and modified by short horn in its faceplate. Both drivers are flush-mounted into the front panel, while twin terminal pairs permit bi-wiring/-amping.

The far-field in-room average measurement shows a beautifully balanced trace, which is also

has a self-effacing sound which would be easy to live with long-term, its open balance assisting intelligibility when playing at low levels. There's some lack of exuberance too, and on some material the bass could sound detached and thumpy. The sound could also become a little uncomfortable at higher listening levels, drawing attention to a top end which could be sweeter and cleaner.

**"The panel was quite taken with the Super Two, appreciating its unusually open, smooth and even-handed balance."**



smoother than usual. It peaks up slightly at around 50Hz in the bass, restricting the ultimate extension a little (as tends to be the way with port-loaded systems), and the treble is also a touch brighter than average.

## SOUND QUALITY

The panel was quite taken with the Super Two, appreciating its unusually open, smooth and even-handed balance, and rating it ahead of several more expensive models. However, although getting the frequency balance right is important, it's only part of the story. In other respects, the Super Two aroused rather less enthusiasm: "The music seems to flow well without quite taking off... too controlled, never seems to get going... lacks agility."

It must be said that the Super Two is a little lacking in 'x-factor', where 'x' stands for excitement. It

## CONCLUSION

NHT is a brand to watch, and the Super Two only serves to enhance that reputation. Three-ways are tricky things: it's not an easy amplifier load, and it doesn't always sound quite as coherent as its smaller brethren, but it should go significantly louder given sufficient amplification, and clearly deserves Recommendation. **PMe**

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£550.00

Black and shiny compact three-way floorstander has marvellously even balance and good coherence.

FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

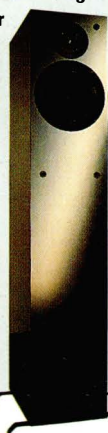
Recoton, PO Box 115, Highworth, Near Swindon, Wilts SN6 UY  
(01367) 252605

## THE LAB REPORT

This is an unusual speaker with an accurately specified 87dB sensitivity (2.83V at 1m) and sufficient power handling to generate levels as high as 105dBA in the average room. But distortion is rather high near the sub/bass crossover point (typically 2-3 per cent) where there are also two positive swings in phase. Fortunately, this reduces to about one per cent once the 'mid-woofer' gets into its stride and drops to a low 0.3 per cent from the soft-dome treble unit. There is plenty of bass, but it's simply not as 'clean' as the mid and treble.

Otherwise, the unusual bass arrangement seems to work well, with the downward-firing driver crossing-in at 120Hz, peaking at

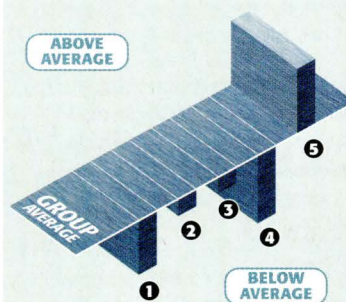
75Hz and allowing the port to continue down to 23Hz. An estimated 35Hz in-room bass extension looks likely with no obvious upper bass emphasis. Indeed, the averaged third-octave response looks fairly even (toeing the speakers in slightly will take out any suggestion of brightness). A narrowband analysis shows a slight irregularity around the 2.2kHz mid/treble crossover, but it's the upper bass that provides the lowest 3.8 Ohm minimum impedance, in line with NHT's specification. With an average 8.5 Ohm load, a nominal 6 Ohm rating seems justified, making the Super Two one of the tougher loads in this group, albeit one that's largely resistive in nature. **PMi**



## HOW IT COMPARES

Any 'character' possessed by this speaker is linked more to the increase in distortion at lower frequencies than any wobbles in its response. Not to be dismissed, at any rate.

1 EASE OF DRIVE	-35%
2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS	-10%
3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	-10%
4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	-45%
5 BASS EXTENSION	45%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	87dB	87.0dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	6 Ohms	8.5 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	35Hz	35Hz



# TANNOY Revolution R3

Tannoy's three Revolution series loudspeakers are designed particularly to appeal to the audiophile community, and incorporate a number of specific techniques to elevate their performance above that obtained with the 'beer budget' Mercury series. They also come in real wood veneers at very competitive prices, thanks no doubt to the 'made in Hungary' label.

The R3 is the third and largest Revolution to come our way. The small R1, reviewed in *HFC* 187, proved a slight disappointment in our largish room, whereas the compact floorstanding R2 was a conspicuous success with the listening panel, achieving a Best Buy rating in *HFC* 193. The question is, can this larger R3 repeat the same trick?

At first sight the R3 looks the same as the R2, but put them side by side and the R3 is comfortably bigger, even though the proportions remain similar. Each basic dimension is increased by some 10-20 per cent, including the weight and main driver diameters – but not the price. At £550, the R3 is nearly 60 per cent more expensive than the R2: not such an obvious bargain. That said, it still looks thoroughly competitive in the context of this test group.

Tall, slim and quite deep, this is a handsome-looking speaker, the real wood finish obvious enough to eyes and touch; although it doesn't quite qualify for a luxury label, it did seem a cut above my recollection of the cheaper Revolution models. The extra depth assists stability, though I do

wish Tannoy would make a separate plinth available, and use something a little more substantial than these indifferently secured



6mm spikes. A separate compartment in the base allows mass to be added to improve the stability.

The bass and bass/mid drivers have 115mm doped paper cones in plastic baskets, and the tweeter has a 25mm soft fabric dome. Twin bi-wire/-amp terminals are fitted. The 24 litre enclosure is rear

One panellist said: "A cleverly contrived balance makes everything sound warm and cuddly, if lacking impact. This character might well irritate after a while." While the bass through midband is generally fine, the presence is shut-in and treble sounds restrained and a bit detached. The

**"While the bass through midband is generally fine, the presence is shut-in and treble sounds restrained."**

ported, and foam bungs are supplied to convert to a sealed box alignment if preferred.

However, our far field in-room measurements show a fine bass alignment with the port active and the speakers well clear of walls, so the bungs are only likely to be needed if close-to-wall siting is unavoidable. The family resemblance between R2 and R3 is unmistakable, but also show that the larger main driver (and baffle width) used here is struggling rather more at the top of its operating range, giving a more pronounced dip centred on 3KHz.

## SOUND QUALITY

The R3 neither disgraced nor distinguished itself in our tests, delivering an average ranking with remarkable consistency between presentations. One listener described (on both occasions) its "rose-tinted" view onto the music, and the comments in general included adjectives such as "inoffensive" and "innocuous".

bottom end has fair drive, but also some woody, plummy colorations, which are rendered more obvious by the laid-back presence, while the top end sounds just a little detached and isolated.

## CONCLUSION

The R3 is a decent enough speaker, but suffers by comparison with the R2 at less than two-thirds its price. The R-series as a whole seems to suffer a little from Goldilocks syndrome. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £550.00

Handsome real-wood floorstander does a decent enough job but lacks the overall evenness of its smaller R2 brother.

### FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

Tannoy, Kingsbridge House, Padbury Oaks, 575-585 Bath Rd, Longford, Middx UB7 0EH  
(01753) 680868

## THE LAB REPORT

This three-driver, two-way design is a natural extension of Tannoy's R1 and R2 loudspeakers. In the R3's case, the upgrade to larger 160mm bass/mid units and an increase from 17.5 to a 24 litre cabinet volume really has brought dividends. Sensitivity is up from the R2's 86.4dB to a useful 88.9dB, matching Tannoy's 89dB specification with low (<0.5 per cent) distortion to boot.

On-axis, there's a 2-3dB suckout around the 2.3kHz crossover point but, averaged in-room, this becomes part of a broad mid/lower treble depression that's best dealt with by toeing the speakers inward by 10-20°. This also takes out a slight treble prominence which could also find the R3 lacking 'bite' or 'airiness', so small

changes in positioning could make a big subjective difference with this speaker.

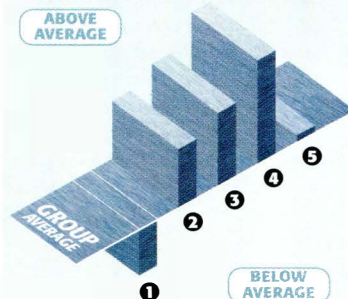
The R3 presents a sub-8 Ohm load from 30Hz-530Hz with a minimum of 3.8 Ohms, suggesting it's the bass end that will tax some amplifiers more than others. Otherwise, its bass looks flat enough on the averaged plots and, indeed, a nearfield analysis reveals a well-tuned system with a moderate-Q (unplugged) port resonance at 40Hz.

Importantly, the R3 is free of what I described as a "thumping great 730Hz resonance" in case of the R1 and R2, ensuring it is a genuinely lower-coloration design. Perhaps someone does read this stuff after all... **PMi**



## HOW IT COMPARES

Good sensitivity, low distortion and a high 200W+ power handling combine to produce a speaker that'll sound loud and clean, if you like that sort of thing.



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	89dB	88.9dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	6 Ohms	8.4 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	39Hz	40Hz



# HEYBROOK Duet

**H**eybrook now operates as the upmarket brand under the Audio Group International umbrella, a large speaker specialist based in the West Country whose other brands most notably include JPW. That said, Heybrook has shown little sign yet of losing its identity – indeed, this Duet is one of a three-strong range whose introduction predated the AGI takeover.

A heftily built and generously proportioned two-way stand-mount, the Duet carries a similarly hefty £799 price tag, reflecting the high-class nature of both cabinet-work and drive units. But it's actually the least expensive of three models with a close family

The styling looks a little old-fashioned, perhaps because of the 'classic' proportions and dimensions, or the 'traditional', if somewhat anonymous, deep red real wood veneer. The separate top is chamfered and fillets are fitted either side of the baffle to soften the edges around the front and top, but the net effect somehow looks a little bitty, to these eyes at least. Two pairs of terminals are fitted, using the new-style shrouded pins – which in my view does nothing for their performance or convenience – and the main driver is loaded by a rear port.

The far-field in-room response shows a fairly 'dry' bass alignment which suggests that some wall

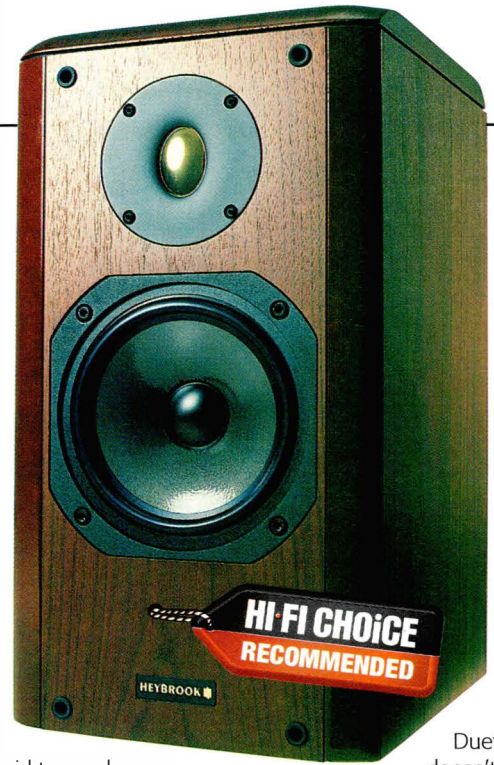
their lists. Subsequent familiarity has brought not contempt but respect, though the Duet took a little time to worm its way into my affections.

In truth, it does sound rather 'middly', and the relative lack of treble is immediately obvious, especially under direct comparison with other speakers. But what there is of said top end is at least delicate and free from attention-grabbing resonances.

Listening to loudspeakers has a lot to do with adjusting to their balance idiosyncrasies in order to get at the underlying qualities, and beneath the Duet's rather forward and coloured character lies a rare ability to hold the whole thing together with fine temporal coherence and lively midband dynamics. The bottom end could be smoother and more energetic – it has an occasional tendency to thump, and also seems short of warmth and drive – but again, it hangs on in there with a timing dexterity that stands out in the context of the whole test group.

## CONCLUSION

A chunky, slightly old-fashioned looking large standmount, the



Duet doesn't

come cheap and does have its peculiarities and colorations.

However, its heart is in the right place, with fine temporal coherence and a liveliness that serves the music well, and is therefore deserving of a cautious Recommendation. **PM**

**“Beneath the Duet's rather forward and coloured character lies a rare ability to hold the whole thing together.”**

resemblance, and is very much a scaled-down variation on the Octet we reviewed in *HFC* 180.

Said Octet had four drivers – two cast-frame, carbon-fibre-cone bass units, an aerogel midrange and a strikingly gilded lozenge-shaped tweeter. The Duet simplifies this considerably (and probably to advantage) by using just one 120mm carbon-fibre cone unit as the main driver, plus that unusual Audax-sourced tweeter, which has a quite large (28x42mm) elliptical diaphragm made of gilt polymer, driven via a gas-filled envelope from a piezo-electric transducer.

reinforcement might be beneficial – try placing the speakers about a foot clear of the wall for starters. Elsewhere the balance looks uneven but pretty good overall through the midband, and is well maintained up to 3kHz. The treble is slightly downtilted to 10kHz and more seriously so thereafter.

## SOUND QUALITY

I used the Duet as the (sighted) warm-up act to the first listening test day, and the panel was quite uncomplimentary. I didn't much like it myself at first, and was quite surprised when the second day's panel put it close to the top of

## THE LAB REPORT

**A**s the smallest in Heybrook's trio (with the Quintet and Octet), the Duet still employs the eclectic mix of Aerogel bass/mid unit and oval-shaped, gold piezo-polymer film tweeter. These are similar to the units used in the floor-standing Octet (*HFC* 180) and, perhaps unsurprisingly, betray similar foibles. Sensitivity, for example, is rather lower than the 91dB claimed at 88.3dB (re. 2.83V/1m) while the efficient Aerogel bass/mid unit betrays two rather obvious breakup modes at 2kHz and 3.9kHz. This is just prior to the 4kHz crossover point where the mild-mannered piezo-tweeter takes over and where the impedance minimum of 5.65 Ohms is achieved. Either way, an axial



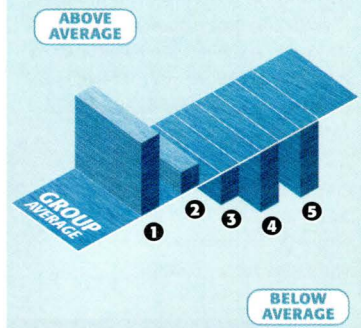
listening position is a must to realise the Duet's brightest treble output.

Low distortion is one feature of the Aerogel unit (not to be confused with a *neutral* response) though this increases from typically 0.5 per cent midband to nearly 2 per cent second harmonic distortion as the gold tweeter takes over. The Octet, by contrast, had far lower HF distortion. The Duet does enjoy a clean 42Hz output from its rear-firing reflex port, however, and this helps drag the in-room bass response down to 50Hz or so when used in a free-standing location. As a load, the Duet is a little easier to drive than the bigger Octet with a mean impedance of 11.3 Ohms and maximum swings in phase of +/-36°. **PMI**

## HOW IT COMPARES

**A** brave application of some unusual drivers delivers moderate sensitivity and a relatively easy load for the amplifier, but HF distortion and an untidy response will colour the whole musical picture.

- |   |                    |      |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | EASE OF DRIVE      | 50%  |
| 2 | RELATIVE LOUDNESS  | 15%  |
| 3 | MAXIMUM LOUDNESS   | -20% |
| 4 | AUDIBLE DISTORTION | -40% |
| 5 | BASS EXTENSION     | -45% |



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	91dB	88.3dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	8 Ohms	11.3 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	45Hz	50Hz



# JMLAB Cobalt 815

So many models, so many ranges – it's hard work keeping up with the vast selection of models in this French manufacturer's extensive portfolio. JMLab started out as manufacturer of the highly regarded Focal drivers, so it's not surprising that said drive unit technology forms the first foundation stone of its five(!) complete ranges of loudspeakers.

The seven-strong Cobalt line-up fits exactly at JMLab's halfway mark in terms of price and pretension, and this £999 815 is just

base damped with resins and tiny hollow glass micro-spheres). They operate in a 'two-and-a-half-way' configuration, both drivers working together (along with the front port) through the bass region, the lower one then rolling off early while the upper one carries on up to the tweeter crossover point. The tweeter – mounted between the two cone drivers here – is one of Focal's dassy Tioxid (oxide-coated titanium) inverted domes.

The box proper is finished in a decent real wood veneer, though

## SOUND QUALITY

The panel members were rather unimpressed by the Cobalt 815s, complaining variously that the sound was heavy-handed, soggy and lacking coherence. This rather surprised me, because I'd thought they'd sounded quite good from

behind the black curtain (but then I knew what was playing).

I still don't know why we disagreed on this occasion. The 815 does have a certain 'boom'n'tizz' character, not unlike a 'loudness' contour, which imposes itself on the music, and the broad upper midband does seem a bit undernourished and laid back. But I quickly found myself getting into this speaker again during the hands-on listening. It is a touch laid-back and 'toppy', but I quickly came to respect its lack of strain, effortless dynamics, and the sort of dynamic tension small speakers simply don't seem to generate. In other words, it knows how to kick.

## CONCLUSION

As big speakers go, this one's far from perfect, but its heart's in the right place, and it does the dynamic thing in a way no small design can manage. At a grand it's decent enough value too, earning a Recommendation but with the caveat to consider its particular balance anomalies in the context of the system and room. **PMI**

**"It is a touch laid-back and 'toppy', but I quickly came to respect its lack of strain and effortless dynamics."**

one step below the biggest Cobalt. It's a very substantial loudspeaker, comfortably the biggest (but by no means the most expensive) in the whole test. Following on so close after the even bigger Electra 915 (HFC 195), I feel almost obliged to point out that size isn't everything in the UK market. Mission (to quote one example) has done very well by making its speakers as small, discreet and lounge-friendly as possible, and several of the leading British brands tend to make their larger loudspeakers primarily for export markets.

That said, you do get plenty of speaker for your money here. The whole shebang weighs 21kg without any assistance from mass loading, and is fitted with two hefty cast-frame main drivers with 120mm 'polyglass' cones (a pulp

the front baffle is a rather more severe black, with or without the grille in place.

Bi-wire/-amp twin terminals are fitted, and the speaker comes supplied with rather feeble 6mm spikes – 8mm might be more appropriate to such a heavy speaker. The brochure indicates that a plinth is also available, which seems like a good idea, although this was not supplied with our review sample.

The far-field in-room averaged traces confirm this speaker is best kept well away from walls, and even here the balance looks rather strong through the bass and lower midband. In contrast, the upper midband and presence are rather too restrained, the more so because the treble stages a 2-3dB recovery above 4kHz.



## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £999.00

Hefty real-wood floorstander has a slight 'boom'n'tizz' character but delivers big speaker grip and dynamics

■ **THREE YEAR GUARANTEE**

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## THE LAB REPORT

With more than one speaker in this test claiming an unrealistically high sensitivity, it's refreshing to find one that offers a genuinely high figure of 90.5dB (re. 2.83V/1m) – the only box to break 90dB in this survey, in fact. With a generous 175W power handling, the Cobalt 815 should sustain peak programme of the order of 108dBA – provided you have no respect for your long-term hearing, of course...

The speaker's averaged response shows a gentle treble uplift, not a sharp 'sting' but sufficient to bring a slight but uniform emphasis across the presence and treble octaves. There's also a suggestion of bass lumpiness around 100Hz and 200Hz (around the 120Hz crossover)

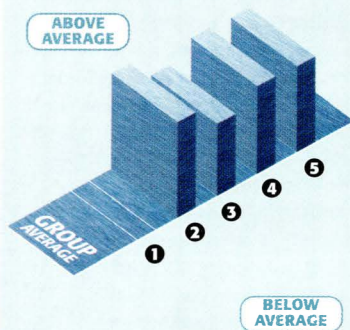


although this will be dependent of room and placement. The biggest swings in phase (+48/-36 degrees) also occur through this region together with a mistermination 'glitch' at 150Hz that appears on both phase and impedance spectra. With a mean 9.5 Ohm load and minimum of 4.3 Ohms (4.9 Ohms is quoted by JM Labs), I'd rate the Cobalt as 6 Ohm nominal load. Distortion is very low at typically <0.2 per cent through the bass, but this still cannot disguise a rather 'peaky' bass alignment, reinforced by a strong 45Hz port resonance. There are some higher frequency modes escaping the port, but in my opinion are low enough in level not to be audible. **PMI**

## HOW IT COMPARES

Quite the loudest box in this month's survey with low distortion, plenty of bass and the capacity to sound very 'lively' indeed.

1	EASE OF DRIVE	0%
2	RELATIVE LOUDNESS	65%
3	MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	50%
4	AUDIBLE DISTORTION	60%
5	BASS EXTENSION	60%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	91dB	90.5dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	8 Ohms	9.5 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	40Hz	35Hz





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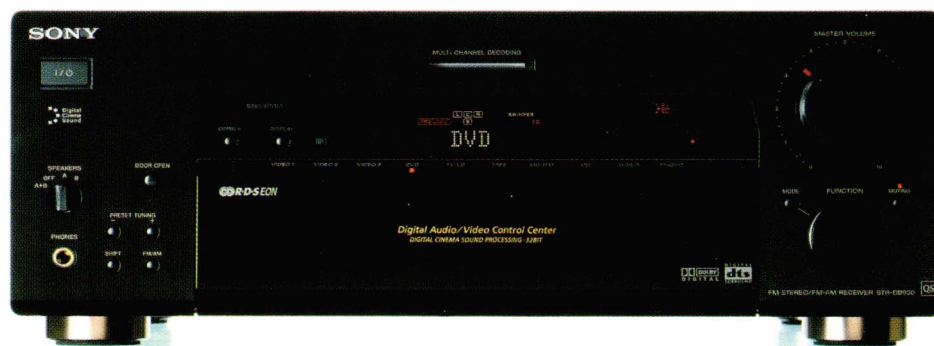
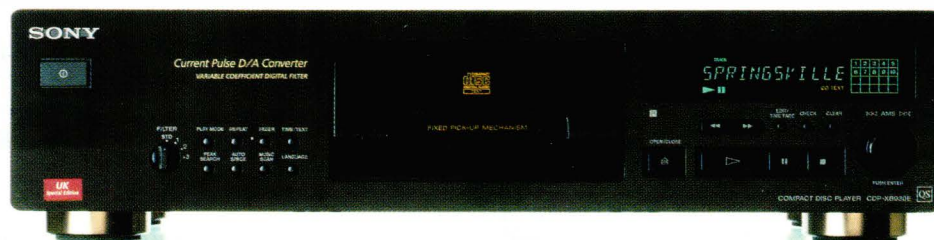
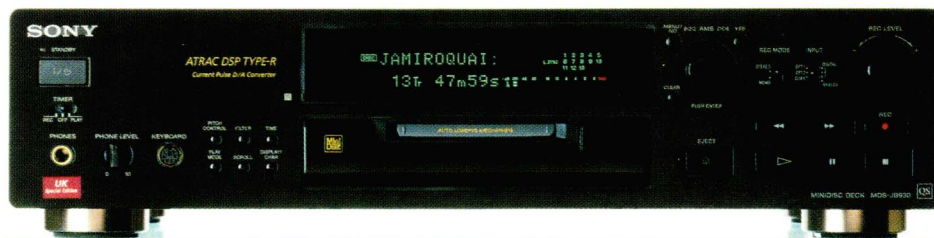
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**SONY**

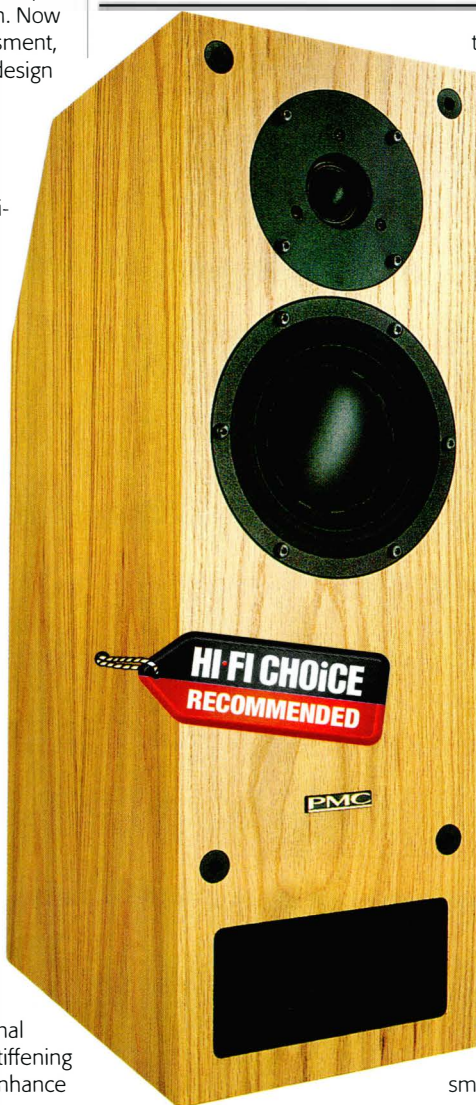


# PMC LB1

First reviewed and Recommended by *HFC* more than seven years ago (*HFC* 110), when PMC was but a fledgling company, the LB1 seemed an expensive but unquestionably high quality design. Now it has returned for reassessment, following a change in the design and manufacturer of the tweeter. Twin conventional socket/binder terminals replace the wacky Neutrik Speakons fitted to the original, but otherwise it's difficult to distinguish the new from the old. Further good news is that the price has remained the same, and the £999 price tag somehow seems less intimidating in Y2K.

The LB1 is a small, rather curiously shaped standmount – slim, but quite tall and deep, with an oblique slice through the top and back which helps direct internal reflections down into the absorptive transmission line that loads the main driver. Beautifully finished in real wood veneer, it's actually a Daline variation on the transmission line theme, with a decoupling cavity between driver and line. The drivers are at the top, loaded immediately by the cavity, which in turn feeds into a twice-folded line that exits at the base of the front, the internal partitioning considerably stiffening the box. Rebat drivers enhance

**“Within inevitable limitations of loudness capability and power handling, this is a genuine monitor design.”**



the appearance, the main unit a small Dynaudio device with 100mm plastic dome/cone, while the tweeter has a 25mm fabric dome.

The in-room far-field responses confirm that the LB1 should be kept well clear of walls, whereupon it delivers an impressively smooth and flat balance from 40Hz to above 1kHz. There's a notable suckout 1.5-2.5kHz, followed by a tidy, smooth and well behaved treble.

## SOUND QUALITY

Top gun on the first day's listening, with excellent consistency too, the LB1 was rather less well received on the second day, perhaps reflecting the subtle changes in listening conditions and panellists, and the latter's reactions to that mild suckout through the presence region, which is really the LB1's most obvious manifestation of 'character'.

While it's clearly no great bass excavator, the LB1 has sufficient vigour and good enough timing through the bass region to give clear insight into what the bottom end is doing and where it's going, while the midband as a whole is sufficiently smooth and well balanced to

provide a very clear and transparent view onto the recording session. Within inevitable limitations of loudness capability and power handling, this is a genuine monitor design that adds very little of its own signature to the sound.

## CONCLUSION

Still very much a contender despite its long history, the LB1 retains the fundamental character that earned Recommendation way back in *HFC* 110 – that it imposes very little character of its own, onto either the system or the music. Individual reactions to the slightly recessed presence will vary, according to taste, system and listening distance – the LB1 is voiced with more than half an eye on its role as a nearfield monitor.

That aside, this loudspeaker is an object lesson in the virtues of maintaining design stability over the long haul, rather than introducing change for marketing's sake. The LB1 is a modern classic, and a valuable benchmark in a world which should perhaps value stability more highly. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** **£999.00**

Still fully competitive eight years after our original review, this genuine compact monitor is now a modern classic.

**FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE**

PMC, Unit 72, Hazelmere Ind Est, Twinn Rd, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1BD  
(01707) 393002

## THE LAB REPORT

Despite using a modest Dynaudio bass unit, its substantial three-inch voice coil and aluminium former yields a surprisingly high 250W power handling and enables the LB1 to hammer out nearly 106dBA in a studio context. Even at 96dBA, distortion remains very low (<0.3 per cent through the bass and <0.75 per cent midband). Its axial sensitivity measures 1dB below PMC's 88dB spec at 87dB (re. 2.83V/1m), but this figure increases to 87.8dB if the calculation extends from 200Hz-20kHz and the LB1's boosted treble is taken into account. As a load, the LB1 is tough; while the +40°/-30° phase angles are manageable, the mean 6.6 Ohm impedance and 3.3 Ohm minimum (285Hz) suggest it's very current-hungry.

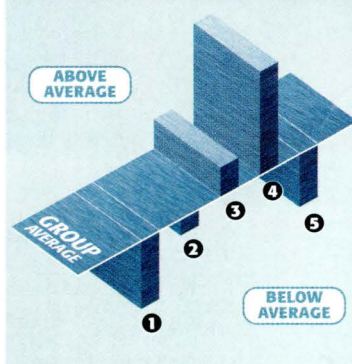


The PMC LB1 is designed to be toed-in by 15°, so the listening axis crosses over behind your head. This tames the post-7kHz treble lift otherwise experienced if you listen directly on the speaker's axis at the expense of a little upper bass 'lumpiness'. Not that a speaker of this size suffers from an overdose of bass: an in-room extension of 49Hz seems realistic, perhaps achieving PMC's 37Hz specification with reinforcement from wall-mounting. The resistively-loaded port, meanwhile looks a little untidy for though the main 53Hz resonance ties in with the driver null (52Hz), there are subsequent pipe modes at 220Hz and 660Hz that muddy the overall picture. **PMI**

## HOW IT COMPARES

A complete sod to drive (from the amplifier's point of view) but cleverly engineered to deliver a punchy, low distortion performance from a compact enclosure.

1	EASE OF DRIVE	-45%
2	RELATIVE LOUDNESS	-10%
3	MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	20%
4	AUDIBLE DISTORTION	70%
5	BASS EXTENSION	-35%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	88dB	87.0dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	4 Ohms	6.6 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	37Hz	49Hz



# SOUTH COAST SPEAKERS Lancelot

A new brand to *Hi-Fi Choice* reviewing, South Coast Speakers has become better known for selling loudspeakers in kit form than for marketing the finished item. In fact, the Lancelot is one of four complete speakers in the company's catalogue, one step up from the Odette, but below the Classic 200 and Excalibur models. SCS also has ties with German drive unit manufacturer Visaton, using its drive units in SCS speakers and kits, and

not be entirely fair, but wouldn't be entirely inaccurate either.

Perhaps the best justification for the price tag lies in the ribbon-style tweeter that handles the treble end of things, made by Visaton using a 10x50mm flat diaphragm with short-horn loading built in the deep plastic faceplate. For the diaphragm, the 'voice-coil' wire is printed onto a polymer substrate. The main driver is also unusual, being a Morel device with a 100mm dome/cone diaphragm,

way, but is rather weak in the dynamic and musical communication stakes when compared and contrasted with its peer group here.

The ribbon tweeter certainly did nothing to cause offence, and sounded very clean and delicate when listening close-up. But because its relative output level is well down from the midband, its contribution is far from obvious anyway.

## "Perhaps the best justification for the Lancelot's rather hefty price tag lies in the ribbon-style tweeter."

marketing Visaton kits in the UK.

The Lancelot is a small and compact two-way standmount, so an £895 price tag must be considered rather hefty, and will take some justification. Granted, the real wood veneer used on all six faces of the enclosure looks very nice indeed, with very attractive figuring and finish.

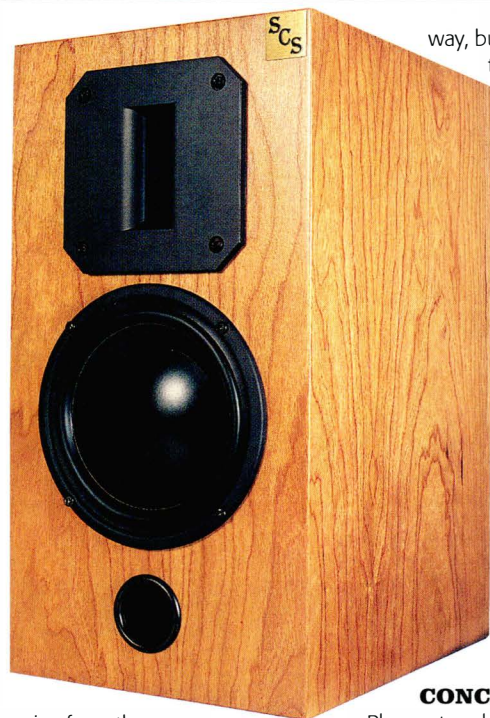
But the devil's in the detail here: there's no grille (which is acceptable on performance grounds), but its absence leaves the surface-mounted drivers looking a trifle cheap – flush-mounting by rebating the frames would have given a more polished appearance. Likewise, a little gilt SCS badge is stuck onto the top corners, and mirror-imaged between the pair, which looks both odd and lacks class. To say it reminded me of assembled kit loudspeakers may

and this is reflex loaded by a small front port (maybe that could have been offset, rather than the badge?). Bi-wire/-amp twin terminals are fitted.

The in-room far-field averaged traces show a balance not untypical of small two-ways, with a bass alignment that benefits from siting fairly close to a wall. The upper midband is a little strong (700Hz-1.5kHz), while output drops nearly 6dB between 2kHz and 4kHz, and the treble level remains rather restrained thereafter.

### SOUND QUALITY

The Lancelot did competently enough on the listening tests, sufficient to register an average rating from each of the panellists. Surprisingly, perhaps, the slightly wayward balance caused little offence, attracting a measure of



### CONCLUSION

Pleasant and pretty enough in its way, the Lancelot is nevertheless a bit of an under-achiever in this test group, especially in view of its hefty price tag.

PMc

praise from the panel, although there was some complaint about "nasal", head-cold" coloration on voices, which may well be balance-related.

The more general complaint, however, was that the sound was too smooth and "soft around the edges". One listener complained of "a loss of tension in the performance, a bit like a camera a little out of focus... This speaker lacks drama and interest – it's too soft and too easy." Another took the view that dynamics – or rather, the lack of them – was the main problem, which pretty much amounts to coming at the same problem from a different perspective.

Ultimately, this is a pleasant enough speaker in an easy-going

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £895.00

Pretty but pricey compact stand mount has nice ribbon tweeter but sounds a bit soft and lacks dynamic vigour.

■ THREE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ South Coast Speakers, 58 Wilton Road, Southampton SO15 5LB  
☎ (01703) 703221

## THE LAB REPORT

While this speaker undoubtedly has its problems, there are some positive features on which the design can evolve. Bass alignment, in particular, is very cleanly executed and although the reflex port looks inappropriately narrow, the 38Hz Helmholtz resonance is free of secondary pipe modes. The roll-off of the chunky Morel bass/mid driver adopts a neutral alignment with no false 'peak' to enhance its subjective punch. Distortion, too, is very low at better than 0.7 per cent through the bass, even though the Lancelot's sensitivity is way below average at just 84.3dB (re. 2.83V/1m) and, with an average 8.3 Ohm load, is no picnic to drive... An averaged third-octave plot provides

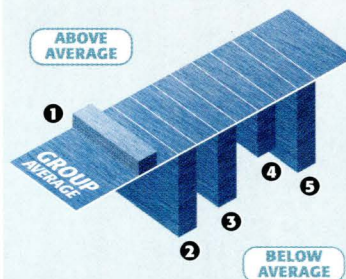


a good indication of the speaker's overall balance and here, while the output is reasonably uniform up to 3kHz, it's impossible to miss the -7dB suckout centred around the high 5kHz crossover frequency and extending through the speaker's vital 'presence' region. There's also an additional swing in phase and, latterly, a dip to 5.3 Ohms through this band. Off-axis, this suckout broadens still further into a general depression through upper mid and treble, helping to explain the lower-than-expected sensitivity. SCS acknowledges that it has a QC issue and is now working to reduce the variations in response that currently exists between different samples of the Lancelot. **PMI**

## HOW IT COMPARES

While distortion is impressively low sensitivity leaves something to be desired and this coupled with the uneven response suggests the Lancelot could do with a little more refinement.

1	EASE OF DRIVE	10%
2	RELATIVE LOUDNESS	-55%
3	MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	-50%
4	AUDIBLE DISTORTION	-30%
5	BASS EXTENSION	-55%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	86dB	84.3dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	8 Ohms	8.3 Ohms
■ Estimated Bass Extension	40Hz	50Hz



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R3

## Revolution R2

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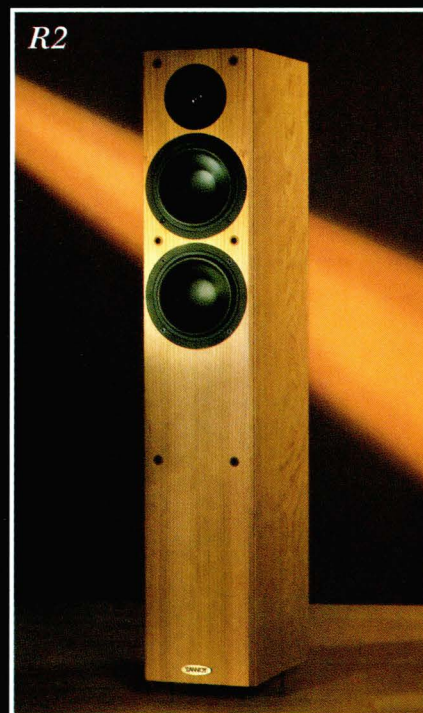
*"Best of all is the way they can hang a soundstage picture in thin air before you."*

*"Fantastic speakers that are well worth your hard earned cash."*

T3 September 99

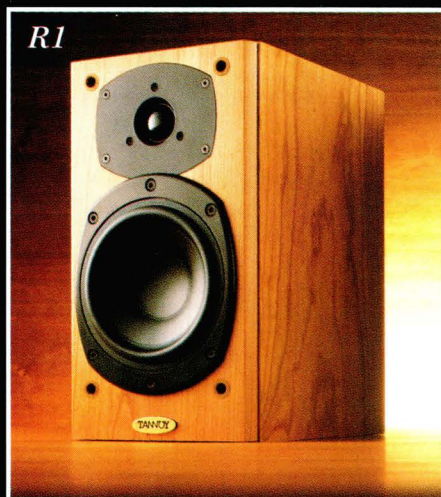
*"What distinguishes the R2 is its overall blend of qualities: the R2 is superb value."*

Hi-Fi News August 99



R2

R1



## Revolution R1

**WHAT HI-FI?** ★★★★★  
September 98

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# TANNOY®



# B&W Nautilus 805

**S**mallest and least expensive of B&W's upmarket Nautilus, for a compact stand-mount the 805's price tag is a substantial £1,400, but elegance and advanced technology provide some justification. It is, in truth, successor to the Matrix 805, which cost £915 when *Choice* reviewed it way back in 1991. Given the intervening years and the many technical improvements, the new price is not unreasonable.

The striking styling is likely to be a major selling point for many prospective purchasers, who will presumably be delighted to find that B&W has come up with an equally attractive matching stand. This, again, is a costly item, but it looks competently conceived, as well as very prettily executed.

A classic compact two-way standmount in outline, this design is stuffed with various features designed to promote sound quality. First there's the curved cabinet-work, which avoids the parallel sides found with most conventional

loudspeakers, and consequently avoids the frequency-specific internal box modes which a rectilinear shape tends to generate. The curved shape, made up from carefully bent plywood-type laminate, is already inherently very stiff, and is reinforced by an internal 'honeycomb' matrix that braces the box in every direction.

The teardrop-shaped tweeter is no less radical. It's mounted externally on top of the enclosure proper, to provide the smallest possible source and hence the widest radiating area, while the teardrop itself consists of a long, tapered tube which acts as a transmission line to absorb (rather than reflect) the rearward radiation from behind the tweeter dome. Compact neodymium magnets further aid the escape of this unwanted rearward radiation.

The main driver has to cover the lower two-thirds of the audio range, so there's no opportunity here to use the 'surround-less' driver found in the various three-way Nautilus 800

series models. Instead, B&W is using its familiar cast-frame main driver with 120mm Kevlar cone and large phase plug.

A front panel port provides reflex loading, and features the stippled 'golf ball' surface which minimises turbulence with high air

and even, with a remarkable freedom from the usual 'boxy' colorations, and with a wide dynamic range that provides an often surprising amount of previously unnoticed detail on familiar recordings. However, the midband could be more convincing dynam-

**"This is definitely a bright-sounding speaker, but the top end is very clean with it, so it remains relatively easy on the ear."**

velocities. Twin terminal pairs permit bi-wire/-amp operation.

The in-room far-field averaged traces show a very well ordered overall balance, with an impressive combination of sensitivity and bass extension considering the modest size and impedance. The bass starts to roll off very gently below 150Hz, so some (but not too much) wall reinforcement might well be helpful (but see below). A 2-3dB downward 'step' at 800Hz should give a slightly laid-back perspective.

ically. It sounds just a bit limp and box-bound here, without the transparency and tension developed by other designs.

## CONCLUSION

This remains at heart a small loudspeaker, with limited dynamic vigour and excitement. However, it has a wickedly clean treble, a lovely lack of boxiness, loads of detail, and looks very stylish indeed, all of which seem to add up to a cautious Recommendation in my book. **PM**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** **£1,400.00**

■ A small-sounding loudspeaker dynamically, but very stylish, clean and 'unboxy', delivering loads of detail.

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ B&W, Marlborough Rd, Churchill Ind Est, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 8TR

☎ (01903) 750750

## THE LAB REPORT

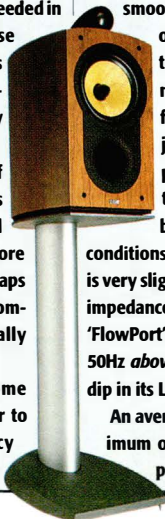
**A**lthough the 805 is the smallest Nautilus by far, B&W has succeeded in stretching its low bass response down to a good 48Hz in-room. Its blurb quotes 42Hz, but also suggests some shortfall in sensitivity (to 88dB) as a consequence.

In practice, B&W is doing itself an injustice, for the 805 achieves 89.2dB (2.83V/1m) and a full 105dBA maximum loudness before signing off for the evening. Perhaps the larger 803, with which it is compared, will achieve proportionally more than its rated 90dB.

Response-wise, there is some slight, axial irregularity just prior to the 3kHz crossover frequency (where there's also a +36° swing

in phase) but the speaker's response is very smooth and even thereafter with no obvious treble emphasis. Off-axis too, the behaviour of this aluminium dome tweeter remains free of 'peakiness'. Distortion just nudges above one per cent prior to 3kHz but remains below this figure through bass and treble up to 96dBA under dynamic conditions. The bass driver/port alignment is very slightly de-tuned, and big swings in impedance indicate little damping, with its 'FlowPort' resonance cleanly executed at 50Hz above the 37Hz driver null and 42Hz dip in its LF impedance trend.

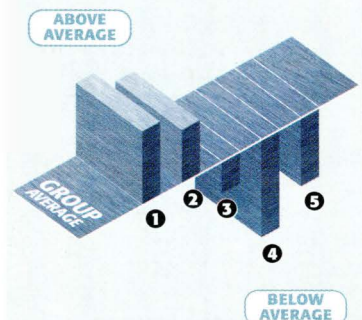
An average load of 11.9 Ohms and minimum of 4.6 Ohms at 200Hz shouldn't prove too challenging. **PM**



## HOW IT COMPARES

**I**t does seem that a healthy sensitivity, maximum loudness and a relatively neutral response has been achieved at the expense of – by B&W's standards – relatively high harmonic distortion.

1 EASE OF DRIVE	50%
2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS	35%
3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	-20%
4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	-65%
5 BASS EXTENSION	-45%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	88dB	89.2dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	8 Ohm	11.9 Ohm
■ Estimated Bass Extension	42Hz	4 Hz



# DYNAUDIO Audience 70

**D**anish brand Dynaudio operates at rather higher prices than most, justifying this on the basis of superior engineering content. The Audience series comprises the company's most affordable models, making some cost savings through the use of vinyl rather than real wood finish, but £1,100 still looks decidedly pricey when compared with, say, this group's real-wood Tannoy and Acoustic Energy models at only half the cost.

In loudspeakers, however, assessment on the basis of superficial perceived value rather misses the point. The same sort of comparison could be made about Dynaudio's much smaller Audience 40 – but that didn't stop it earning our Best Buy accolade in *HFC* 190 and going on to win further gongs elsewhere.

The Audience 70 might use vinyl for the surface finish, but it's a good enough quality vinyl that no one really need be any the wiser – and of course, it's wipe-clean too! The business end of this loudspeaker consists of two of Dynaudio's main driver units, operating in a 'two-and-a-half-way' configuration where the lower one is rolled off by the crossover network prior to the upper one, plus one of the company's tweeters.

Each of the main drivers has a 115mm plastic cone/dome diaphragm, a cast alloy frame, and the large diameter voice coil which is very much a trademark, conferring more than ample



power handling. The tweeter is the familiar soft fabric dome, and the speaker has just one terminal pair, as is Dynaudio's way. A large port is fitted into the rear panel, and a foam bung supplied to block it off (if the speaker has to be placed

the Audience 70 proved a little disappointing. It's all very competent, but rather lacks charisma and charm. There's a certain congestion through the midband, either dynamic or temporal or both, which squashes some of the

**“There's no gainsaying the neutrality, but in some other respects the Audience 70 proved a little disappointing.”**

close to a wall). A plinth is fitted to the base of the enclosure, accommodating chunky 8mm spikes but not extending the footprint, which seems like a lost opportunity in styling and stability terms.

The far field in-room averaged response is typically Dynaudio – very well balanced right across the band. Relative bass output is a bit full, even with speaker well clear of walls, so those foam bungs could be useful. The top end here looks notably smooth, much more so than the midband (300Hz-1kHz).

tension and expression from the music. One panellist described it as: “Lacking conviction; all show and no go.”

## CONCLUSION

The Audience 70's price tag is high for a vinyl-covered enclosure of this size and, while it's a highly competent and neutral loudspeaker which is very good at avoiding drawing attention to itself, some lack of transparency and dynamic tension means that it's less good at attracting attention to the music. **PMe**

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £1,100.00

■ A highly competent and neutral speaker, but pricey for vinyl finish, and doesn't quite drag you into the music.

### ■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

☒ Dynaudio UK, 29 Robyns Way, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3EB  
☎ (01732) 451938

## SOUND QUALITY

The Audience 70 did pretty well on the listening tests, thanks in no small part to its resolutely neutral balance. On the first day it was played with ports open, attracting some comment that the bass was a little full, even with speaker well clear of walls, so those foam bungs could be useful. The top end here looks notably smooth, much more so than the midband (300Hz-1kHz).

There's no gainsaying the neutrality, but in some other respects

## THE LAB REPORT

**D**ynaudio's use of related polypropylene-coned bass/mid units and 28mm soft-dome tweeters lends its Audience range a predictable behaviour. There are parallels in performance between this floorstanding Audience 70 and the smaller 50 and 40 models (see *HFCs* 190 and 174). Its response still errs on the bright side of neutral while the midband is broken by a series of cone modes at 2kHz and 4kHz, either side of the high 3.6kHz crossover point. But a loss in neutrality isn't the same as high distortion. Indeed, with two of its bass/mid drivers in parallel, the Audience 70 enjoys even lower levels of THD than its smaller cousins, falling as low as 0.2 per cent through the

midrange at sound levels as high as 96dBA.

A third-octave average from 200Hz-5kHz indicates a sensitivity of 88dB for 2.3V/1m, 1dB higher than Dynaudio's conservative 87dB spec, and promises

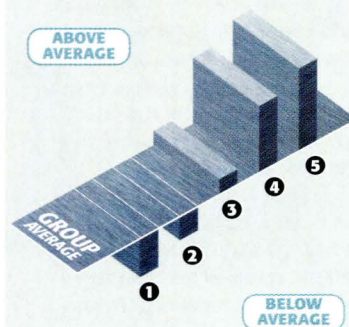
maximum in-room levels as high as 106dBA. Bass extension is impressive, but alignment looks slightly 'peaky' with a broad port output (plug removed) from 25-78Hz. The partnering amp won't be troubled by modest swings in phase, but the average impedance of 5.85 Ohms seems very current-hungry indeed, varying between just 4-9 Ohms across the audioband. As a result, the 70 will prove amp and cable sensitive (see *Oasis*, *HFC* 177). **PMi**



## HOW IT COMPARES

**A** strong treble and extended bass are possible from the Audience 70 along with impressively low distortion, but the (mainly resistive) load is no cakewalk.

1 EASE OF DRIVE	-25%
2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS	-15%
3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS	10%
4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	45%
5 BASS EXTENSION	55%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	87dB	88.0dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	4 Ohm	5.85 Ohm
■ Estimated Bass Extension	35Hz	36Hz



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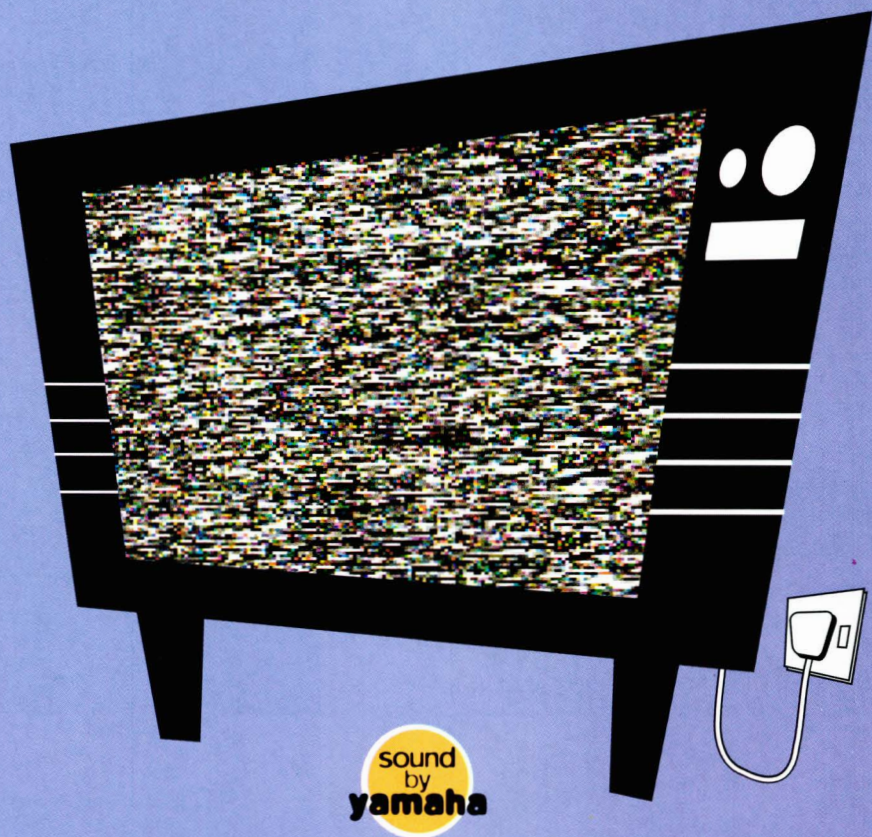


PERSONAL MINIDISC



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# VIENNA ACOUSTICS Mozart

**A** new name on the UK scene, Vienna Acoustics speakers come from Austria (now there's a surprise!). This is the company's first model to come under *Choice* scrutiny, so we've no previous experience of the brand to provide a context. There are currently five models in VA's 'Composers' series, and this £1,500 Mozart sits exactly halfway up (or down) the ladder.

Even though it's neither the biggest nor the heaviest, this is the most expensive speaker in the group test, but it does lay a fair claim to being the most elegant. There's real wood finish and there's *real wood finish* these days, and the Mozart has a lovely, highly polished and figured rosewood veneer. The brochure mentions a mix of real wood and laminates, but I don't think anyone's going to find it less than lovely.

It's not just the finish that looks good, the shape is the height of fashion too – ultra-slim from the front, with nicely rounded-off badge edges too. The enclosure is deep to give good fore-and-

aft stability, but so narrow I wonder whether it might not get knocked over accidentally.

There's a compartment in the base for adding extra mass to aid stability, but I can't help feeling some sort of plinth is called for. Spikes are supplied (indeed it came with them already fitted, which was an unwelcome surprise): although only of the 6mm variety, they fixed securely enough.

The two main drivers are small, classy cast-frame affairs, and their 95mm cones use a hard, clear plastic codenamed XPP, which the brochure claims is a 'breakthrough material'.

Each operates into its own chamber, separately port-loaded at the rear. The tweeter has a 32mm soft fabric dome, and power is fed in through a single pair of terminals. The far-field

in-room averaged response was a little startling, first because there was too much output around 50Hz, but more importantly because of a dramatic crossover suck-out, roughly 8dB deep, centred on 2.2kHz. However, the broad midband looks usefully flat and smooth from 60Hz-1kHz.

suppressed, so the volume has to be turned up higher than normal in order to hear words clearly. The bass has an occasional tendency to 'thump' depending on the disc being played, but such caveats notwithstanding, there's no denying the all-round quality and essential musicality of this design.

**"To my surprise, in view of the balance anomalies, the panel really warmed to the Mozart, and gave it top score of the day."**

## SOUND QUALITY

Rather to my surprise, in view of the balance anomalies, the panel really warmed to the Mozart, and gave it the top score of the day. The distancing of brass and voices in particular was obvious enough, but it somehow didn't seem to spoil things unduly.

This speaker remained musically convincing and communicative despite – or perhaps because of – what one panellist aptly described as an "easy-listening" balance. The compliments kept coming: "Expressive and musical with good but not 'shoving it down your throat' detail retrieval." "Lovely, clean and easy to live with... a good balance of virtues with no obvious weaknesses."

The Mozart's sucked-out presence region became rather more obvious during the longer hands-on listening work, where the speaker is operated across a wide range of listening levels. Its effect was most noticeable on speech from radio and TV: consonants are

## CONCLUSION

Under normal circumstances the Mozart's balance anomalies – especially its sucked-out presence – might be expected to disqualify it from formal commendation. However, the panel spotted the underlying virtues of a musically very literate and communicative design that deserves to carry the *Choice* Recommended flag, albeit with a firm 'try before you buy' qualification. **PMe**

## VERDICT

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★★
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£1,500.00</b>

**Gorgeous slimline floorstander sounds very laid-back but very charming and musically literate, too.**

### FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

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## THE LAB REPORT

**V**ienna's two 'XPP' polymer bass/mid units are reflex-loaded via a pair of staggered rear-firing ports tuned to a sharp 45Hz. This ties in with the driver null and impedance minimum but, sadly, is joined by a severe pipe resonance at 615Hz that very nearly matches the bass level in output. With any luck this will not adversely colour the lower midrange (there's no obvious blip on the forward response) which, otherwise enjoys a low-ish <math>0.45</math> per cent distortion right up until the silk dome treble unit takes over.

The Mozart's axial response shows a broad midrange/lower treble droop that's not atypical of

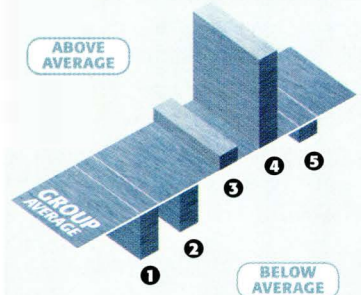
multi-unit, two-way designs and can be partially ameliorated by toeing the boxes in by 15° or so. Nevertheless, this shallow depression does force the speaker's overall sensitivity down from its rated 90dB, rather closer to 87.8dB (re. 2.83V at 1m). If the third-octave bands from 200Hz to 20kHz are computed, the figure works out at 88.9dB which is rather closer to specification (see *Oasis*, p52). There's a big drop in phase to -51° at 1.6kHz where the speaker's impedance has only just risen above 8 Ohms! And with a 3.2 Ohm minimum together with a 7.6 Ohm mean, the Mozart vies with PMC's LB1 for the title of 'toughest drive' in this group. **PMi**



## HOW IT COMPARES

**D**espite its classical pretension, the Mozart needs an amplifier with the muscles of a navy to tackle its load. Otherwise, distortion is low but the response is rather uneven.

<b>1 EASE OF DRIVE</b>	-30%
<b>2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS</b>	-25%
<b>3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS</b>	10%
<b>4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION</b>	60%
<b>5 BASS EXTENSION</b>	-10%



## SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	90dB	87.8dB
■ Impedance (Nominal/Mean)	6 Ohm	7.6 Ohm
■ Estimated Bass Extension	35Hz	43Hz



# SPEAKERS

# CONCLUSIONS

## THE BEST IN THE TEST

### RECOMMENDED

#### 1 B&W Nautilus 805 £1,400.00

This remains at heart a small loudspeaker with limited dynamic vigour and excitement, but it has a wickedly clean treble, a lovely lack of boxiness, loads of detail, and looks very stylish indeed.

#### 2 HEYBROOK Duet £750.00

A chunky and slightly old-fashioned looking standmount, the Duet has its peculiarities and colorations, but its heart is in the right place, with fine temporal coherence and a liveliness that serves the music well.

#### 3 INDIGO Three £500.00

Controversially different in presentation, technical performance and sonic abilities, the Indigo Three is qualitatively too different to appeal to all listeners, but its fine basic communication skills make music of all types interesting and involving.

#### JMLAB Cobalt 815 £999.00

4 As big speakers go, this one's far from perfect, but it does the dynamic thing in a way no small design can manage. At a grand it's decent enough value too, although beware its particular balance anomalies.

#### MISSION 782 £699.00

5 An exceptionally good looking and lounge-friendly design, the 782 has a radical midrange drive and does tend to favour midband performance over the bass end of things. Take time to experiment with precise positioning.

#### NHT Super Two £550.00

6 Unusually finished in shiny black laminate, and with a very clever stand arrangement, this attractive three-way has a beautifully even and neutral balance, but dynamics seem a bit lacking in enthusiasm and vigour.

#### PMC LB1 £999.00

7 The new LB1 imposes very little character of its own, onto either the system or the music, apart from a slightly recessed presence – a valuable benchmark in a world which ought to rate stability more highly.

#### VIENNA ACOUSTICS Mozart £1,500.00

8 The Mozart might suffer from a significant presence suck-out and have a tendency to thump in the bass, but it's musically a very literate and communicative design, and it looks stunning too.



Hand on heart, this wasn't the most exciting group of speakers ever to come in for a test. Despite going through them with the usual diligence, we were unable to come up with one example which truly deserved a Best Buy rating. Even though the Recommended ratio came out close to normal, most of the flags came loaded with qualifications.

The problem with reviewing loudspeakers comes in trying to cope with the wide variations in size, complexity and finish which exist at every price level. The broad range of speaker types available is unquestionably welcome, giving the consumer plenty of opportunity to choose a pair which suits his/her room size, decor, system and personal taste.

But it does make it hard to compare like with like – all too often it's like trying to compare apples with pears. And/or bananas. It's not difficult to come up with criteria against which a given speaker or group of speakers can be assessed. The problem comes in applying appropriate weighting to come up with an overall judgement. Some people like large loudspeakers, others small; some are prepared to pay for real wood veneer, others aren't fussed.

Picking through the models assembled here, I wouldn't give any one of them an entirely clean bill of health. If we look first at the Group A models, the AE120SE is just as bad as its AE120 predecessor, and comfortably outclassed by Acoustic Energy's much less expensive Aegis Three (see p15).

## SPEAKER COMPARISON TABLE

MAKE	ACOUSTIC ENERGY	B&W	DYNAUDIO	ELAC	HEYBROOK	INDIGO	JMLAB
MODEL	120SE	NAUTILUS 805	AUDIENCE 70	CL102 MKII	DUET	THREE	COBALT 815
PRICE	£599.95	£1,400.00	£1,100.00	£599.00	£750.00	£500.00	£999.00
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
GUARANTEE	5 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	10 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	3 yrs
SIZE (WxHxD, cms)	18x97x28	24x42x31	20.5x93x25	20x95x28	23x43x30	23x30.5x32	22x100x31
WEIGHT	25kg	10kg	16kg	16kg	9kg	8kg	21kg
SENSITIVITY	88.3dB/W	89.2dB/W	88dB/W	88dB/W	90dB/W	86.3dB/W	90.5dB/W
LOAD (MEAN)	11.3 Ohms	11.9 Ohms	5.85 Ohms	8.7 Ohms	8 Ohms	16.9 Ohms	9.5 Ohms
BASS FROM	45Hz	48Hz	36Hz	37Hz	27Hz	45Hz	35Hz



Likewise, Tannoy's R3 is bigger and more expensive than the R2 (HFC 193), and is rather more convincing through the bass region too, but its mid-to-treble integration is more suspect. If the Elac's classy drive units are a big plus, its vinyl finish is a definite minus, and I couldn't help wondering if the bottom might have benefited from either a smaller enclosure or an extra bass unit.

Arguably the most interesting speaker in the whole test, the Mission 782 is a beautifully compact package with a superb new midband driver, but its bass is rather less convincing.

Of the two Recommendations, the compact Indigo seems a bit pricey among the floorstanders, but deserves recognition for daring to be so different from the norm, with a sound that's coloured but entertainingly coherent. In contrast, the NHT might be an object lesson in achieving an exceptionally even, neutral balance, but sounded just a little too cautious and constrained.

Group B scored three out of four Recommendations, only the compact Lancelot falling short, hampered by its price tag. One could say something similar about the Heybrook Duet, but it scores at least a B+ for all-round effort and enthusiasm, and is a better musical communicator than most. That applies equally to the JMLab,

which is plenty of speaker for the money, but suffers from a slightly 'boom'n'tizz' balance.

PMC's LB1 is proof, if it were needed, that a good speaker is a good speaker, regardless of the age of the design. However, because it's been voiced in part as a professional nearfield monitor, it can be a bit too laid-back when listening from further away.

In the top priced group, the floorstanding Dynaudio seemed to have similar strengths and weaknesses as the NHT – an exceptionally even balance but a lack of dynamic vigour. Some of

the same applies to B&W's pricey standmount, but its superb tweeter supplies oodles of fine detail. The Vienna Acoustics can seduce the eyes and ears, which makes its lack of overall balance evenness all the more frustrating.

It would be nice to identify patterns, but they're too nebulous to pin down. The standmounts have scored a higher hit rate than the floorstanders on this occasion – but the opposite was true in our last major group test (HFC 193). But speakers are idiosyncratic things, and trying to stereotype them is rarely useful.

**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 or less competitive overall sound quality.

**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 is derived from the reactive and resistive components of the speaker load, indicating how tricky it is for the amp to drive.

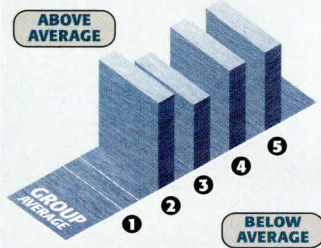
**2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS:** Speaker sensitivity is measured at 1m with a 2.83V input across third-octave bands 17-29, then weighted according to the human loudness contour to indicate how 'loud' one speaker will sound relative to another.

**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.

**4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION:** This test momentarily raises the output to 96dBa with dynamic signals through bass, midrange and treble. This allows us to more realistically assess distortion.

**5 BASS EXTENSION:** This gives an indication of the likely bass extension in an 'average' room, according to the maker's suggestions for positioning.

**THE BAR GRAPHS**



**TEST INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR**

Our Technical Editor, Paul Miller, has been awarded Test Innovator of the Year by *Test* magazine, the leading European journal of the test and measurement industry. This gong came in recognition of Paul's Jitter Measurement Suite, as used to test CD players for *Hi-Fi Choice*.

**RIVAL BUYS**

**CASTLE Harlech** £880  
A luxury finish floorstander which probably suits acoustic music better than synthesised Dance. It provides an entertaining and enjoyable musical experience at a very realistic price.

**CELESTION A1 (Above)** £899  
This lovely, luxury-finish standmount speaker has a delightfully sweet and easygoing sound, but is also thoroughly musical and informative.

**MUSICAL TECHNOLOGY Falcon** £680  
A big speaker with lots of headroom and loudness capability, but also surprisingly smooth and unusually well behaved for its type.

**NEAT Elite** £1,200  
An excellent loudspeaker, and an object lesson in what can be achieved by taking an essentially simple formula and applying painstaking development alongside the best quality ingredients.

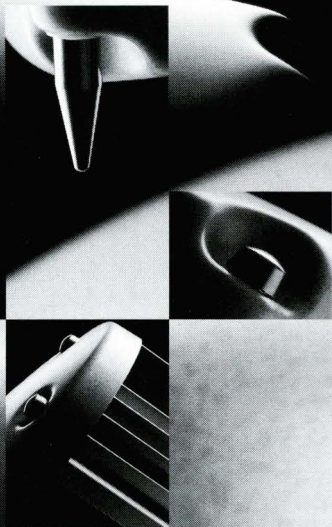
**ORELLE The Swing** £1,200  
One of the best sounding 'miniatures' you've ever heard, and conveniently comes with built-in stand. Its joyful sound has vim and expert timing.

**TRIANGLE Zephyr II** £599  
Oddball appearance, but its unusual high sensitivity main driver supplies fine dynamic tension and vivid excitement, with reasonable neutrality too.

**S P E A K E R C O M P A R I S O N T A B L E**

MAKE MODEL	MISSION 782	NHT SUPER TWO	PMC LB1	SOUTH COAST SPKRS LANCELOT	TANNOY R3	VIENNA ACOUSTICS MOZART
PRICE	£699.00	£550.00	£999.00	£895.00	£550.00	£1,500.00
SOUND	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
GUARANTEE	5 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs	5 yrs
SIZE (WxHxD, cms)	16.5x82x28	18.5x100x26	17.5x53x26	19x36x26	18.5x103x28	17x97x30
WEIGHT	28kg	17kg	9kg	6kg	17kg	18kg
SENSITIVITY	85dB/W	87dB/W	87dB/W	84.3dB/W	88.9dB/W	87.8dB/W
LOAD (MEAN)	9.55 Ohms	8.5 Ohms	6.6 Ohms	8.3 Ohms	8.4 Ohms	7.6 Ohms
BASS FROM	45Hz	35Hz	49Hz	50Hz	40Hz	43Hz





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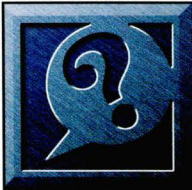
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[ C U R A   H I G H   Q U A L I T Y  
L O U D S P E A K E R   S Y S T E M S ]





# HELP!

Help! I need somebody; Help!  
not just anybody. Nope, only  
Peter Guthrie can fit the bill.

## VINYL JUSTICE



I've recently purchased a second-hand Linn LP12 record player.

My current set-up is far from perfect for such a machine, with a Marantz PM66-KI Signature amp, KEF Q35 speakers and SonicLink AST200 cable showing their shortcomings.

My conundrum is two-fold: I am a total novice when it comes to the charms of the LP12 and have no idea as to whether I have set the weight on the tonearm to the correct setting. Any adjustments I implement seem to make no difference to the sound.

Secondly, my amp/speaker combination is very "middle of the road", with plenty of room for improvement. Could you suggest a combination around £1,500-£2,000 to complement the turntable?

*Jonathan Bullock, Warrington*

First things first, take your new LP12 to a Linn dealer and have it serviced. They should be able to make a dramatic difference to its sound. LP12s, particularly the older models, appreciate a bit of mollycoddling.

On your budget it would be well worth listening to Linn's Majik Phono integrated amp (£800) and Keilidh speakers with Aktiv boards (£1,000).

If this proves unsuitable, try Naim's Nait 3 (£575) and Linn's Keilidh (£750). Other amplification to consider would be the Creek P43R/A52SE (£350/£599) pre/power combination with the OBH-9 (£129) phono stage. Have a good listen with a couple of speakers such as Dynaudio's Audience 50 (£578) and Neat's Elite (£1,195).



Linn LP12.

## MULTI-ROOM MAYHEM



I have had my Systemdeck II/Rega RB250/Audio Technica

95E turntable, Musical Fidelity B1 amp and Rogers LS4A speakers for about eight or nine years and think it's about time for an upgrade of some sort. I would certainly like to improve the cartridge, so could you suggest one at about £100-150? Perhaps a Denon DL110, Ortofon 510/530 or Grado Prestige Gold. Should I stick with moving magnet or consider moving coil?

I would also like to link this system into an adjoining room. The new listening room is large at 30x14x9 feet, so I think floorstanding speakers would be a good bet to fill the room.

*Martin Tomms, Worcester*

The cartridges you have suggested are all good performers

with the Denon (£70) and Grado (£149) really shining. You should also consider a Linn K9, although the Grado will give you a sound more attuned to the Audio Technica (but significantly better).

Multi-room is always a tricky one, with QED's Systemline range being one of the only ones in which you can use your present amplifier, but make sure you go to a reputable dealer for installation as it can get

very expensive if it goes wrong. A Systemline installation into a second room (with full control of components), including cabling, can start from as little as £400 – a lot cheaper than a second system. Other solutions to have a look at include Cyrus and Linn Knekt.

In terms of your speakers, the Revolution R2s would do a good job of filling the space and should complement your system very well.



Tannoy R2.



## KEEP IT GREEN WITH HI-FI CHOICE!

The reader whose letter is our Query of the Month will receive one of these stylish, lovingly crafted and, dare we say it, groovy green clothing items courtesy of – well, us.

## CHOICE CHALLENGE



I have a budget of £350 to spend on an amp and speakers (preferably floorstanders). I am into '70s disco, rock and '60s music (Beatles, Bee Gees, Led Zep etc). Can you help?

*Richard Pike, via e-mail*

As our powers of clairvoyance are running at an all-time low this month (too much Millennial cheer!), we will assume that you have a fairly neutral sounding CD player. You're also pushing the envelope somewhat if you're after an amp *and* floorstanders for £350, but no challenge is too big for us at *Hi-fi Choice*!

To stay within budget and get the

best sound for your money, it would be most sensible to abandon the floorstander idea. You will get a better sound if you invest about £150 on a pair of standmount speakers and about £200 on an amplifier.

On the amp front, we'd have a listen to Harman/Kardon's HK610 amplifier (£180), Sony TA-FB730R (£199), NAD C3 (£199) and AMC's 3025a (£140). All are fine amplifiers and offer superb value for money. The speakers will be more down to personal preference, but try to listen to the Acoustic Energy Aegis One (£149.95), Heybrook Heylette B (£199), KEF Q15 (£199) and Mission 771 (£169.90).

**Harman/Kardon HK610.**



## CONNECTION CAPERS

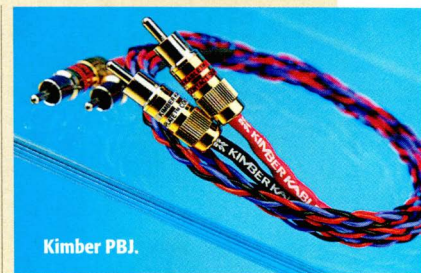


I have a pair of original Linn Kans driven by a Creek CAS4040 amp (both of early/mid '80s manufacture) and a Marantz CD46. I'm using Ixos 6003 speaker cable and the excuse for an interconnect that came with the CD player (plus a DIN adaptor).

The system sounds pleasant enough, but is lacking in bass and detail, and gets a bit muddy with complex music. I've had conflicting advice as to what to upgrade first – some say a guttier amp, others a better CD player (and, of course, a proper interconnect!). In an ideal world I would do both, but finances only really allow for one at present, with a limit of £350.

What would your choice be? I would require that either the amp or CD player has a headphone socket and I also need an MM phono input.

*Nigel Morrison, Clevedon*



Kimber PBJ.

A host of things are giving you the muddy sound, not least the nasty interconnect that came with your CD player. Our first upgrade would be the interconnect: try listening to a SonicLink Silver Pink (£35), or, at a slightly higher price, a Kimber PBJ (£61).

Beyond the interconnect, we'd look at the amplifier and then the CD player. Try listening to a Cyrus SL (£398): the expressive midband should suit your Kans very well. Other amps that deserve a listen are the Magnum IA170 (£330) and Rotel RA-971 MkII (£225).



OUT WITH THE OLD



Arcam Alpha 7SE.



I wonder if you could give me some quick advice. A shop nearby is selling an ex-dem Quad-77 Main CD player for less than £350. Is this player still worth the price, or should I spend my money on the new Arcam 7SE? In other words, is the older model still so good that it sounds better than an up-to-date budget CD player?

The rest of my system consists of KEF Reference 2 speakers and Primare A20 MkII amplifier. The latter was bought thanks to your review. My listening range starts with Elgar and finishes with U2. I am also a little afraid that the Quad player will be a little soft for my equipment.

Yoram Pomer, via e-mail

The simplest answer is to have a listen for yourself. The Quad 77

was a thoroughbred CD player, but not as dynamic as some, whereas the Arcam is a real star at its price point. Whether or not the Quad is better is up to your ears, but the sound is relatively laid back. The Arcam is far more involving, but will lack some of the Quad's detail, so the choice really comes down to personal preference.

The Quad is more like your amp and speakers, but the combination might end up being a little too smooth and sophisticated, and lack the edge that brings music to life.

In many respects neither is really in the same league as your Primare and KEF Reference 2 combination, though, and you should really be looking in the realms of the Meridian 506 (£1,100), Densen Beat B-400 (£1,000) or NAD Silverline S500 (£1,100) to get a well balanced result.

RINGING THE CARTRIDGE CHANGES



Denon DL110.



I own a Dual 1229 turntable and have recently received a Shure M95ED cartridge from someone and want to know if it's any good. If I buy a new cartridge, such as a Shure V15VxMR, will it make a big difference?

Alexander C Ionescu, Romania

Only your ears can tell if the cartridge you have is any good! If you like it, then it is, but if not, it will

need changing. A new cartridge will make a difference, but without details about the rest of your system, we can only speculate on suitable choices. We rarely look at Shure cartridges because they tend to appeal to the DJ market rather than hi-fi, but let your ears be the judge. We'd look at a Goldring 1012GX (£79) or a Denon DL110 (£70), both are decent upgrades on the Shure. A big difference for sure.

TURNTABLE WOES



My system consists of a Musical Fidelity A-100 amp, Rotel RCD-971 CD player and Linn Nexus speakers. All cables are Linn (K-400 bi-wire speaker cable and Linn interconnects). I recently added a Pro-Ject 6 turntable with a Grado Prestige Gold cartridge which sits on a granite slab on top of a Sound Organisation Z560 support.

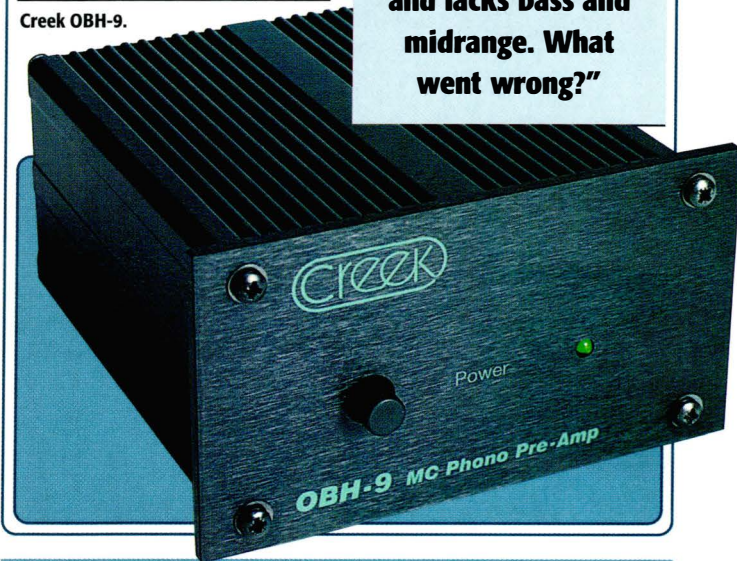
The sound is satisfactory on CD (although it could do with a bit more presence and space), but the turntable worries me. Although rhythmic, the sound is rather lightweight and lacks bass and midrange. What went wrong? Is it the cartridge, the MF built-in phono stage or is it something else? Is the amp still considered good even though it's ten years old?

Stefan Ketels, Belgium

The A-100, while still a good amp, is probably the source of your problems. It would be worth investing in a good phono stage if you can't afford to upgrade completely. A Creek OBH-9 (£129) would extend the bass considerably and should do a good job of clearing up the problems with the turntable. As you're not completely satisfied with CD either, why not try upgrading your amp to an Arcam Alpha 8R (£380)? That will transform your entire sound and give you the presence and space that you would like on CD as well as vinyl.

**"The Pro-Ject turntable worries me. Although rhythmic, the sound is rather lightweight and lacks bass and midrange. What went wrong?"**

Creek OBH-9.



CD CONUNDRUM



I have recently purchased a Talk Electronics Storm 1 and found a great improvement in the performance of my system. My Sony CDP-XE510 CD player is now the obvious weak link in the system, so I am looking to upgrade on a budget of about £300.

I was thinking about a Sony CDP-XB930E or Arcam Alpha 7 (or Alpha 7SE if the funds can stretch that far!).

Robert Gaskell, via e-mail

You've got a hard decision to make, and it looks like you'll be auditioning for a little while yet! There are several top quality players between £300 and £400, with Rotel's RCD-971 giving the models you mention cause for concern. The two players that you've suggested are very fine, but the Arcam should work slightly better with your amp (although playing with the filters in the Sony may also create a suitable result). The control and detail that either player will bring to your system will be a real upgrade to listening pleasure.

Sony CDP-XB930E.





**QUIETLY DOES IT**



My current system is a Yamaha RXV-592 Pro-Logic receiver, Marantz CD-67SE Mk II CD player (Cambridge Audio Pacific interconnect and Cable Talk 3.1 speaker cable) and Mordaunt-Short MS-6 Floorstanders in a 4x7 metre room.

How would I gain the greatest improvement by upgrading? Assuming my CD player is still adequate, where would £500 be best spent? My thoughts included Marantz PM-66 KI Signature or Arcam Alpha 8P power amp. My tastes are mainly rock and acoustic pop, but at low volumes due to neighbours.

*P Marley, Cheshire*

Upgrading your receiver to a hi-fi amplifier will make the greatest

impact on the system as a whole, although you'll probably want to look at the speakers and speaker cable in time.

If you need to listen at low volumes, then you need a powerful, dynamic amplifier and for that reason we'd look somewhere other than the PM-66 KI Signature. We'd listen to an Arcam Alpha 9 (£499), NAD 317 (£399.95), Denon PMA-1500R (£500) or Magnum IA 200 (£599). All are powerful amps that will allow you to listen at low volumes yet retain most of the detail offered at higher volume levels.

A good choice for your Mordaunt-Shorts would be the Arcam: its smooth performance should reduce the brightness that can occur when mixing Mordaunt-Short speakers and a Marantz CD player such as yours.



**NAD 317.**

**WHY NO RECEIVERS?**



I am shopping around with the intention of buying an AV receiver and a CD player (and speakers of course). I will be choosing between Marantz and Harman/Kardon. I was also wondering

why there are no reviews available for receivers in *Hi-Fi Choice*? *Pim Bezemer, Netherlands*

We don't tend to review receivers because they usually do not compare favourably with their straight amplifier counterparts. The extra circuitry required for a tuner inside an amplifier (and the process of creating the tuner sound) tends to coarsen the sound of the main amplifier unless properly shielded.

The modern receiver is increasingly equipped for surround sound with multiple channels, processing etc which compromises matters further. But there are some good ones nonetheless, such as Marantz's SR5000 (£500) tested last month.

**"The modern receiver is increasingly equipped for surround sound with multiple channels, processing etc which compromises matters further."**



**Marantz SR5000.**

**AMP MUSIC**



**Primare A30.1.**



I need some advice on my selection of amps for my B&W Nautilus 805 speakers. I was impressed by their sonic capabilities, but they were driven by a pair of Mark Levinson pre/power amps (way out of my budget) at the dealer's demo. My budget is around \$1,200 and I mostly listen to Jazz, vocals, soundtracks and rock. My room is small at about four metres square.

*K Hoosy, Singapore*

Sadly, \$1,200 wouldn't get you very far in the UK, but as prices are lower in Singapore, let's assume you would have about £1,500 to spend in the UK. Perhaps the perfect amp for you is the Primare A30.1 (£1,499.99), capable of driving large loads. The Primare will integrate well with the B&Ws to create a spacious, open sound, bringing out plenty of subtle detail and giving a coherent, unobtrusive yet greatly involving sound. But we don't know about your source...

**WHAT'S THE NAIM OF THE GAME?**



My current system is a Naim 32.5/Snaps/160 (32.5 has been upgraded to NAC72 specifications), a Rotel RCD-965BX and Wilmslow Audio Studio Monitor II speakers on matching veneered wooden stands.

When I first purchased a Naim amplifier, a 42.5/110 combination, it was using an LP12 and Linn Kans. As I lived alone, I didn't concern myself with how much space the equipment occupied. Now that I have children, the vinyl has had to go and

of newer designs? I have about £800 to spend on adding to my equipment, plus the proceeds of any equipment sold. I have a 16x14 feet room (including bay window) and listen to mainly pop, rock and Motown.

*Ron Bagshot, Skipton*

The basic sonic characteristics of Naim equipment hasn't really changed, although the lower end of the range is significantly brighter than older models.

Your amplification is still perfectly good: if you're happy with the system,



the living room has diminished in size. I'm now bothered about the way the system looks and the space it occupies, and would often appreciate headphones.

Due to the move away from Linn/Naim-type systems, I'm interested in your opinion regarding what I should do to change my system. I realise that this will not be an 'upgrade'.

I have auditioned a Naim CD3, but found little improvement over the Rotel, and a Micromega T-DAC and T-Drive were good, but expensive.

In your opinion, has Naim altered the basic sonic character of its equipment with the advent

of something better looking, the easy answer is to change the whole system. The Cyrus range looks like a lifestyle product, particularly with the Hark rack and offers the convenience of a mini with its bus system.

As regards an upgrade, the weakest link is the CD player (and make sure you buy a good interconnect – it can make all the difference), so try listening to a NAD Silverline S500 (£1,100), Arcam Alpha 9 (£799), Talk Electronics Thunder 3 (£999.95) or Rotel RCD-991 (£750). All of these players will give you masses of extra detail and soundstaging and should counter any brightness that you might get from the Naim amplification.



**NET SHOPPING NIGGLES**



Having just purchased a pair of Tannoy Revolution R2 speakers 'blind' over the Internet, I have to say that I find them to be very thin and severely lacking in bass.

The review in your magazine (HFC 193) suggested that the bass has a "fine weight and scale", but that seems totally lacking in my set-up. My equipment consists of a Marantz CD-52 MkII CD player and Denon PMA-250 amplifier (bi-wired).

I'm not sure whether it's my equipment or the comparison with my old Mission 733s that makes the Tannoys seem light. What could I do to improve the system in terms of overall bass weight?

I still have the Missions and am currently undecided as to which speakers to keep. How much difference does running in speakers really make?

*Nigel Kneale, via e-mail*

**Pioneer A-607R.**



Running in will make a marked difference to the sound, as the speaker diaphragms need time and play to stretch and 'free up': this will result in greater bass weight. However, after your Mission 733s, many speakers would sound somewhat lightweight!

Although you can save by buying over the Web, your case illustrates the importance of visiting a reputable dealer and auditioning kit.

If you are after more weight, you will probably need to upgrade your Denon amp. Try listening to a Pioneer A-607R (£300) and a NAD C340 (£269.95) with your Tannoys and CD player to find out if an amp upgrade would solve the problem. Both amplifiers are far more powerful and should give the Tannoy R2s much more power in the bass.

The other answer is that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. If you were happy with your original speakers, then why not switch back?

**THE RIGHT STUFF**



My system consists of a Rotel RCD-930AX CD player, Rotel RA-930AX MkII amplifier and Mission 732 loudspeakers. I am quite happy with my system, but think that more expensive speakers like Dynaudio's Audience 40s would be a big improvement. I went to a local dealer and he told me that they are not the best choice for rock music because they lack bass and he suggested Tannoy's Revolution R2 floorstanders, but another salesman said that the Tannoys sound awful with classical music.

I like a warm and detailed sound with as little colour as possible. My room is only 2x5 metres and I listen to Aphex Twin, Beck, Pixies and classical music.

*Nico, Belgium*

If you are quite happy with your system, why would you want to change it? A better pair of speakers would enhance your set up, but

isn't necessarily the place to start an upgrade path. You've also been badly informed by the dealer you visited! The Dynaudios are definitely not bass light and the Tannoys do tend to perform well with classical music, if not as well as some. The Dynaudios would be a good choice for your requirements, and should partner your Rotels nicely as an excellent upgrade from the Missions.

**Dynaudio Audience 40.**



**CRANK UP THE BUDGET**



My current system is a Marantz CD-63 MkII KI Signature CD player, PM-66 KI Signature amplifier and B&W CDM2 speakers on Atacama SE24 stands. I have Audioquest Quartz 3 interconnect and Nordost Super Flatline Gold speaker cable. I am about to move the system into a larger room (4.5x3 metres) and intend to upgrade over the next six to nine months. I have a budget of up to £3,000.

I want to change the speakers first and am considering floor-standers such as B&W P4, Castle Severn 2, Mission 752 Freedom or Tannoy Revolution R3. Would any of these speakers be suitable for my rooms (my current room is 3x3 metres) or should I stick with standmounts?

As for the CD and amp, I will probably audition from the Marantz, Arcam and Cyrus range, but am open to suggestions. *Chris Bright, Swansea*

To be perfectly honest, Chris, it's probably not the best idea to start

with the speakers as they are the main source of coloration in a system and, as such, should be the last addition to a system. When upgrading your amp and CD player, try to have a listen to the Roksan Caspian range (amp is £795 and CD £895), Arcam Alpha 9C/10P (£399/599) and Alpha 9 CD player (£799.90), and the Musical Fidelity X-A100R (£999) and E624 (£500) CD player.

The speakers that you mention aren't really an upgrade, more a sidestep from your current equipment. Try increasing the budget for speakers a little: if you have £3,000 to spend in the long term, then spending £500 now will mean you'll have to upgrade again in nine months time.

The B&W CDM 1-SE would give you a significant improvement with its wonderful midband transparency. Other speakers to audition would be the ProAc Studio 100 (£699) and, slightly further up, the Dynaudio Contour 1.3 Mk II (£1,198). All these speakers should make your music a joy.



**ProAc Studio 100.**

**ELEGANT BLASTS FROM THE PAST**



I would like your advice on speakers. Some years ago I bought a pair of Rogers LS6 speakers on the recommendation of a London hi-fi dealer (following a demonstration). I had intended to go for a 'flavour of the month' model which as it turned out didn't suit my taste. The Rogers LS6 was the one for me with its full and elegant sound. Now that Rogers is no more, is there a speaker manufacturer in the UK with that elegant type of sound? Would I be right in thinking that Harbeth or Spendor may lean in that direction? I realise that I would have to spend more today, maybe £600-1,300. *Keith Wilding, Germany*

If you like your current speakers, why do you want to change? Harbeth and Spendor have a relatively similar sound to your old Rogers, but that sound is quickly going out of fashion nowadays. It is always a challenge to recommend speakers without knowing the rest of the system, but here goes! We can create a similar sound

throughout the price range, but none will come close to Zingali's Overture 2S (£1,975), giving you a wonderfully detailed and open sound thanks to a well worked horn tweeter. Within your price range, the Celestion A1 and A2 would give a fairly similar sound with a detailed but slightly laid-back presentation. Otherwise the Spendor, Harbeth and Ruark ranges would be well worth listening to.

**Zingali Overture 2S.**





## FORGIVE AND FORGET



I want to forget my current system and build a new one. I have about £800-1,000 to spend – what would you recommend? I like a warm sound for pop and acoustic music and have an average sized room.

Yonni Aroussi, Israel

There's nothing like a good new system to forget a bad old one! You should have a listen to a few set-ups from a reputable dealer to get an idea of the sound you like. If that isn't possible, then a combination of Arcam Alpha 8R amplifier (£379.90), Arcam Alpha 7SE CD player (£349.90) and Heybrook Heylette B Speakers (£199) would give you a great



Heybrook Heylette B.

starter system at about £930 (plus cables). If you spend about £100-£150 on cables, for example Kimber PBJ (£61) and Kimber 4PR (£65/5m pair) or van den Hul PB5 (£49.95/0.8m pair) and QED Qudos Silver (£5/m), you won't go far wrong. The Arcam and Heybrook combination would give you a warm, rich sound with plenty of detail for acoustic music and enough thump for dance. Add the Kimber cables and you'll have all that plus an added dimension of space and dynamics.

**“The Arcam and Heybrook combination would give you a warm, rich sound with plenty of detail for acoustic music and enough thump for dance.”**

## SYSTEM SHOCKS



Roksan Caspian CD.



I have an old and somewhat dated hi-fi system comprising of a Quad 33/303 pre and power amp, Quad FM3 tuner, Quad ELS57 speakers, Rogers sub-woofer, Nakamichi BX2 cassette deck, Pioneer PD102 CD player and ERA turntable.

My quandary is that I am interested in improving this system, but I'm on a budget and not sure of the best approach.

A more dramatic move would be to sell everything and buy a package from somewhere like Richer Sounds, but a local dealer suggested I might be disappointed in the long run as I could only afford about £600-£700.

Jeremy Scothern

Your weak link here is the CD player and possibly the cables. Your

local dealer is quite right in saying that selling your present kit won't get you very far and, while the new gear will look prettier, it's not likely to sound better.

To be in keeping with the rest of your system, you'll have to spend a fair amount on a CD player and should be looking at a player such as Roksan's Caspian (£895) or Rotel's RCD-991 (£750).

There are a few players at lower prices that are worth a listen, though: Sony's XB930E (£299), Cyrus dAD 1.5 (£400) and Musical Fidelity E624 (£500) should all fit well with your system. The important thing is system matching, and it's essential that you visit a good dealer so you can take the products home to try *in situ*.

## NEW FIRE CRACKERS



I used to own a pair of Epos ES14 loudspeakers and a Meridian 200/3 CD player with a Heybrook Signature pre/power/power supply (the one with two volume controls!) The speakers and CD player met their demise in an unexpected house fire, which was a real shame as I thoroughly enjoyed the sound of the system. I was thinking of changing the speakers due to their size, so perhaps it was well timed! I have about £1,700 to spend on the two including cabling.

Christopher Wray, via e-mail

Given that your Heybrook amps are no longer made, it would be worth taking them along with you when

auditioning ancillaries. £1,700 is probably a sensible amount to replace your previous equipment. If you want a similar sound, ES14s are still in production, although their baby brothers, ES12s (£499), are somewhat more detailed and provide better imaging. Another speaker to consider would be Dynaudio's Audience 50 (£578), which will combine very well with a Meridian CD player.

Meridian's recent update to the 506 CD player has given it an even livelier and more detailed performance. The combination of Epos and Meridian gives a very detailed and lively midrange to really let you enjoy vocals, acoustic and classical.

Meridian 506.



## MAKING THE GRADE



I've recently upgraded my CD player to a Rotel RCD-991 and I think the rest of my system isn't up to scratch. The Rotel is hooked up to a NAD C340 amp and Mission 702e speakers with Cable Talk Monitor 2 interconnect and a Talk 3.1 Bi-Wire speaker cable.

I'm therefore searching for an amp and speakers in the £400-£500 price bracket. Although the Rotel is £750 in the UK, it's only £500 here in Australia. I have either the NAD 319 or Marantz PM-66 KI Signature amps in sight and am considering Mission 773e, 774, Tannoy Revolution R3 or B&W 603S2s for the speakers. I was wondering if the 774 is a great improvement over the 773e? I also don't think that upgrading the interconnects is worthwhile – what do you think?

Kenny Cheong, Australia

There are several upgrades you can make right now, first the amp and speakers, but also the interconnect and speaker cable.

If we start with the amp, at the lower end of your price range, an

Arcam Alpha 8R (£379) would be a good choice, but to make the most of your new CD player, we'd probably spend the whole budget and more besides.

We'd listen to a Densen Beat B-100 (£650) and Arcam Alpha 9 (£500), both will work well with the Rotel and give you enough power to effectively drive the floorstanders you suggested.

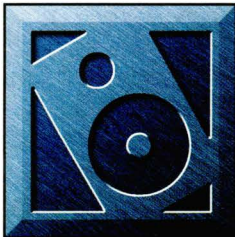
If we assume that you've spent around £500 or more on the amp, we'll try to keep the speaker prices down a little! The speakers that you've suggested are very bass-heavy speakers that are well suited to heavy rock or dance music. The B&W in particular has a massive bass, but controls the rest of the music slightly better than its counterparts, as long as you don't have to listen quietly. Other speakers you might want to consider are the Rega Juras (£475) with their superb dynamics and decent bass.

And yes they make a difference. Make sure you invest in good quality speaker cable, such as the Kimber 4PR (£65/5m pair) or the QED Qudos Silver (£5/m) and an interconnect such as Kimber PBJ (£61) or Supra EFF-ISL (£79.95).



Densen Beat B-100.





# PAUL MILLER'S OASIS OF SANITY

**Paul Miller** gets sensitive about some of the claims made by loudspeaker manufacturers.

**A**longside the dubious power output specifications cited for many a mini and micro-system, loudspeaker sensitivity figures are also fertile ground for the manufacturer's imagination. This is one reason why we compare the loudspeaker sensitivity quoted by the maker alongside our practical measurement in all group tests, this issue included. So why is there so often a big gap between what is specified and

the enthusiast is concerned, will be a price that is well worth paying.

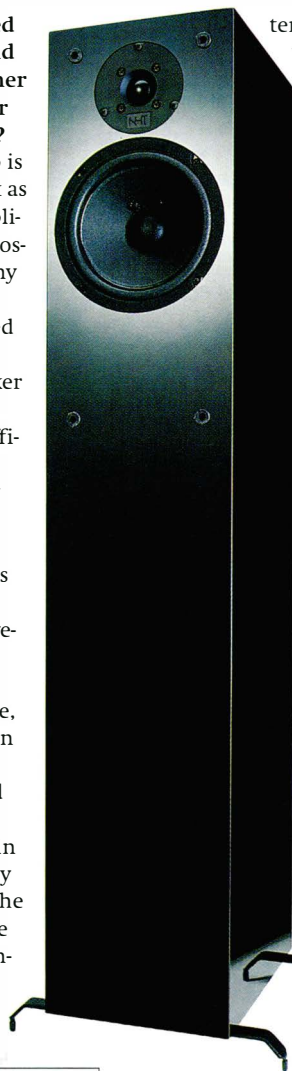
Naturally, the whole situation is made murkier still by the ambiguous manner in which figures for loudspeaker sensitivity are often quoted. Most manufacturers would accept that sensitivity is a measure of loudness (or SPL - Sound Pressure Level) achieved by a speaker for a given electrical voltage. Typically, we would apply 2.83V across the speaker

**"The whole situation is made murkier still by the ambiguous manner in which figures for speaker sensitivity are often quoted."**

what is achieved in practice - and why is the former typically higher than the latter?

Specmanship is the answer. Just as next year's amplifier could not possibly be rated any lower than, say, the 50W claimed for this year's model, so speaker manufacturers often find it difficult to justify a lower sensitivity for their new range of boxes.

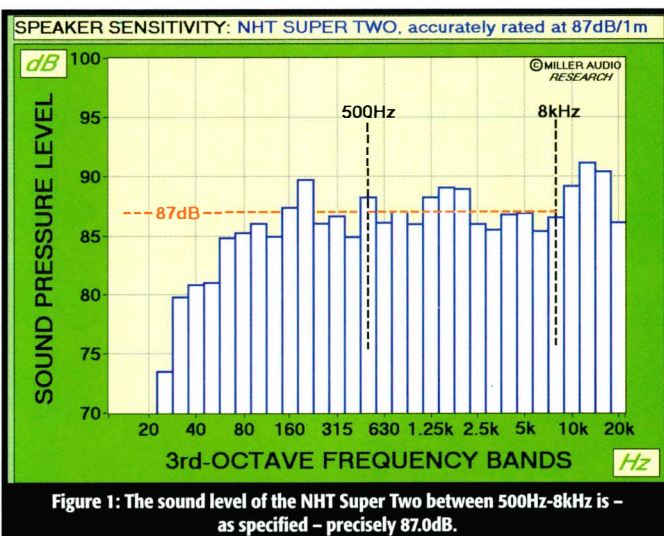
All of which is rather daft, because improvements to the speakers' frequency response, to bass extension and easing the 'load' presented to the attached amplifier may, in many cases, only be achieved at the expense of some small loss in sensitivity. And that, as far as



terminals and measure the SPL at 1m distance, taking care to position the speaker uniformly away from reflective boundaries like the floor, ceiling and walls.

### FREQ OUT

If this voltage is applied at a single frequency, say 1kHz, then the measured SPL is appropriate only at this frequency and gives us little or no real idea of how 'loud' the speaker will sound in practice. Furthermore, if there's a small peak in the speaker's response around 1kHz, then the returned sensitivity will be that bit higher - which is precisely what some companies rely upon. Better, instead, to drive the speaker at 2.83V using a noise-like signal



that covers the entire audio-band and then compute the speaker's average SPL across a suitable frequency range.

For our measurements, I've created a program that divides the audible range into third-octave bands and then calculates the mean output, in dB, from 500Hz to 8kHz (between the vertical dotted lines on Figure 1). As this is the region to which our ears are most acutely tuned, the figures for loudspeaker sensitivity are directly related to how loud the speaker will sound in 'real life', all else being equal.

By this method, the usual sensitivity of today's speakers is between 87-88dB for 2.83V/1m, with high sensitivity designs achieving more than 90dB. It's a reliable and repeatable technique that, having stored the data for all speakers tested during the past three years or so, allows precise comparisons to be made between competing loudspeakers. So let's take a look at some examples...

### MAN ON A MISSION

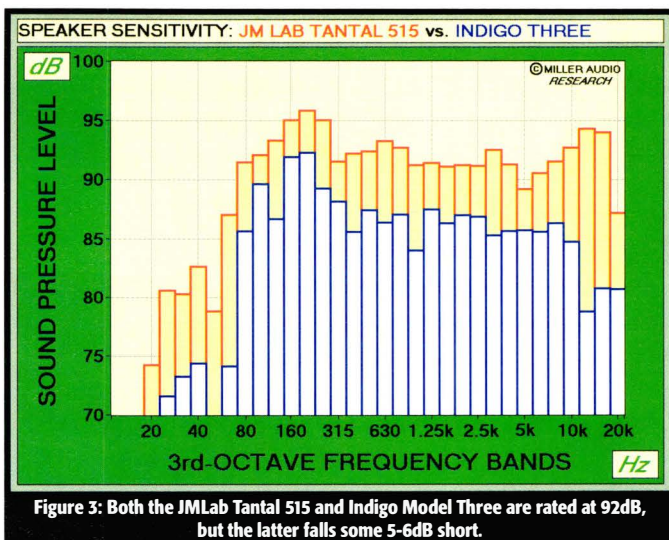
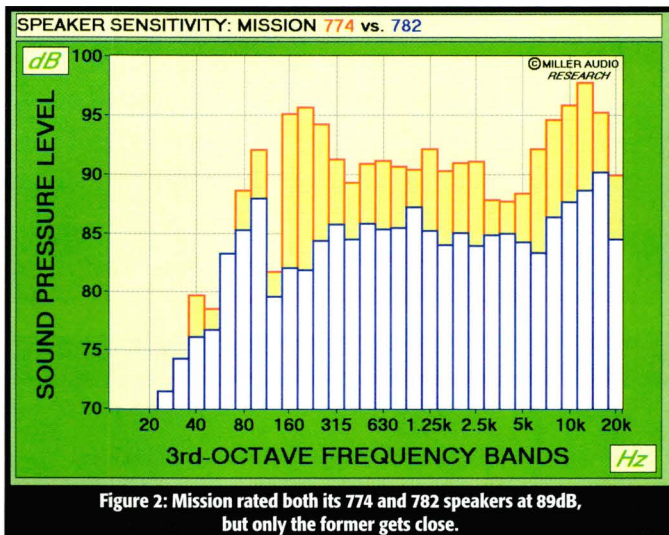
First up to bat is Mission, which succeeded in producing the very sensitive model 774

**NHT Super Two (left)**  
**Mission 782 (right)**  
**Indigo Three (far right)**

way back in issue 183. This speaker was rated at 89dB/1m but, thanks to the enhanced output between 500Hz-2.5kHz of its Aerogel bass/mid driver,







actually delivered a thumping 90.4dB. A change of drivers later, and the 782 reviewed in this issue still offers a remarkably similar response 'shape' to its predecessor, but is obviously less sensitive.

Incidentally, you can clearly see the exposed bass (60-100Hz) of the 782 that's mentioned in Paul's listening test (see p29).

Mission, meanwhile, has held on to the 89dB specification, although a figure of just 85dB is evidently nearer the mark. In practice, it's the difference between the sound level achievable with a 20W and 70W amplifier, a loss in sensitivity traded for a speaker load that's less current-hungry than the 774 and a narrowband response that's far

smoother. Which is why the 'quieter' 782 has been awarded a swingtag.

Of course, as the 782 is an easier load than the 774, then it'll be drawing less current from the



amplifier to sustain the 2.83V of the test signal. Historically, the value of 2.83V is chosen because it represents a power output of 1W into a nominal 8 Ohm load (Power =  $V^2/R$ ).

In *Oasis* in HFC 179, we saw that a 'real' loudspeaker load typically varies quite wildly with frequency. As a result, neither power nor current are ideally suited as indicators of speaker sensitivity. In fact, power is used to determine loudspeaker efficiency, which is a ratio of electrical power input to the acoustical power output by the speaker.

Now you can see the benefits of storing every bit of data from our computer-based measurement regime. This data suggests a 'real-life' sensitivity rather closer to 86.3dB for the Indigo, some 5-6dB short of the claimed spec. Just assuming both speakers were of an equivalent load (which they're not, exactly) you'd need to upgrade from a 30W to a 100W amp to bridge the gap in loudness between these two speakers.

Naturally, any modestly-equipped manufacturer could provide a realistic and meaningful specification for the

## "Although a sensitive speaker will almost invariably be an efficient speaker, the two terms are not interchangeable."

Loudspeaker efficiencies are of the order of just 1-5 per cent, the remaining 95-99 per cent being lost as heat in the voice coils, cones and driver suspension. So, although a sensitive speaker will almost invariably be an efficient speaker, the two terms are not interchangeable.

### PLAYING THE RATES

So, who are the most reliable manufacturers when it comes to facts and figures? In my experience, you can always rely on B&W to provide a specification that matches reality. Its sensitivity figures are usually true to within a fraction of a dB, so its under-specification of the Nautilus 805 by 1.6dB (this issue) is extremely unusual. In this instance, the company's doing itself an injustice – rather like rating a 70W amplifier as a 50 Watter!

JMLab is also one of the few producers of genuinely high sensitivity speakers not to over-inflate its ability. The Tantal 515 (HFC 183), Tantal 507 (issue 193) and Cobalt 815 (see p34) are rated by JMLab at 91.5dB, 90.5dB and 91dB respectively, and achieved 91.6dB, 90.2dB and 90.5dB respectively in our tests. Impressive and consistent results by any standard.

In comparison, the third-octave response of the Indigo Model Three (see p28), with its claimed 92dB sensitivity, is plotted against the true 91.5dB output of the aforementioned JMLab Tantal 515 (issue 183).

sensitivity of its speakers, if it so wished. In which case, we'll just have to wait until our next loudspeaker group test to see whether this *Oasis* has succeeded in tweaking the conscience of the hi-fi industry's spec-doctors.

**Do you have a subject for the *Oasis*? Please contact Paul Miller via e-mail on MILLER\_AUDIO\_RESEARCH@compuserve.com**

### GLOSSARY

- 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.
- CROSSOVER:** A simple electrical network which divides the full bandwidth signal received from the power amp, apportioning appropriate parts of the spectrum to the various drive units.
- DRIVE UNIT:** 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 electrical load that 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 audioband, where the ear is most sensitive, covering the approximate frequency span from 160Hz up to 1.5kHz.
- PRESENCE:** Critical section of the band between midrange and treble.
- SENSITIVITY:** The relative loudness generated for a specific voltage input.



# 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 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



# for Value

**specialist dealer if you are searching for real hi-fi satisfaction**

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 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

**"If music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority!"**

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. The views and opinions expressed here are my own and not necessarily those of Hi-fi Choice.

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 ★★★★★

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**SW11 ORANGES & LEMONS**  
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 40 High Street  
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**Chelmsford RAYLEIGH HI-FI**  
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**INFIDELITY**  
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 01922 493499

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 6 Hotel Street  
 0116 262 3754

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 32 Gold Street, 01604 637871

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**Glasgow STEREO STEREO**  
 260 St. Vincent Street  
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# RHYTHM AND STEALTH

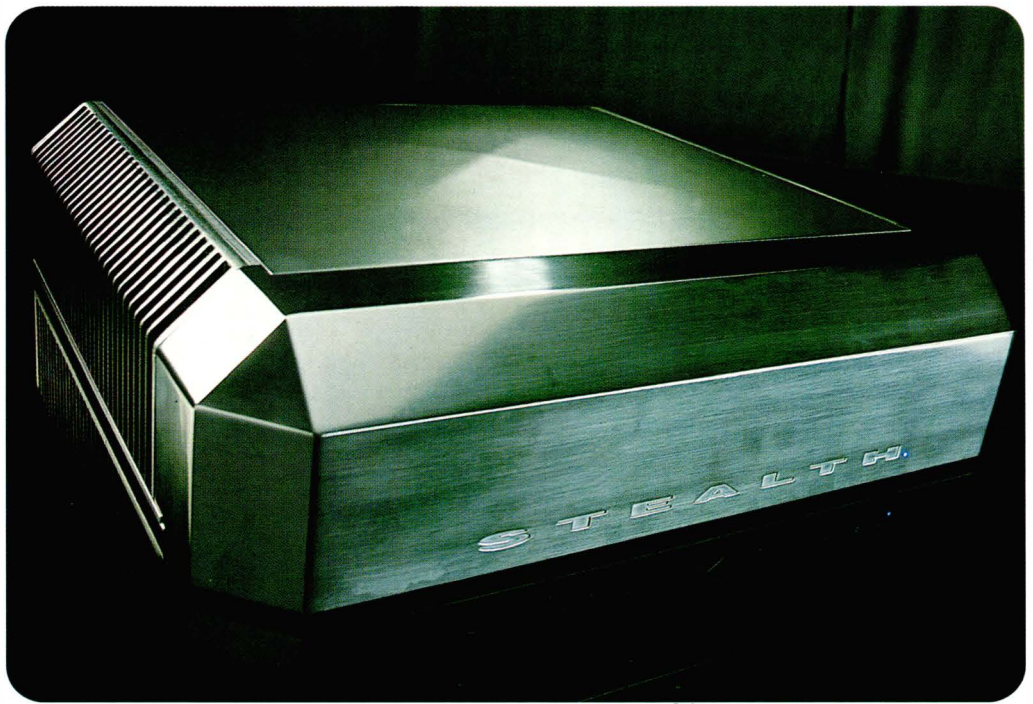
**Paul Messenger looks into the curious tale of the support builder that opted to go into high-end electronics.**

**M**ana Acoustics probably needs no introduction to serious enthusiasts, but even industry-watchers might be surprised to hear that the most talked-about company in the equipment support business is moving into the rather more sophisticated and complex world of high-end electronics.

The Mana factor first came to our attention at *Hi-Fi Choice* about ten years ago. I clearly recall my astonishment when (now editor) Jason Kennedy brought in this new turntable table from his car at the end of a day's speaker listening tests.

Although it was well known that equipment supports had a significant effect upon the sound quality of a component or system, few appreciated how dramatic these effects could be. Mana's combination of open-frame supports, hardened steel spikes and carefully tuned and damped glass shelves woke up a lot of people to the potential benefits of support furniture.

In recent years the Mana crew has further refined its system, mainly through the addition of extra levels or decoupling 'stages', each of which seems to add an incremental boost to sound quality.



As the Mana systems became more refined, so the crew became increasingly dissatisfied with the performance of the available hardware, eventually deciding, some five years ago, to start developing its own electronics. It's one of hi-fi's eternal frustrations that the

Mana's key objectives was to create an amplifier which not only sounded wonderful, but which also had significantly greater power output and headroom than the better sounding amplifiers currently around.

It didn't rush things, but set about a protracted, painstaking

designer Lawson Swinfield, who has a lot of experience on both sides of the motor industry, doing work for names such as Jaguar, Triumph and Ducati.

Mana is focusing on the design and marketing of its amplifiers, and has a much larger 'silent partner' on the manufacturing side with considerable expertise and resources. The whole thing is made using production facilities that conform to ISO 9002 standards, and Mana is determined that build quality will rival the very best.

Electronically speaking, this is essentially a simple design that pays careful attention to component selection, board layout and earthing. The manufacturer claims an output power rating of 200Watts into 4 Ohms, which is delivered by four bi-polars per channel, backed up by a massive 500VA, tightly tolerated toroid transformer and 20,000uF of capacitance.

## SOUND QUALITY

Twentysomething years ago I took on an *Amplifiers* edition of the then-A5 format *Hi-Fi Choice*, simply because I believed that amplifier sound quality differences were both real and important. At the time, general UK opinion was that such differences were mythical –

**“It's not easy to make a power amp look interesting as well as keeping it practical; someone's gone to a lot of trouble here.”**

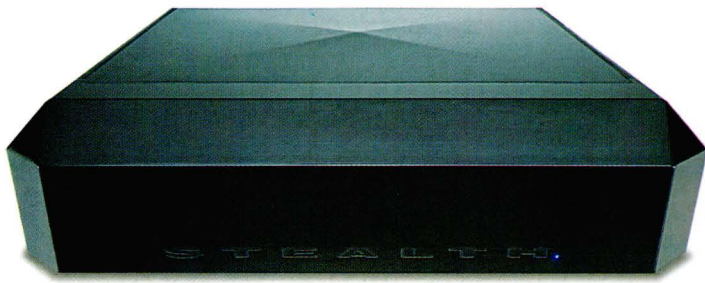
good sounding amplifiers tend to be the less powerful ones; while the more powerful ones might go louder, they tend to lack subtlety and agility. One of

development programme, which has finally born its first fruits with the Stealth power amplifiers. There are two Stealths, the MA-1 monoblock, which costs £4,800 per pair, and the MA-2 stereo model, which carries a £3,500 price tag. MA-2 purchasers will have the option to trade up to MA-1s at no net increase in price.

The name Stealth is well chosen, given the cunning angles of the casework. These at least look as though they will help to reduce the radar signature (although I didn't carry out any objective tests). It's not easy to make a power amp look interesting as well as keeping it practical, but it's clear that someone has gone to a lot of trouble here. In fact, the styling work was done by industrial







**“The midband and upper bass sound wonderfully clean, with great coherence and dynamic expression.”**

and admittedly, it was quite difficult to hear the differences between amps back in the 1970s. It's a measure of the progress hi-fi has since made that the differences today are all too obvious, but I was still surprised how 'different' the Stealth sounded from my regular power amplification.

Pinning the difference down wasn't so straightforward. My regular amplification is Naim front-to-back, and when the Stealth arrived I was temporarily using a NAP250 stereo power amp while two ten-year-old NAP135s were enjoying a (long overdue) service. That does, of course, mean that except for the support furniture, from a Mana perspective, this was very much an 'Away' fixture, to see how well the Stealths would slot into a system well known for its internal consistency.

Day one, with the Mana crew in the driving seat, was both exceptionally positive and a bit confusing. Some years back Mana had offered to build a pair of its speaker stands for my

Rehdeko RK175s. These arrived at the same time as the Stealths, and 'phase one' consisted of installing these under the speakers - with truly dramatic consequences for the sound they were delivering. The combination sounded marvellous on most material, but occasional tracks proved unexpectedly disappointing. The trouble is, I couldn't get my head around what my speakers were now doing - they were still very interesting, but in different ways, and weren't doing the things I'd bought them for.

Not without some regret, I went back to the Rehdekos' regular 'deck-chair' stands, and the familiar ground this afforded. I also powered up the now re-furbished NAP135s as a further known reference.

First and most obviously, the Stealths seem to roll off the top end somewhat, and as such there's some loss fine harmonic detail and 'air'. However, the midband and upper bass sound wonderfully clean, with great coherence and dynamic

expression, and that was the part that got under my skin, and kept sending me back to explore old record collection favourites - a sure sign of a component that's doing a lot of things very well, especially in terms of rhythm and timing.

I've tried numerous solid state power amps in my system over the years, and this is the first time I haven't felt impatient to go back to my NAP135s. I'd use one pair for a couple of days, then move to the others, enjoying each for the things it did best. (Sometimes I even had to glance over to check which I was using at the time!)

I tried a large number of different speakers, probably (ironically) spending most time with Naim's new NBL three-way (due

between large unregulated and smaller regulated supplies.

One minor point that must be mentioned concerns toroid transformer mechanical hum. I'm not sure what causes it, but my system suffers occasional intermittent bouts of this problem - most days it's fine; sometimes it just happens! It seems that the larger the toroid, the louder the hum, and in this regard the big toroid in the Stealth was more obvious than the smaller ones used by Naim. I also noticed (but only with the very high sensitivity Rehdeko speakers, under very low, late night ambient noise levels) a slight background noise at idle.

**CONCLUSIONS**

It's only right to point out that



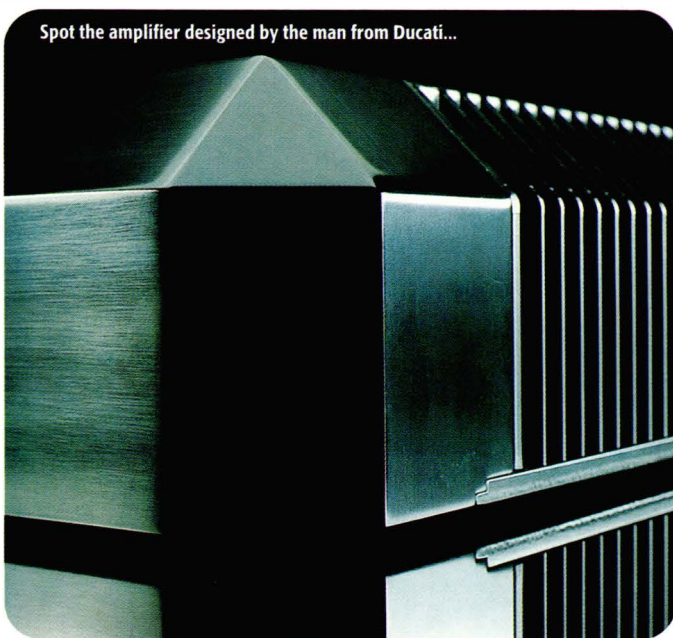
Simple design pays careful attention to component selection.

for review next month). Irony upon irony, this was probably the speaker that suited the Stealths best, especially when driving the system hard, and the combination did sterling duties delivering The Offspring at high level to a millennial party of teenagers.

On a sound level meter there wasn't a great deal of difference in the maxima the Naim and Mana amps could achieve, but the Stealths tended to be kinder and more listenable at those high levels.

However, they seemed rather less happy when I repeated the max level test using the JMLab Mezzo Utopia speakers - a lower impedance and therefore more current-hungry load. Here the Mana-driven speaker started making distressed noises at a lower level than that attained with the nominally less powerful Naim. Exactly what this means I'm not certain, but perhaps it has something to do with the difference

these were very early production samples of Mana's Stealth MA-1, but assuming they're representative, this is a very exciting new amplifier indeed. It might not be the most neutral sounding amp around, but it's certainly one of the most seductive, and something of a master in the subtle art of extracting maximum communication from your music signals.



Spot the amplifier designed by the man from Ducati...

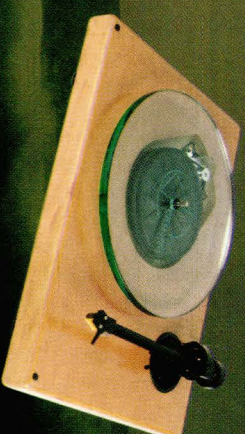
VERDICT	
<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★★
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★★
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	£4,800.00
<p><b>■ An important new entrant on the serious power amp scene, the Stealth has an uncanny ability to drag you into the music - leaving you spending half the night sitting up listening to records.</b></p> <p><b>■ 5 YEAR GUARANTEE</b></p> <p>✉ Mana Acoustics, 59 Jubilee Close, Pinner, Middx HA5 3TB ☎ (01753) 655744</p>	



# In the beginning there was darkness

Then God created Music and it was good

The new Classic series of turntables from Pro-ject  
Composer series loudspeakers from Vienna Acoustics  
Somehow the world seems a better place



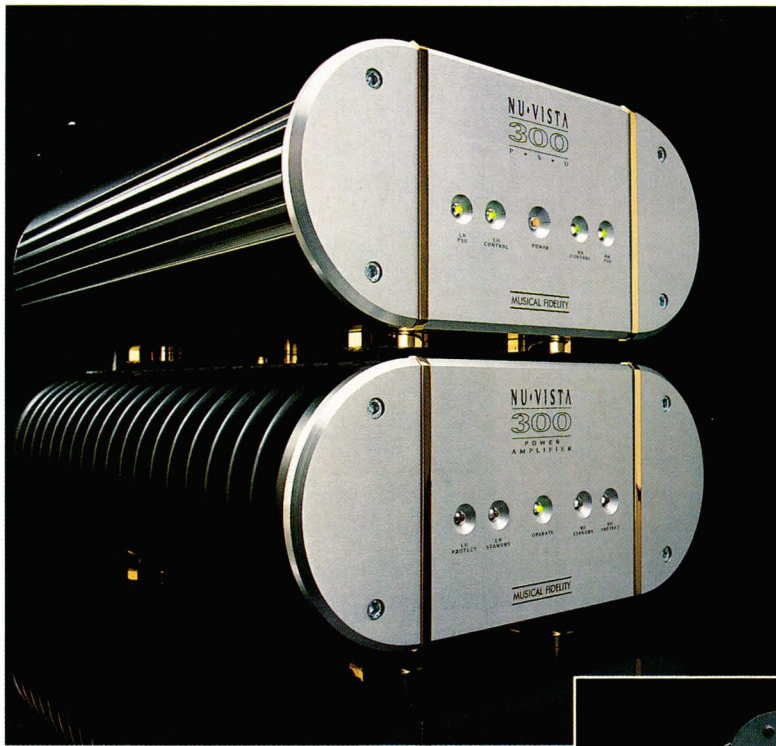
Stunningly finished in piano lacquer and beautiful veneers  
these Austrian creations are as pleasing to the eye as they are to the ear.  
Classic turntables from £360, Composer loudspeakers from £650

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e-mail: [henley.designs@virgin.net](mailto:henley.designs@virgin.net)



# MISSILE Fidelity

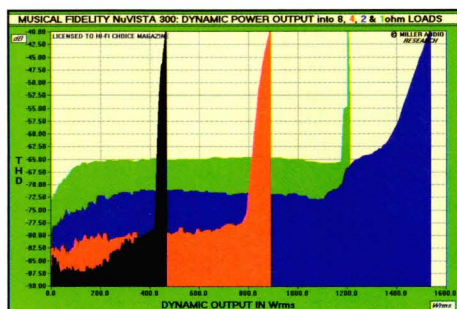
The NuVista 300 might have a military heritage, but **Paul Miller** reckons the result is lounge-friendly.



**U**nderstated excess is the hallmark of Musical Fidelity's glorious NuVista 300 power amplifier, an amplifier capable of huge outputs and yet styled with sleek curves to minimise its substantial bulk. Our picture shows two lookalike boxes, but the '300 is no monoblock. Instead, one enclosure houses independent power supplies for each channel while the other supports the amplifier proper, complete with cast heatsinks to moderate its temperature *without* slicing your fingers off should you grasp it by the sides. A small point, perhaps, but one still lost on competing 'super-amps' with razor-sharp fins.

The power supply and amplifier are linked with what, at

**The 300 has huge reserves of power.**



first sight, look like a pair of braided steel hoses but are, in fact, a set of screened leads equipped with Neutrik Powercon connectors. A thinner control cable also bridges the gap, ensuring all is well with the internal logic and activating the amplifier's soft mute, for example, if the supply is turned on or off. LEDs for the power supplies and control circuitry grace the 300PSU itself, complementing the 'standby' and 'protection' LED's that illuminate the amplifier. I should point out that if you ever see the latter flicker into life in 'normal' use, then you've either dropped a spanner across its gold-plated binding posts or are using the world's least sensitive speakers.

As you might expect, there's plenty of interesting technology behind the thick wedge of aluminium fascia. The huge power supplies, for example,

use a mix of conventional reservoir capacitors with choke regulation (a large coil or transformer). This provides an additional 'reservoir' of energy while reducing the sort of ripple commonly associated with huge power supplies. It's a technique culled from valve amplifier designs of the 40's through to the early 60's, before large value capacitors became affordable.

Which brings us onto the NuVista 300 amplifier. Named after the miniature nuvisor valve (itself some 40 years old), this



The back panels reveal the NuVista 300's true nature.

lightweight, ruggedised, metal-screened triode was originally conceived for military applications (missiles rather than amplifiers). Because of its small size and – by valve standards – very low power consumption it was also seen as a viable alternative to the fledgling transistor back in the days of the first 'portable' radio sets. Naturally, it's the unique sonic quality of this device, not to mention its novelty, that's of key interest to Musical Fidelity. In this application, the NuVista valve provides just the first stage of amplification and a 'safe' load for any preamplifier to drive, while multiple pairs of chunky bipolar Sanken power transistors provide the real muscle.

And what muscle! I measured a full 350 Watts into 8 Ohms, increasing to 467 Watts, 1.54k Watts and 1.2k Watts into

4, 2 and 1 Ohm loads, respectively, under dynamic conditions. This profile, showing the amplifier's optimal output into 2 Ohm loads (blue trace), is vividly depicted in the graph.

This huge reserve of power lends the NuVista 300 a genuinely graceful sound, one that swells to accommodate the grandest of orchestral crescendos without batting a transistorised eyelid. This easy magnificence might even sound slightly 'undynamic' when compared with lesser amplifiers. But it's important not to confuse the sound of an amplifier struggling to reproduce musical peaks (where bursts of distortion bring an 'edge' to the sound) with one like the '300 which has the capacity to handle real-world dynamics *without* adding extra distortion. As a result, it sounds smooth, effortless and equally at home with the simplicity of a solo vocalist as with the tumult of a runaway brass band.

The NuVista 300 also boasts tremendous bass control and successfully grapples with the deepest rhythms that either Leftfield or Massive Attack might bring to bear. Small speakers will often sound a little 'bigger' than you might expect while full-range boxes (like the Audio Note EII's used here) are finally driven to their full potential. The power, potency and scale of all musical styles are expounded with an illusive ease and clarity by this amplifier for, like all skilled performers, it makes the trickiest of acts seem deceptively simple.

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£3,300.00

Powerful yet silky-smooth sound with tremendous bass extension and the capacity to fulfil the demands of the most dynamic material. Regardless of volume, the NuVista 300 always manages to sound effortless.

**FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE**

(020) 8900 2999



# THE X-Phile



Can Wadia's CD player cast a spell on a die-hard analogue fan like Jason 'Spooky' Kennedy?

**K**evin Scott, proprietor of Definitive Audio in Nottingham, is one of the few tube enthusiasts I know who managed to make the transition from turntables to CD players and continue to put on spectacular demonstrations. In the past I've put this down to the extreme tube amp and horn loudspeaker combinations he sells, but there has been a third consistent factor in his systems: a top flight, one-box Wadia CD player.

From the Model 6 to the 16 and on to today's 850 and 860, Kevin's always used one of these high mass monsters. Now that I've had a chance to use the latest incarnation myself, I can see why his systems always had more than a fighting chance of success - Wadia's top single-box player is the best reason I've heard for buying CDs in a long, long time.

The latest incarnation is called 860x and it represents a fairly small change from the 860 that Paul Messenger reviewed in issue 189. While Paul clearly enjoyed the 860, he

didn't seem to get the result that I did with the 860x, so either his Naim CDS is a better player or, more likely, it gels with his Naim amplification so well that it's unlikely that any newcomer could challenge it when it comes to the rhythm and timing factor that Naim owners live and die by. The other possible explanation is

the ability to accept full 24-bit/96kHz digital inputs and the capacity to Clocklink external processors.

Having four sets of digital in and outputs and a volume control, the 860x is a preamp as well as a CD player, and as the internal DAC runs at a theoretical 24 bits (the best that can currently be achieved is 21 bits)

**"Wadia's top single-box CD player is the best reason I've heard for buying CDs in a long, long time."**

that the £5,000 that differentiates the Wadia from my CD player (Acoustic Precision Eikos) defies the law of diminishing returns. Or it could, of course, be the 'x' factor.

The new suffix on this player indicates three things. First, the player has what Wadia considers to be a higher quality clock, which is the only part of the 'x' configuration which affects its standalone performance. The other elements are

it makes sense for the player to accept the output of DVD-Video players so that the advantages of the DAD format can be appreciated.

It's an advantage which may not be fully taken due to the jitter problems that unsynchronised digital connections can suffer from, and which the third element of 'x' is designed to negate. This is the synchronising of output against input when an external processor is

used, by which they mean such rare devices as digital room or speaker equalisers.

It would seem to be a much more useful facility to have in high-end, multi-channel set-ups where standalone Dolby Digital or dts processors have to be connected to a preamp. In fact, if the 860x were a DVD player with six analogue outputs instead of two you'd have the potential for serious surround sound. But that's enough fantasy. Back in the real world, the ability to use what is effectively a form of timing feedback on a digital loop like this offers considerable flexibility for the well heeled audio experimenter.

The digital preamp factor, on the other hand, is potentially more useful. The ability to adjust full output between 0.25 and 4.4 Volts means that the 860x can be optimised for use with most power amp/speaker set-ups. Because the volume control operates on the basis that 12 digits on the display are equal to 1 bit and 6dB (ergo a single digit equals 0.5dB), the



closer you can run the output to 100 (24-bits) the higher the resolution. But removing the preamplifier from the signal path does become a viable if not necessarily practical option, should you use analogue sources as well, for instance. Analogue to digital convertors are available from Wadia at a price, but that rather goes against the grain.

Operationally the 860x isn't quite as slick as one might hope; this may be due to its computer-like flexibility, or just the price you pay for great sonic results, but as a £399 mini system is easier to use than most separates combos, so a £250 CD player is easier to use than a seven-and-a-half grand one. The only real gripes are the sometimes recalcitrant nature of the stop/open button and the narrow operating angle of the remote control.

The remote is a substantial lump, the sort of thing you would hope to get with a megabucks audio component, albeit

favourites: RCA phono and AES/EBU balanced analogue outputs combined with digital in/outs in ST glass, Toslink, XLR and BNC varieties. Wadia recommends the ST glass route, whereas the preference on these shores is for coax connections (BNC or XLR in this case) but that could be because the glass option is so rare.

#### SOUND QUALITY

As you may have guessed, the Wadia 860x proved an extremely entertaining CD player for its all too brief visit (for too brief, read anything less than a year or two). I really didn't believe CD could be as good as this player proved. The key talents in its considerable array were the ability to resolve timing, dynamics and vanishingly low-level detail. It provides a highly analytical picture yet holds the musical performance up in all its glory (or otherwise) for what it is.

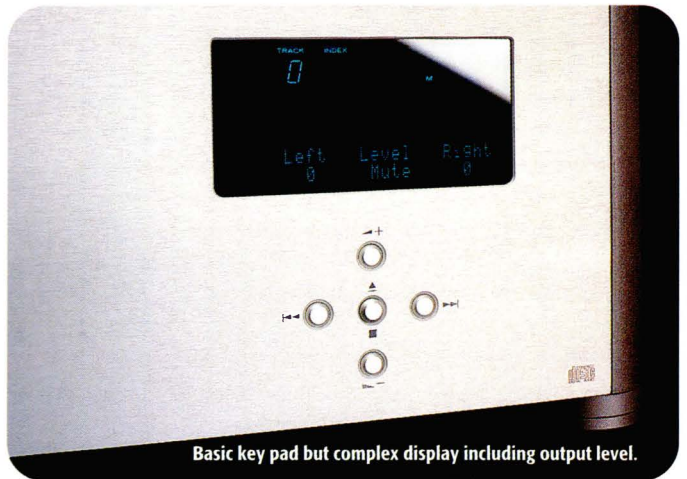
One might have thought that tracking level accurately would

**"The key talents in its considerable array were the ability to resolve timing, dynamics and vanishingly low-level detail."**

perhaps not as ergonomic as its lighter relations. But the range of facilities is certainly broad once you master navigation. Alongside the usual disc-driving options there is volume and balance control, input selection, on/off for each output, phase inversion and Clocklink configuration. I mainly used the input selector, which responded consistently if reluctantly.

The rear panel connections consist of all the American

be easy for CD players – after all, it's only 0s and 1s, as the computer fraternity is so keen to point out – but turning them into a convincing facsimile of music is a fine art, and one which few digital devices fully master. The 860x is one of the few. It is extraordinarily fluid and immediate, so much so that music feels like it's being played then and there – as long as the amp and speakers are up to the task. It seems to be able to extract all the musical



Basic key pad but complex display including output level.

energy without adding the subtle glare that tends to reveal most digital sources when they are really going for it.

In many ways the 860x is like a record player: it has the rhythm and timing qualities as well as the immediacy or energy, with truly powerful bass to boot. There aren't many turntables that can do everything this CD player can, and even fewer that have such vanishing levels of noise. Coming from an analogue die-hard that's praise indeed.

#### CONTRASTS

Another thing this player managed to do was to make my system sound better at higher levels. It overcame what I had thought to be limitations in the speakers, giving them greater apparent bandwidth and power. They always said the source is paramount, but you don't often get proof like this.

Given the preamplifying capabilities of the 860x, I experimented with and without regular preamps and got even better results (without), generally in the vein of increased subtlety in the dynamic and tonal domains. I also noticed that running the player at full

output, as opposed to 83 on the scale, had as great an impact on quality as omitting the preamp. So don't be tempted to use the Wadia for remote control volume if you're also using a pre – you won't feel the benefit.

As we had some DVD players available after last month's multi-channel extravaganza, I pulled a Pioneer into service to try out the Wadia's converting abilities. These certainly proved to enhance matters, but the difference in quality between the two players meant that a full 24/96 DAD disc didn't sound as good as a regular CD played on the Wadia, which is a surprising result. Or perhaps not, if Wadia's theories about clock syncing are correct.

#### CONCLUSION

I didn't get a chance to compare the standard 860 with this latest incarnation, but somehow I don't think the change will have brought about the difference between my findings and those of Paul Messenger. Taste and ancillaries probably explain that. What I can't explain is how good CDs can sound and to what degree the law of diminishing returns has been broken with this Wadia.

Forget new formats and find out what your software is really capable of with one of these.



Proof that the 860x is a preamp as much as a CD player.

#### VERDICT

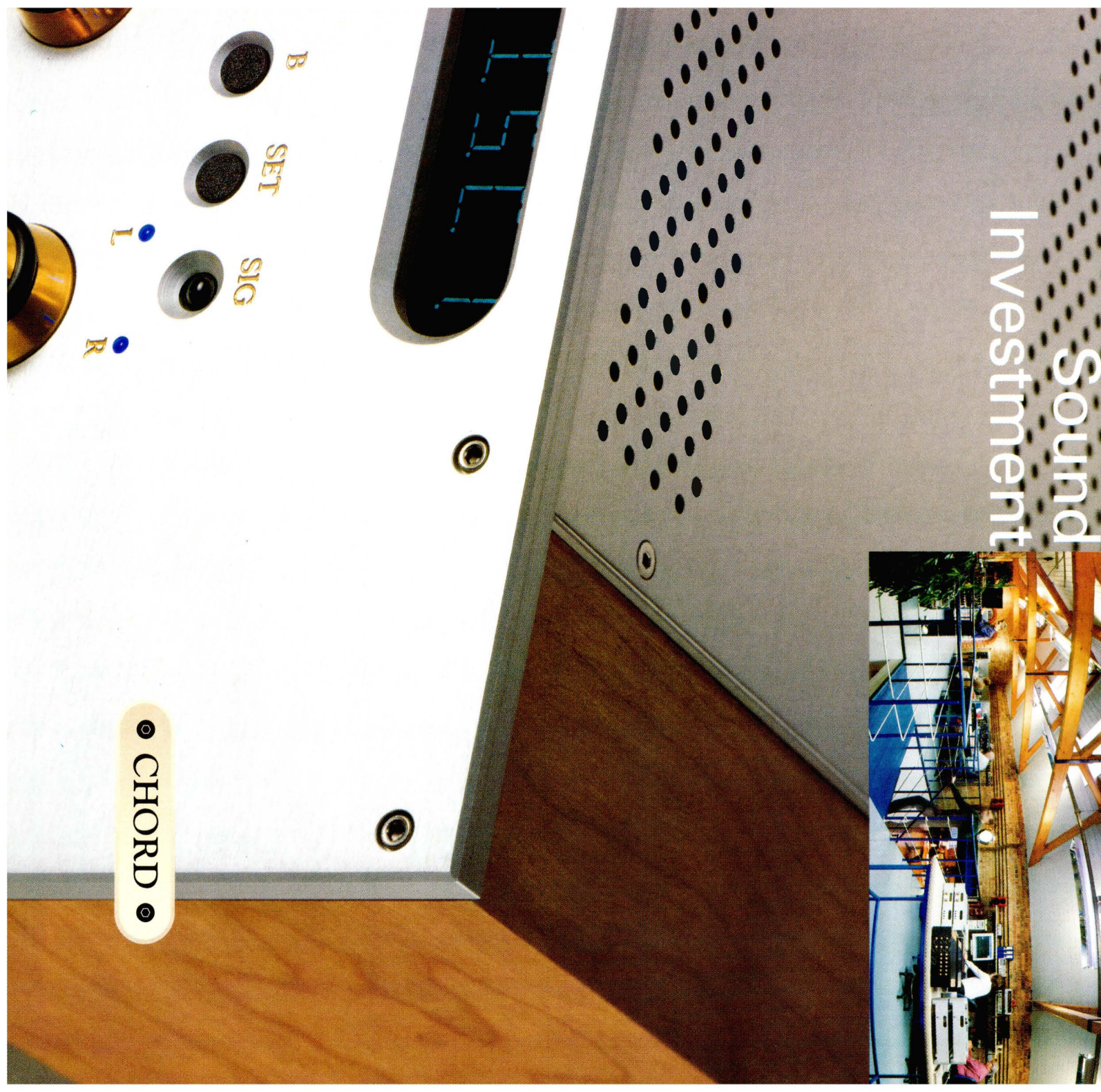
SOUND	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£7,495.00

Quite simply this player offers state-of-the-art performance and places the humble CD in the realm of genuine high fidelity.

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE (MECH ONE YEAR GUARANTEE)

Musical Design Company ☎ (01992) 573030





# Sound Investment

● CHORD ●

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### Midlands

Leicester Hi-Fi Company, Leicester. T 0116 253 9753  
Sound Academy, Bloxwich. T 01922 473499  
Music Matters, Birmingham. T 0121 429 2811  
Music Matters, Solihull. T 0121 742 0254

### North

Doug Brady Hi-Fi, Warrington. T 01925 828009  
Audio Reflections, Wakefield. T 01132 528850  
River Crossing Audio, Norfolk. T 01263 741230  
Global Hi-Fi Centre, Newcastle. T 0191 230 3600

### Northern Ireland

Moores Hi-Fi, County Down. T 01247 812 417

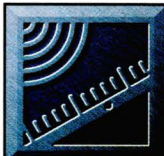
### Scotland

Robert Ritchie Hi-Fi, Montrose. T 01674 673 765

### Chord Electronics Limited

The Pumphouse, Farleigh Bridge, East Farleigh  
Kent ME16 9NB, UK  
T 01622 721444 F 01622 721555  
email: sales@chord.softnet.co.uk  
www.chordelectronics.co.uk





# SUPER TEST

# DAB TUNERS

**Richard Black** flexes his knowledgeable antennae in the direction of three digital tuners.

## THE CAST LIST

Arcam Alpha 10 DRT	£799.90
Cymbol C-DAB	£999.00
Technics ST-GT1000	£499.95

**A**fter something of a slow start, DAB finally hit the road running in 1999 and is now being heavily promoted by the BBC and, to a slightly lesser extent, by commercial broadcasters. Most of the major FM stations are now available; a few AM stations turn up as well and there are quite a few DAB tuners on the market, although most so far have been designed for in-car use.

That's all very fine and nice, but the broadcasters know that the biggest turn-on for the public will be the availability of new stations and services on DAB that do not appear on the other wavebands. Sure enough, at its official launch in November, commercial DAB operator Digital One announced the availability of two all-new national radio stations, Core and Planet Rock, the former offering teen-chart music (ugh!) and the latter rock (that's more like it!).

Those stations join Classic (they can't really call it Classic FM when it's on DAB, can they?), Talk Radio and Virgin as national commercial stations, while the BBC is putting out Radios 1 to 5 plus experimental Parliament and sports channels. Meanwhile, in London at least, there are many local commercial stations as well as the BBC's GLR.

As for services, DAB has the ability to carry data as well as audio in its digits, and we are promised that eventually we'll even have pictures along with the

## GLOSSARY

**DAB** – Digital Audio Broadcast, the system used throughout Europe to broadcast digital audio.

**ENSEMBLE** – A group of DAB stations all sharing a common frequency.

**MPEG2** – One of a family of audio data reduction systems which aims to cut the data rate by a factor of up to 20 while maintaining audio quality. Also called Musicam.



**“DAB’s attractiveness is only enhanced by the fact that you no longer need to know about such things as frequencies.”**

sounds and traffic announcements (perhaps you'll be able to see the traffic jam you're being alerted to while listening to Steps).

It's a neatly designed system, and its attractiveness is only enhanced by the fact that you no longer need to know about such things as frequencies – just tune in a station by name, anywhere in the country. Oh, and it's 'green'

too, because a devilishly clever bit of signal processing design allows it to use the same frequency for each station everywhere in the country and so the total transmitted power need not be as high. This should eventually mean an end to 'fading' when listening in the car, although to date transmitter coverage doesn't extend to the whole UK. So far so funky.

## HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

**W**ith only three tuners and an aerial for each, it was, for once, practical to set the whole lot up at once, each feeding one input on a preamplifier (via a fixed attenuator made up to match the slightly different audio levels of the three) and all tuned to the same station, so that instant comparisons could be made. An FM tuner on the 'same' station provided an interesting reference, although the audio compression – used by all FM stations but avoided by most DAB ones (how long that will last remains to be seen, but it's certainly a good thing) – makes the comparison of limited application. Some listening was also conducted via an external DAC to give some kind of neutral ground for comparison, and basic checks were carried out to ensure all tuners were operating correctly with no data errors.

Ancillary equipment included EAR pre- and power-amps, Quad Electrostatic speakers (ESL57) and cables from Goertz and my own workbench. Each tuner was used with its supplied DAB aerial which proved to give perfectly satisfactory results at the test location in South London.

Unfortunately, DAB relies heavily on digital data reduction (sometimes confusingly called compression), which does a lot to sabotage its outward promise of CD-quality sound (48KHz/16-bit – actually a gnat's thingy better than CD).

The data rate used in the highest quality broadcasts put out at present is only just over half that of MiniDisc and accordingly the sound is, frankly, not what one might wish – as you will discover.



## HINTS & TIPS

At least with DAB you don't have to worry about RF

signal level and multipath and interference. Being digital, the system either works or it doesn't, and as a rough guide if you start hearing audio breakdown you're very close to complete inability to receive stations. The Arcam and Cymbol tuners have reassuring readouts of error count, something that would surely be useful on all DAB tuners.

DAB works at a different sample rate from CD – 48KHz. If you want to use an external DAC, you'll almost certainly find that it supports this rate and all MiniDisc recorders do too: however, some older CD recorders will not. They'll still record an analogue feed from the tuner, of course.



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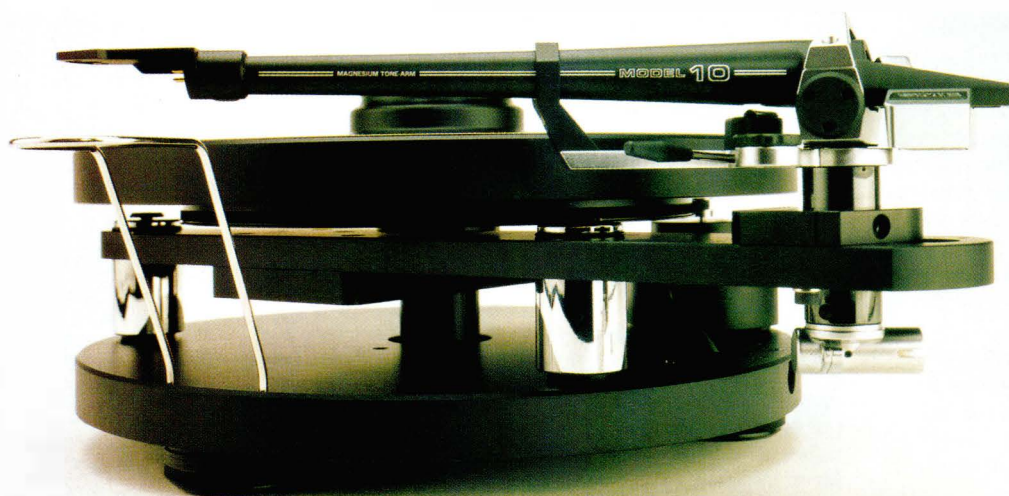
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# SME MODEL 10



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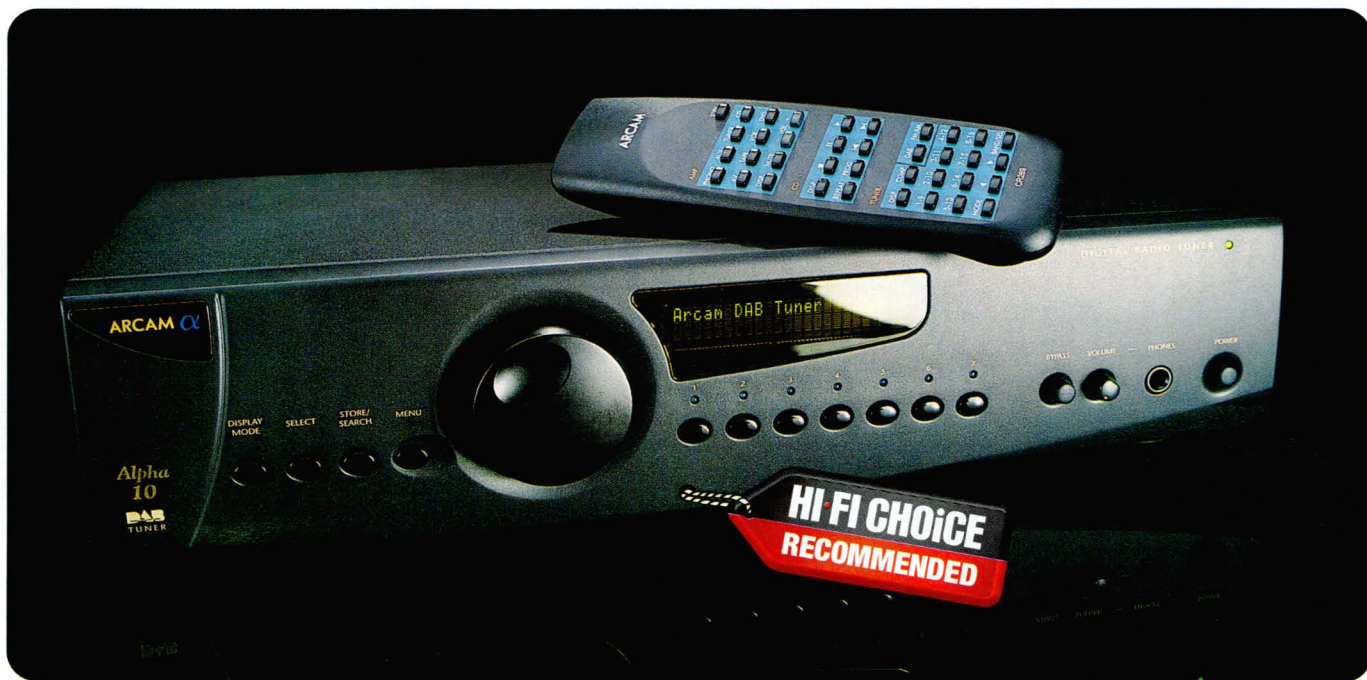
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# ARCAM Alpha 10 Digital Radio Tuner



This tuner has already featured in HFC, albeit in pre-production form, when it was the subject of a first peek at DAB in HFC 188 (March 1999). Since then nothing has changed externally and apparently not much internally either, although a few minor niggles have been sorted out (the control software still threw one wobbler during the test, when it refused to tune to the BBC stations: however, it reset quite happily when switched off and back on). The smart front panel is common to the entire Alpha range and the metalwork behind is also regular Alpha fare. Like all Arcam products, this tuner is tidily and efficiently built.

The business end of DAB reception and decoding is handled by a sealed module bought in from Roke Manor Research. Arcam's contribution to proceedings, in audio terms, consists of converting the digital output provided by the module to analogue, plus control logic and power supplies.

Connections are much as for any analogue tuner: there's an aerial input (on a BNC socket) and two pairs of audio outputs. In addition, there are two digital outputs, Toslink optical and coaxial, for connection to an external DAC and/or digital recorder, and a thoughtfully provided pair of inputs so that your old FM/AM tuner can be looped through, via a front panel switch, to give access to stations not yet on DAB.

Ergonomically, this seems to be the friendliest of the three tuners here. It can scan the entire DAB

**"The lack of interference is welcome and, on the whole, the Alpha 10 seems the best of the group by a small margin."**



spectrum for stations and store the lot in memory, so all you have to do is spin that chunky knob to scroll through stations, which appear by name on the display – no need to know anything at all about frequencies. There are also seven one-touch presets for frequently-accessed stations.

Arcam has built in an 'Engineering Mode' which gives access to the broadcast data rate of each station and some useful information on incoming data error rates: useful, because it gives a very good feel for signal strength and hence the need for a better aerial. At my South London location, the supplied wire dipole was more than adequate. Finally, Arcam has implemented a switchable dynamics compression scheme which relies on dynamics information broadcast with the audio to give 'Optimod-style' compression at the user end. However, it appears that broadcasters aren't supporting this yet.

## SOUND QUALITY

On 'DAB-friendly' material (not too much high-frequency energy and nice simple textures – anything mellow, basically), this unit's sound is good, the lack of interference is welcome and, on the whole, the Alpha 10 seems the best of the group by a small but significant margin. It lacks nothing in clarity and spaciousness and its trump card is the feeling of solidity it can, at best, give the sound. There's also just the smallest hint of warmth compared with the other two tuners; not to the extent that it sounds like distortion, but rather a lack of the thinness that mildly afflicts the others.

All the same, in busy textures where the MPEG2 data reduction has the most work to do, the seemingly intrinsic characteristics of the system come to the fore. You might not spot it at first, but it's a kind of distortion which becomes increasingly obvious: the nearest analogy I can think of is a

metallic tinkling, as lots of little bits of metal which hang from wires bounce off each other. That's the extreme form, which can be heard, for instance, plugging the trumpets and saxophones of a big band. In milder form, it afflicts woodwind and voice, while on percussion the natural irregularity of the sound leads to coarsening which makes tambourines, snare drums and hi-hats all sound much the same.

## CONCLUSION

This tuner is the nicest and the most pleasant sounding of the group. The current state of DAB where only three or four stations are exclusive to the format combined with the fact that this price would buy one helluva FM aerial set-up go against the Arcam.

However, as it's the best we've heard a Recommendation seems to be appropriate. **RB**

## VERDICT

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★☆
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£799.90</b>

**The first DAB tuner and arguably still the best, but only as good as the system.**

### TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

Arcam, Pembroke Ave, Waterbeach, Cambs, CB5 9PB  
(01233) 203203

## SPECIFICATIONS

■ Bands	DAB
■ Audio compression	Yes
■ Digital outputs	Toslink, coaxial



## CYMBOL C-DAB1



It's interesting, and indeed impressive, that a relatively small outfit like Cymbol should be so early in the DAB fray – new technology more often stems from the giants. In fact, all the funky stuff is courtesy of a giant, Robert Bosch, whose RF/MPEG decoder module forms the heart of this tuner. In a similar manner to Arcam, Cymbol takes the S/PDIF output of this module and passes it through a quality DAC, adding the necessary control logic and – look at that photograph and drool! – some of the finest bright-work you'll see.

In true UK high-end fashion, the features are a bit thin but still probably adequate for most users. Obviously there's an aerial input – and Cymbol supplied an intriguing indoor aerial made from coaxial cable in a style I've never before seen outside amateur radio circles – plus a pair of analogue outputs, a lone coaxial digital output and a Toslink Radio Data Interface. At the front, a dozen push-buttons handle all the control functions, since DAB obviates the need to tune as such it's a lot less of a fag to scroll through stored stations with Up and Down buttons. Anyway, there are eight one-touch presets.

The alphanumeric display shows the usual station name info and scrolling programme description, and can be made to give a direct reading of error rate in percentages (down to 0.000000%). As with Arcam's error display, this gives the necessary clues for setting up an aerial: when the error rate drops to zero you've got a good enough aerial, that simple.



**"The construction of this tuner is very good, with considerable 'audiophile cred' in the choice of components on the DAC board."**

The construction of this tuner is very good, with considerable 'audiophile cred' in the choice of components on the DAC board. The power supply is generous and everything is securely fitted together. It behaved impeccably on test without any logic hiccups or strange behaviour.

#### SOUND QUALITY

As with the other two tuners, sound varied considerably with the type of programme material. It's important to stress that the digital output from all three tuners is identical (apart from some 'dither' which is only low-level hiss) since despite differences in design they all decode the data according to the same rules (encoders, on the other hand, can legitimately differ considerably in transfer function).

The distortion associated with the MPEG encoding of the material on any given station will, therefore, be exactly the same on any tuner, differences between models being entirely due to differences in their DACs. That in turn

relies on subtle differences in distortion and filter characteristics, plus jitter, which so far is a bit of an unknown quantity in subjective terms with DAB.

So this tuner, too, was happiest with the less aggressive end of the musical spectrum – instruments without too many high harmonics, recordings miked up at a moderate distance rather than close-up, simple scoring. Under these circumstances, sound is detailed and clean with very low background hiss (mostly microphone hiss at that), next to no distortion and a more relaxed sound than FM, thanks to the lack of final compression as used on practically all FM stations to their audible detriment. On balance, though, the C-DAB1's sound was just a shade less full and involving than that of the Arcam. The difference is not vast but seems fairly consistent, with the Cymbol sounding just a little cold and detached and, sometimes, rather hard.

With more difficult material, the result sounds much the same as

on the other tuners: harsh treble, distinct metallic spurious sounds at worst (modulated by a fast warbling), indistinct and splashy sibilants, percussion and applause. The big irony is that the result sounds not unlike an FM tuner failing to cope with moderately serious multi-path distortion, although the causes are completely different.

#### CONCLUSION

It seems mean to carp when Cymbol has obviously made a big effort to produce this impressively high-tech product, so beautifully finished too.

However, not only is its audio performance (and, frankly, its flexibility) bettered by the less expensive Arcam, but it is only possible to recommend the entire DAB system with very serious reservations at present, none of which relate to the Cymbol. **RB**

#### VERDICT

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★★
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£999.00</b>

**The first 'high-end' DAB tuner, although, sadly, sound benefits little overall. Gorgeous finish.**

#### ■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Cymbol, 2 Manor Farm Cottages, Herriard, Basingstoke, Hants RG25 2PH  
☎ (01256) 381569

#### SPECIFICATIONS

■ Bands	DAB
■ Audio compression	No
■ Digital outputs	Coaxial



Part **4** SACD Systems



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**Why we need Super Audio CD!**

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*SUPER AUDIO CD*



***“Through its phenomenal acoustic performance and completely integrated compatibility with compact disc, Super Audio CD offers today’s home listener a unique proposition.”***

Jeffrey van Ede, Sony HiFi Europe



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## To realise the dream of truly outstanding sound quality

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Last year, Sony introduced us to Super Audio CD. Magazine reviews have praised the outstanding sound quality provided by the first Sony SACD player, the SCD-1, but do we really need another new audio format?

At its European SACD premiere, Sony announced initial plans to target the audiophile community. Will SACD ever be adopted as a mainstream audio carrier with similar potential to compact disc (CD), or will it remain a niche format?



Looking ahead, Jeffrey van Ede, General Manager, Marketing at Sony HiFi Europe sees a future packed with potential for SACD. Is van Ede a realist or an optimist? We talk to the man responsible for introducing Sony’s new family of HiFi systems in Europe.

**Sony launched its first two SACD players several months ago. How are consumers reacting to the new format?**

Reactions have been very positive. Ever since the Japanese launch last spring we have seen success, but now, even our most optimistic forecasts look conservative. When we have such large numbers of top-end players ordered even before they enter the stores, we know that something special is happening. At last year’s IFA show in Berlin, we staged hourly sound demos on each of the ten public days. Even on the last day, people were standing at the back of the room. Most demonstrations prompted applause from the audience.



**What has been the reaction from the retail sector?**

Retailers welcome this new audio concept and see great potential for future sales. SACD gives retailers a completely new story to tell and sell. It introduces a new standard in home sound quality and gives the consumer a new level to aim for. It motivates consumers to visit stores and experience the new medium, like they did with CD many years ago. Such innovations in home music listening are few and far between.

**So are you helping retailers promote SACD?**

You bet. For the consumer to know it is in the stores is very important. We offer a full in-store promotional support package covering hardware, software and even public demonstration assistance. SACD is here now and we want as many people as possible to experience it.

**Your first players are expensive. Can equipment costing so much ever win mass-market appeal?**

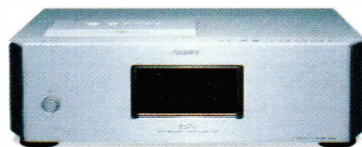
Our initial intention is to target the high-end audiophile community. To establish SACD as a revolutionary new audio format that offers a significantly enhanced listening experience compared to any current technology, even compact disc. We plan to broaden our product range in the near future. DSD is not an inherently expensive technology and within the next few years virtually all our CD player range will feature SACD playback, making it affordable for everyone.

**Can you put timescales on these introductions?**

We already have the reference SCD-1 and ES range players available. A lot depends on mar-

---

The first Sony SACD products were launched at last year’s IFA exhibition in Berlin. Developed for the high-end audiophile market, interest and sales have been strong. Across Europe, music lovers are enjoying the outstanding sound quality of SACD.



1. The SCD-1 is the world’s first stereo Super Audio CD compatible player, providing outstanding SACD and conventional CD playback.

2. The TA-E1 Pre-amplifier from Sony.

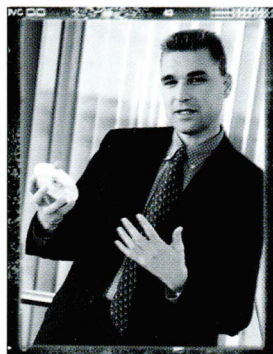




## PSP Pit Signal Processing



Using the newly developed Pit Signal Processing (PSP) technology, each SACD has an invisible watermark that protects consumers and artists against illegal copying. In addition, a visible watermark in the form of a text or image can also be imprinted on the disc. This ensures that you will always have original versions for the best sound possible.



ket dynamics, but already, we plan to introduce mid-range players this year.

### What's the bottom line incentive for consumers' evolution from CD to SACD?

Two things – wonderful sound quality and security. Nowadays, when people replace their CD players they normally look for a higher specification model, capable of better sound reproduction. The step-up to SACD yields a far more tangible quality improvement than even the highest performance CD player can provide. Add to this future developments, such as multichannel sound and the capability to access extra data stored on the disc, and the proposition becomes clear.

### So where does security come in?

Security comes from care and protection. Two generations have grown up with CD and many people have their entire music libraries stored on this format. Consumers don't want to restart their music collections.



They want to play their old CDs on their new player. As well as providing incredible high resolution SACD sound, the new Sony players are also great CD players. Furthermore the compatibility is two-way. Through its hybrid disc option, SACD lets you play your latest SACD disc on your old CD player. It is the only format that provides such support. The two carriers are completely integrated so that the decision of when to step-up to SACD is up to each consumer – not the manufacturer.

### What about mobile SACD players?

That is some time away. But already, the hybrid disc option allows SACD replay through your CD Radio cassette in the park, your CD-Walkman® on the move and your in-car CD player on the way to work. When you return home, you can hear the same music in high definition on your SACD player. No other format combines outstanding sound quality with this versatility and compatibility.

### What is your expectation for SACD in the near future?

It's hard not to sound too emotional but I believe that SACD will have a major impact in Europe – very similar to CD in the 80's. Time and again during development, we asked the simple question, 'what does the consumer want.' The consumer wants exceptional sound quality and also a way of preserving their much-loved CD collections. This is SACD: such customer focus will benefit us in the future. This year, our product diversification and pricing strategy are set to build on SACD's early success. SACD is here, now. If you haven't already heard SACD, then go into a store and ask for a sound demo. During my entire career in the HiFi industry, I've never heard anything that compares with this innovation. We want all music lovers to experience the fantastic audio quality that is SACD.



3. The Sony TA-N1 Power Amplifier. Sony's new reference models, the TA-E1 Pre-amplifier and TA-N1 Power Amplifier are designed to support the SCD-1 reference Sony SACD player. Capable of handling the very high-resolution audio information that makes Super Audio CD so remarkable, these amplifiers excel at reproducing the purest audio quality.

4. The SS-M9ED speaker system focuses on several key areas of performance in order to reproduce Super Audio CD's superb sound quality and realism: playback resolution and detail, wide dynamic range and expanded bandwidth.





## SACD – superior audio technology developed out of experience

### Direct Stream Digital DSD audio technology

2.8224MHz sampled 1-bit audio for 100kHz frequency range, more than 120dB dynamic range within the audible (frequency) range and a pure waveform very closely resembling the analogue original.

**DSD**  
Direct Stream Digital

### SACD provides backwards and forwards compatibility with CD

SACD offers three disc variations, including a hybrid disc which can be played by SACD players and standard "Red Book" CD players.

### Sony's top London studio fits DSD Mastering & Editing

DSD Mastering and Editing at Whitfield Street Studios is hailed for its high standard and ease of use.

### SACD ensures complete copyright protection

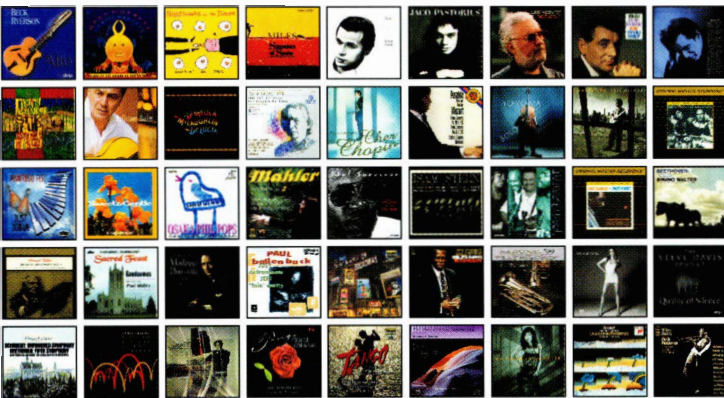
Mandatory invisible watermarking; optional visible watermarking; and optional encryption protects copyright holders against unauthorised copying and piracy.

### Many record companies produce SACDs

Since the launch, many leading record companies, including key audiophile labels and multinationals have started producing SACDs.

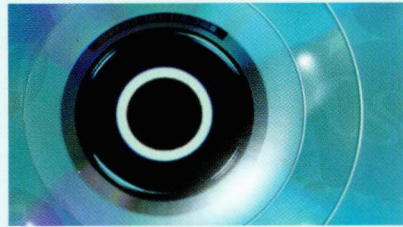
### Sony launches new state-of-the-art amplifiers and wide-range loudspeakers to optimise SACD playback

SACD launched in Japan on 21 May, in Europe on 27 August and in North America on 31 August

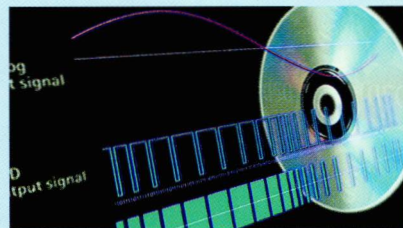


DSD and Super Audio CD is attracting keen interest in the European record industry. Sony Music's SACD catalogue continues to expand and includes many music genres from classical to jazz, rock and pop. Also, a growing number of independent record labels in Europe are producing SACDs – many highlighting the appeal this enhanced audio system has amongst their artists and record producers.

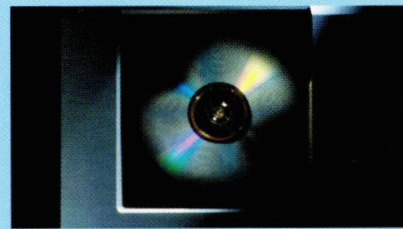
## Part 1: SACD Format



## Part 2: SACD Key Technologies



## Part 3: SACD Software



Sony Consumer Products Group  
Registered Head Office:  
Sony United Kingdom, The Heights, Brooklands  
Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0XW

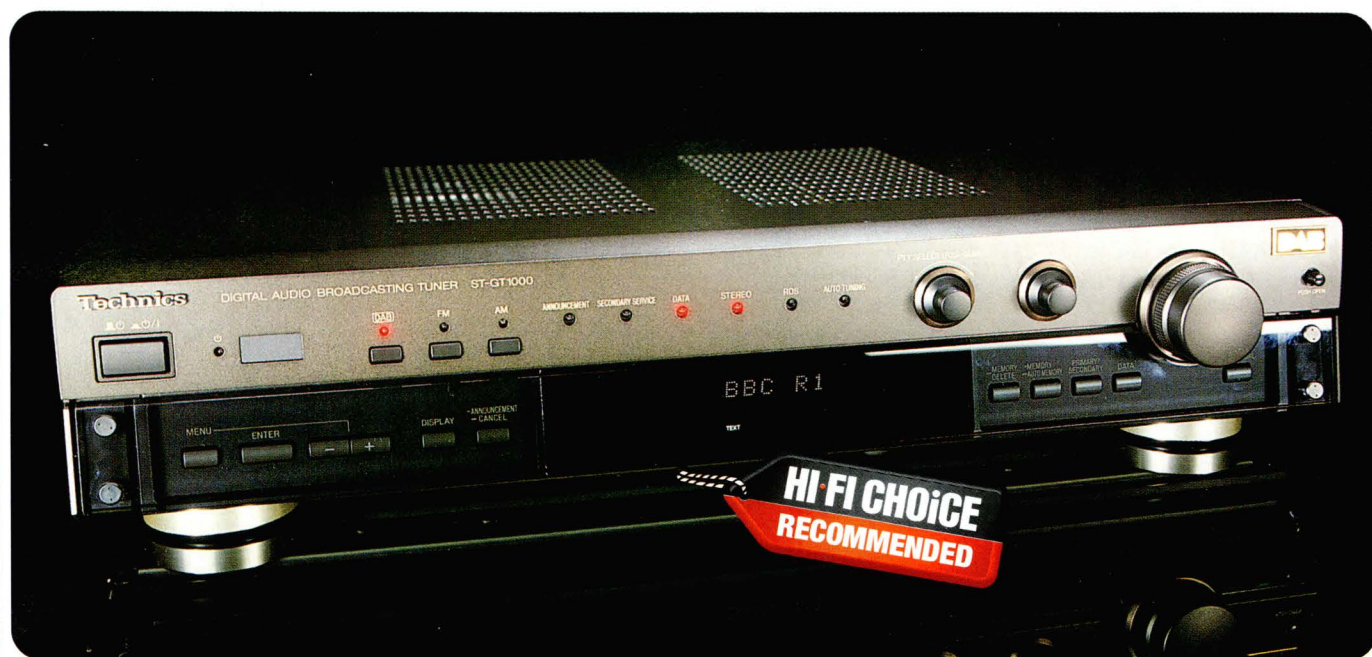
# SONY

Sony  line

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# TECHNICS ST-GT1000



**T**echnics is more the kind of company one expects to find around new technology: this appears to be the first DAB tuner from a 'major' to hit these shores. Apart from the favourable price, what marks this model out as different is its inclusion of good 'FM and AM alongside DAB, obviously a sensible design decision from many points of view. Now, if your existing tuner is perfectly OK you won't benefit, but otherwise you could argue that with a budget FM/AM tuner worth about £120, Technics is flogging a DAB tuner for less than half the price of the competition. Attractive? For many, it will be.

Construction is typical of Far East models. The front panel is reasonably intelligently laid out, with many of the push-buttons hidden behind a door which also dims the display somewhat.

What did bother me was the method of tuning, which requires the user to tune to the 'ensemble frequency' (DAB stations are broadcast in blocks or 'ensembles' all sharing one frequency) and then select the station from within the ensemble. This seems plain daft to me, because one of the attractions of DAB is that the user should never need to know anything about frequencies. OK, so there are presets, but you still have to program them somehow.

Another grouse concerns the DAB signal quality meter, which is a bargraph display: the manual doesn't actually tell you how long the bar should be to show decent reception, which would have been rather nice to know.

**"This tuner is by far the quickest to tune to a new DAB station – it performs the task effectively and instantaneously."**



Inside the unit, almost everything is concealed inside shielded modules, but it's well assembled. Connections are the basics: aerial sockets for all three bands (a screw-down 'F-connector' for DAB – a matching indoor wire dipole aerial is supplied), Toslink digital audio out and a Toslink Radio Data Interface socket. If you were wondering, there's no digital output when FM or AM is selected. This tuner is by far the quickest of the three here to tune to a new DAB station – it performs the task effectively and instantaneously.

### SOUND QUALITY

Once again, the sound is, not surprisingly, strongly programme-dependent. What did seem fairly consistent, though, when compared with the other two tuners, was a lack of detail. It's not vast, but when switching rapidly from one tuner to another (yes, with adjustment for the subtly different output levels of all three), there

was almost always a sense that this one was just a little veiled. It's similar to the sort of difference one might expect between CD players at, say, the £120 and £250 price points – and that figures, since the differences between two DAB tuners (assuming sufficient signal level to ensure correct operation) are down to their DACs and output stages, just like the difference between two CD players.

I suppose in a way the difference is rather like that between a cheap FM tuner and an expensive one, but that would be assuming 'perfect' reception conditions: FM tuner engineering has a lot of variables to contend with.

On balance, this tuner comes quite close to its more costly brethren, and with the 'right' programme material it sounds very nearly as lifelike as they do, with the usual DAB attributes of low noise, extended treble (clean just as long as there's not too much of it) and solid, well defined bass.

But, as with the others we've looked at, it all goes rather horribly wrong with 'busy' music, with the data reduction artefacts quickly noticeable and long-term listening relatively fatiguing.

The GT1000 puts in a decent performance on the FM band, in the 'decent budget tuner' ballpark – perfectly listenable with no obvious nasties and commendable detail under good reception conditions.

### CONCLUSION

This is certainly the most enticing DAB prospect yet, although no doubt time will bring substantially cheaper models once all the manufacturers are fully tooled-up. As it is, and with the current state of DAB quality (improvements will have to be at the broadcast end), even £500 seems a rather heavy tariff for such a curate's egg. But it's the best price yet and you get a regular radio too. **RB**

### VERDICT

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★☆
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£499.95</b>

Combines DAB, FM and AM and substantially lowers the entry price bar.

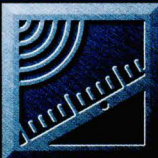
#### ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Technics, Panasonic House, Willoughby Road, Bracknell, Berks RG12 8FP  
(0990) 357357

### SPECIFICATIONS

■ Bands	DAB, FM, AM
■ Audio compression	No
■ Digital outputs	Toslink





# CONCLUSIONS

# DAB TUNERS

It is quite hard to recommend DAB at present. Undeniably, there are situations when it will be a godsend: consider the hapless soul stuck in a block of flats with a crummy communal FM aerial and not enough radio signal for decent FM reception. For such folks DAB is a dream come true – in good reception areas (and that means, according to the BBC, 69 per cent of the UK population and rising fast), you can get noise-free, interference-free stereo from DAB with only an indoor aerial. There's not much feedback yet to say how well DAB will fare in country districts with lots of hills and not many transmitters, though no doubt such areas will have to wait till last for really good reception. However, most of the major population centres are already well covered.

The problem is that DAB really doesn't sound that good. Quality varies between broadcasters too, with only the BBC making invariable use of high bit rates for music broadcasts (192Kbit/s): the lower the bit-rate, the lower the quality and at 128Kbit/s Planet Rock is pretty rough. The BBC is using good quality coders too, and its broadcasts sound good at first hearing, but after a while the persistent edginess on any kind of treble sound can become wearing.

There are good reasons for not continuously broadcasting audio at full CD quality – it would be just too much of an invitation to piracy. The problem is that a lot of the most important broadcasts, especially on Radios 3 and 4, are not from commercial recordings and can only be heard on the radio. FM has not fully realised its

potential, largely due to the way it has been implemented during the last two decades. Still, for most people it was possible to get good reception, at least if one shelled out a bit for an aerial and a good tuner. With DAB, we're being offered a system which has definite limits to its performance: no tuner will get rid of the data reduction artefacts, only better encoding can do that, and it will

still have to be compatible with the specification. But this was the way we felt when CD was launched, and that format has come on a long way since then despite fundamental limitations.

DAB looks to be analogous with MP3, the compression system used for music files on the Internet, it uses similar bit rates in order to reduce the time it takes to download music. However, it uses

what appears to be a more elegant compression system than DAB's MPEG Layer II. When the test kit becomes available we will find out where DAB stands in the new digital hierarchy.

For those situations where DAB really is the best thing going, it seems reasonable to recommend both the cheapest tuner currently available and the best sounding one in this group.

## RECOMMENDED



### ARCAM Alpha 10 Digital Radio Tuner

If you want to hear DAB broadcasting at its very best, the Arcam is the clear winner in this group, and has only the considerably dearer TAG McLaren for serious competition.



### TECHNICS ST-GT1000

The cheapest way to get into DAB, also includes FM and AM on board. Apart from its rather daft tuning arrangement it does its job quite efficiently, and if the sound's not quite up to the more expensive tuners it's not too far behind – and identical at the digital output.

## DAB TUNERS COMPARISON TABLE

MAKE	ARCAM	CYMBOL	TECHNICS
MODEL	ALPHA 10 DRT	C-DAB1	ST-GT1000
PRICE	£799.90	£999.00	£499.95
SOUND	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
GUARANTEE	2 yrs	2 yrs	1 yr
BANDS	DAB	DAB	DAB, FM, AM
AUDIO COMPRESSION	Yes	No	No
DIGITAL OUTPUT	Toslink, coaxial	Coaxial	Toslink



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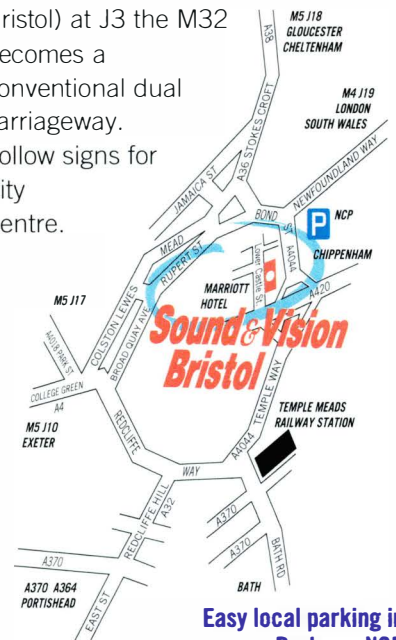
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- Stereophile, April 1996

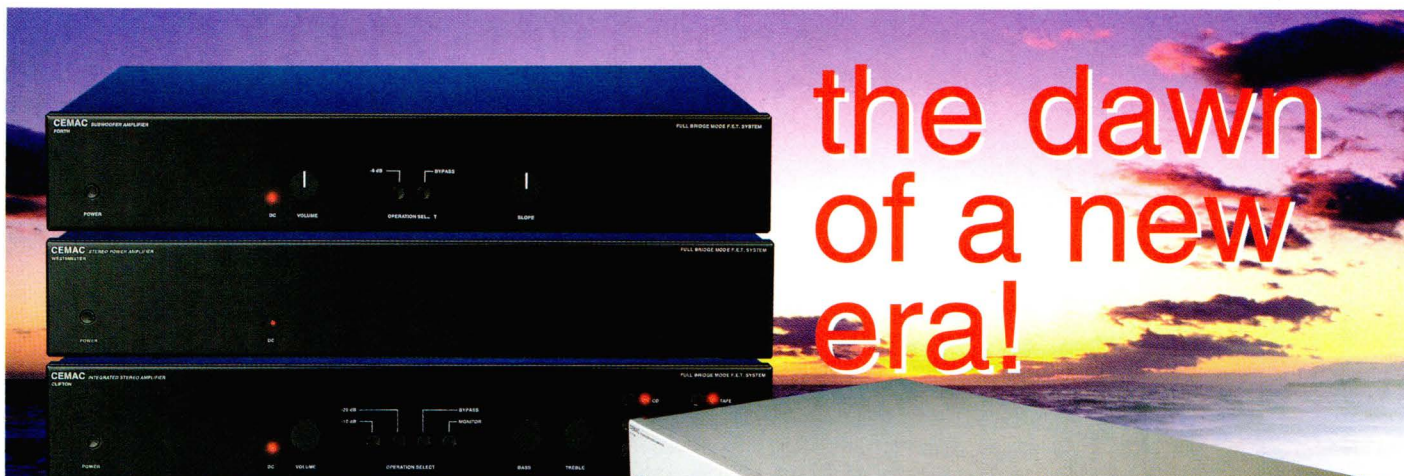
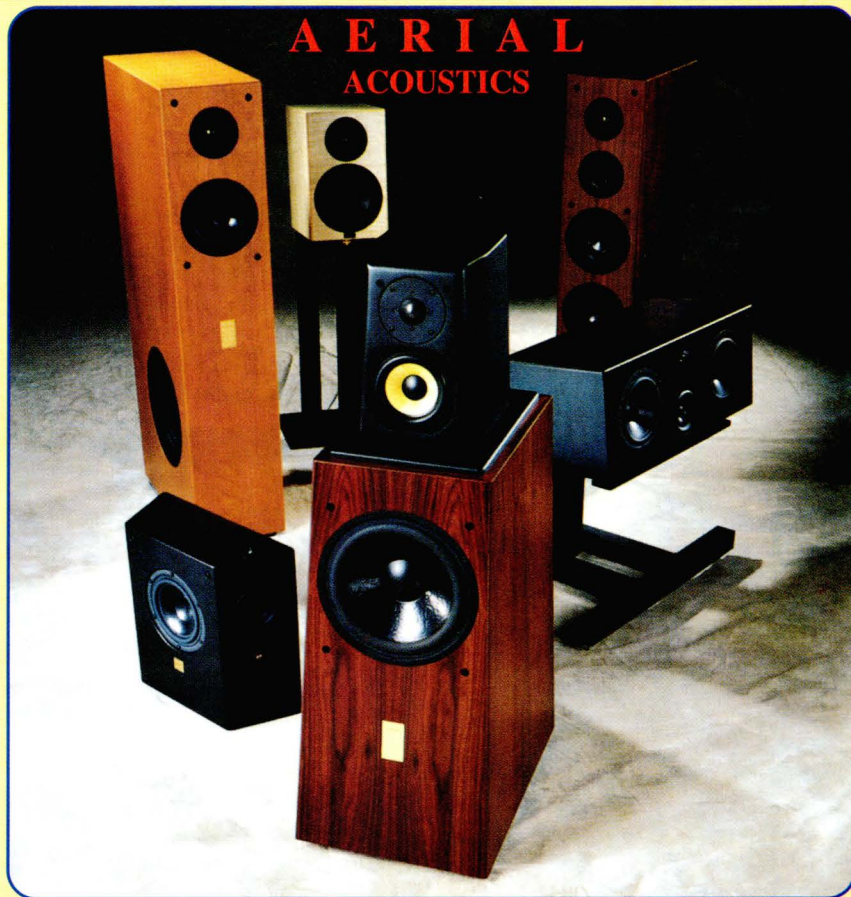
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# SUPER TEST

# SYSTEMS

Tim Bown and Lee Dunkley check out six single-make systems with affordable price tags.

## THE CAST LIST

Denon/B&W system	£659.98
Marantz/Tannoy system	£729.80
NAD/Dali system	£999.85
Pioneer/B&W system	£730.00
Sony system	£599.97
Yamaha system	£549.97

**Q**uid pro quo. You're reading *Hi-Fi Choice*, so you already know the score. Pre-packaged mini systems are merely mediocre; if you love music, you owe it to yourself to enter the harmonious world of hi-fi separates. But knowing the truth is one thing. Acting on it is quite another.

It's really not surprising that minis and micros are so popular. They look neat, they give you all the functions you could ever want (and often more besides) and they're so damn easy to buy. In contrast, separates may seem messy, cumbersome and expensive, not to mention a right pain when it comes to choosing and buying. With all that to contend with, the promise of superior sound just isn't enough for the average consumer.

But allow us to evangelise for a moment. Sit anyone anyone with a penchant for music down in front of a separates system and the difference is quite literally clear. Your favourite discs just won't sound the same if played through anything else; the results undoubtedly justify the means.

And for anyone who feels separates are too much trouble to bother with, we're here to make life easier. Our uniquely thorough testing process and our focus on 'quality' equipment mean that music fans can trust our recommendations like those of no other magazine – simply draw up a list of the kit that suits you best using our reviews and the back-of-the-mag Directory. Then visit a specialist dealer, audition your chosen components and make an informed decision.

Even with our help, that first step into separates can still feel



like a hurdle, so let's narrow the field a little more. The pages that follow contain a test of six affordable separates systems, each consisting of CD player, amp and speakers. Their prices range from £550 to £1,000, perfect for anyone building their first hi-fi system or looking for a second step up the ladder.

To get the test together, we approached six top manufacturers operating at the 'affordable' end of the separates market. "Send us a CD player and an amp from your range that work well together," said we, "and recommend a set of speakers to complete the set-up." This they duly did. Naturally, those that make suitable speakers under their own name recommended

their own product, which means the systems from Sony and Yamaha are complete 'one brand' set ups. In the case of Marantz and NAD, speakers were recommended from brands with which they have strong business links – Tannoy and Dali respectively. And in the absence of such an obvious link, Denon and Pioneer simply recommended speakers from another firm they hoped would work well with their electronics, both plumping for B&W.

If you're looking for an 'entry-level' set-up, you may find the next few pages provide an ideal solution, both in terms of sonics and matching aesthetics. However, if your sights are a little more upmarket and the 'one

brand' system idea appeals, get hold of our December 1999 issue (see Archive on p137 for details of how). There you'll find tests of complete systems from British brands Arcam, Creek, Cyrus, Naim, Rega and Roksan.

## HINTS & TIPS

### AMPLIFIERS

Amps need to be stretched before they give their best. They need running in (for maybe a week) and warming up (for at least an hour). They also sound best when used on a proper hi-fi support, ideally with no other component on the same surface, and a set of isolation 'feet' placed underneath can be a cost-effective upgrade.

If an amplifier must be stacked with other hi-fi equipment, put it on top to ensure proper heat dissipation. If tone controls are fitted, set them to zero under normal circumstances, and bypass them if possible.

### CD PLAYERS

Like amplifiers, CD players improve once they've been run-in and warmed up, and perform better when placed on a proper hi-fi 'rack'. You may also find benefit from using an isolation platform or 'feet' underneath the player, thus lessening the effects of vibration. It's worth making sure you keep a player's reading lens clean, particularly if it lives in a smoky or dusty environment – lens cleaners are available in the high street. Likewise, take care of your discs – they're not indestructible and damaged discs will make your player's error correction circuitry work overtime, if they actually play at all.

### SPEAKERS

The rules for getting the best out of speakers are the same whatever the model. Stand-mounting designs require proper stands to give stable, predictable support and ensure the drive units are the same distance off the floor as your ears. Finding the right place to position the speakers acoustically, with respect to the room walls, is just as important. Few designs like to be placed in corners, but some work better close to a rear wall than others. Every room is different, so it's important to experiment.

## HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

**E**ach system was tested in the *Hi-Fi Choice* listening room using extensive subjective listening with a wide range of music. The same cables were used with each system: QED Qudos Silver speaker cable (£5/m) and QED Qnet 2 interconnects (£30). These were chosen for their smooth, even-handed balance and strong compatibility across a range of products. Marantz also specifically requested we listen with Kimber 4VS speaker cable (£9/m) and Cable Talk Studio 2 interconnects (£65), and our conclusion takes this into account. The electronic components were sited on Mana equipment supports and the speakers were placed on Target R1 stands, with experimentation to find the best room position.

Many CDs were enjoyed during the course of the review, including: Dot Allison – *Afterglow*; Ben Christophers – *My Beautiful Demon*; John Digweed – *Global Underground Hong Kong*; Joni Mitchell – *Blue*; Carl Orff – *Carmina Burana* (RSO Berlin/Chailly/Decca); Talvin Singh – *OK*; The Chemical Brothers – *Surrender*; Underworld – *Beaucoup Fish*; Mahler – *Symphony No.4* (Royal Philharmonic/Hirokami/Denon); Madonna – *Ray of Light*; Paul Simon – *The Rhythm of the Saints*; The Flaming Lips – *The Soft Bulletin*.



# THE DENON/B&W SYSTEM

**D**enon is a well respected Japanese electronics manufacturer that will be familiar to regular readers of these pages for its high quality hi-fi components which have collected numerous Best Buy and Recommended swing tags over the years. Always at the forefront of technological advances, Denon built the world's first digital audio recorder and continues in the digital arena producing high performance DVD players and AV amplifiers for the increasingly popular world of surround sound. With its own software label and pressing plants producing CD and DVD discs, the company has a wealth of experience at both ends of the market spectrum.

For this system, Denon nominated components that it considered would work well together accompanied by speakers from B&W, the UK's largest manufacturer of hi-fi loudspeakers.

The two electronic components nominated here have both been seen before in *Hi-Fi Choice* receiving Recommended swing tags for their efforts. B&W's DM601 speakers however, have yet to go head-to-head in a *HFC* group test in this new and improved Series 2 version – but that's a situation we intend to rectify.

Denon's DCD-835, reviewed in *HFC* 184, is a solid, budget CD player which replaced the long-running DCD-825 offering a substantial step forward in sound quality. Designed in the UK, the DCD-835 features a centrally

## THE COMPONENTS

### CD PLAYER

Denon DCD-835 £279.99

A mid-priced, multi-bit CD player that is sonically appealing and may even rival some more expensive players.

**Socketry:** Analogue and digital (optical and coaxial) outputs, synchro control.

### AMPLIFIER

Denon PMA-350SE £179.99

A budget priced 50 Watt amplifier, although not the least expensive of Denon's range. May be a little short on power for these speakers. **Socketry:** four line inputs, one of which can be converted to a phono input for additional cost, plus one tape loop, second set of speaker terminals.

### SPEAKERS

B&W DM601 Series 2 £200.00

The baby brother of the 600 Series in its improved Series 2 form but retaining its original price point. Well balanced sound with superb stereo imaging. Sensitivity is rated at 88dB, impedance is 8 Ohms.

**Two big hi-fi names, one goal: to produce a great sounding system at an affordable price. Lee Dunkley investigates.**



mounted transport mechanism and dual-mono 18-bit Burr-Brown DACs with an 8x oversampling filter. The player sports a simple cosmetic design with only basic features adorning the front panel and an easy-to-read, extinguishable display.

No CD player is complete without a remote control, and the DCD-835 comes supplied with a chunky handset for armchair convenience with output level adjustment. Around the back there are coaxial and optical digital outputs, plus a synchro control socket for hooking up to a recorder.

Power and control come via Denon's budget priced PMA-350SE (reviewed in issue 162). As with the DCD-835, this integrated amplifier is a UK design offering 50 Watts per channel and a minimalist approach, with the absence of tone controls promising sound quality benefits via short signal paths. Volume is motorised and can be controlled from a remote control (not supplied) for an extra £14.99.

Five line level inputs are provided, including one tape loop, but there is no tape monitor switch. One input can be converted to phono operation for another £14.99. Two sets of speaker connections are fitted for bi-wiring purposes or additional speakers.

As mentioned, this is the first time B&W's DM601 Series 2 speakers have graced these pages. It replaces the highly

regarded original DM601, reviewed in *HFC* 156. With little external evidence of the new broom, internally the 600 Series 2 range is derived from the much acclaimed Nautilus 800 Series technology, with tapered tweeter tubes, flat-ring tweeter suspension, mid/bass bullet dust caps and a woven Kevlar fibre cone.

The baby in the range, the 601 Series 2 is a two-way standmount design employing a 165mm mid/bass driver and a 26mm metal dome tweeter. Finished in cherry or black ash vinyl, it two promises to give even greater levels of performance – still for the original price of £200.

## SYSTEM SOUND

The Denon/B&W system fared slightly less favourably than the Recommended Marantz/Tannoy set-up. There's no doubt that this is an extremely musical combo, but in comparison it needs to be a little smoother and less congested when the music gets demanding.

Tonally the frequency balance doesn't quite hit the mark, with the lower end of the scale sounding thin and lacking in bass grunt when compared with the Marantz/Tannoy set-up. As a system it offers more detail overall, but with an uncomfortable tendency towards harshness at higher volume levels.

Things mellow out quite considerably at lower volumes, when a more rounded personality is taken

on. The lack of coloration in the midrange is particularly notable, and vocal and choral works are portrayed with openness and sense of space. However, it fails to pack a punch at the lower end of the register, lacking in scale and sounding compressed and restricted.

## CONCLUSION

This system isn't designed to rock the party with pumping bass. The speakers tend to err on the bright side for my taste, and the combination with this Denon amp does not achieve the best all-round balance. The system proves to be more of a subtle performer, preferring classical and acoustic pieces played at a moderate level.

It's a credible cocktail of components, but the mix here may ultimately prove a little too thin for some.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**SYNERGY** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £659.98

■ A well respected bunch of components which are musical and sonically appealing in many respects, but somehow fall short of the highest standards in this test.

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE (DENON)

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE (B&W)

Denon ☎ (01753) 888447

B&W ☎ (01903) 750750



# THE MARANTZ/TANNOY SYSTEM

This system brings together two of the biggest names in the UK hi-fi market, with electronics from Marantz and speakers from associated company Tannoy. These two highly successful manufacturers formed their alliance during 1995, with Marantz taking responsibility for Tannoy's UK consumer product distribution after similar ties were established between the two brands throughout Europe. The partnership's success soon became evident, with Marantz's involvement in the development of Tannoy's Mercury range and the more recent introduction of its Revolution speakers, which are included here.

Regular readers will undoubtedly recognise the components that make up this affordable system, each having appeared on these pages in recent times. Both the system source and amplification comprises two recently introduced components born of Marantz's long awaited Range-Series stable.

The CD 6000 OSE (Original Special Edition), reviewed in *HFC* 196, is a mid-priced CD player set to replace the similarly priced CD 67MkII OSE. A bitstream player, the 'new look' styling features a round-edged, brushed-alloy facia, while under the lid the improved technical specification offers scrolling CD text, where available, as well as CD-RW (rewriteable) disc playback.

## THE COMPONENTS

### CD PLAYER

Marantz CD 6000 OSE £299.90  
Marantz's evolutionary CD 6000 OSE replaces the well established CD 67MkII. A mid-priced player, the CD 6000 OSE is an adept sonic performer handling music with true finesse and no treble harshness. Socketry: analogue and digital (optical and coaxial) outputs.

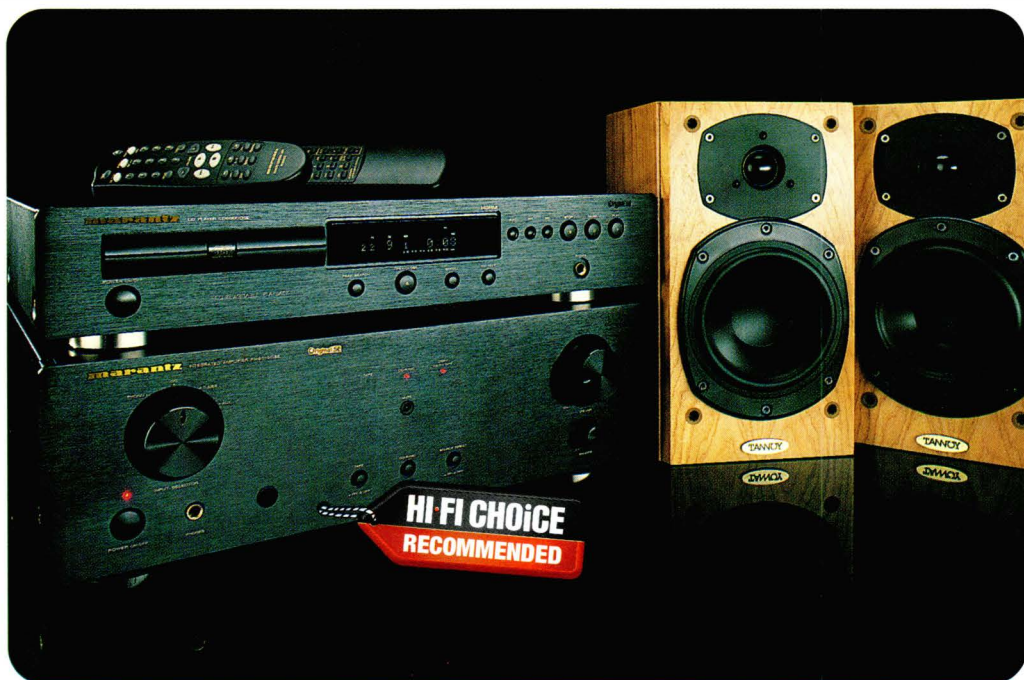
### INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

Marantz PM-6010 OSE £229.90  
The PM-6010 OSE offers more than its rated 50 Watts per channel suggests. It's free of tone controls, making sure the sound is heard at its very best. Socketry: three line inputs plus one phono and two tape loops.

### SPEAKERS

Tannoy Revolution R1 £200.00  
A high specification mini-monitor at an attractive price. Features include tuneable rear port and bi-wireable connections. Big and transparent sound for such a compact speaker. Sensitivity is rated at 87dB, impedance is 8 Ohms.

Here's a starter hi-fi system that combines two respected and closely associated companies in the UK. **Lee Dunkley** reveals all.



The front panel is limited to a few basic functions, with more advanced features to be found on the natty little remote control. A few CD text and editing controls also grace the front panel, of which the oddly placed peak search control is easily and, at times, annoyingly mistaken for the drawer open/close button. At the back of the player connections include both coaxial and optical digital outputs giving the feel of a more expensive model.

The 6010 OSE integrated amp, reviewed in *HFC* 196, is a substantial looking, if rather bulky, powerhouse offering a measured 98 Watts per channel. Sporting a matching brushed-alloy facia, the 6010 comes without tone controls, showing a large, sparse front panel. Interestingly, though, there is a source direct button for bypassing of the record monitor loops and balance control which should further benefit sound quality.

The amp has adequate socketry provision with five line level inputs, including two tape loops, plus an MM phono input and earthing point. Other notable features include a headphone socket and full system remote with volume and mute control.

The Revolution series of speakers is a fairly recent introduction, with this system opting for the baby £200 R1s, reviewed in *HFC* 187. Pitched above the Mercurys, Tannoy's Revolutions utilise

selected components from the range but to a tighter tolerance and with a special crossover, while maintaining an extremely attractive price point with exceptional sonic abilities.

The mini-monitors employ a 100mm paper cone mid/bass driver and a 25mm soft dome tweeter. Neatly packaged and finished in a natural cherry wood veneer, they offer a surprising amount of bass for their size.

### SYSTEM SOUND

After removing the speakers' foam port dampers, designed to be used in more confined listening environments, there was no doubt that this system is capable of producing a *big* sound that belies the size of its dinky loudspeakers. Coupled to the aforementioned Marantz electronics, the R1s are capable of producing exceptionally agile and surprisingly low bass.

As you'll have gathered, I was initially surprised by this system's sonic performance. Its weighty bottom end and transparent midrange portrayed William Orbit's remixed version of Barber's *Adagio for Strings* with drive, rhythm and more conviction than I expected, making it a lot of fun. Stereo imaging and soundstaging is equally impressive, radiating far and wide and making it difficult to aurally locate the exact position of the speakers.

While the system seems adept

with the lower frequency range, mid bass frequencies lack impact and gave a hard, almost compressed sound on Underworld's *Jumbo*. Classical pieces also fared less favourably and seemed to be dynamically challenged, with a notable lack of high-frequency detail and clarity masking the sound.

### CONCLUSION

This system is guaranteed to wow anyone who's just starting out down the hi-fi road. Its exceptional drive and stereo imaging makes you think twice about the size of the speakers, but hearing is believing. While it has a characterful and appealing sound, ultimately it's a little too laid-back and lacking in detail to really grab you. But it's well worthy of Recommendation at the price.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**SYNERGY** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** **£729.80**

■ A well matched choice of components that at their best are capable of producing a full and engaging sound, if a little dynamically challenged.

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE (MARANTZ)

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE (TANNOY)

Marantz ☎ (01753) 680868

Tannoy ☎ (01236) 420199



# THE NAD/DALI SYSTEM

You can't do 'affordable systems' without the presence of NAD – it just wouldn't be the same. This British brand has built its considerable reputation on low-cost separates which eschew gimmicks in favour of good, honest sound. World-beating, entry-level amps have been its cornerstone, a platform cemented by budget turntables, CD players and even loudspeakers, the quality of which has made NAD the classic budget hi-fi brand.

When it came to speakers, NAD could have easily picked a pair of its six-year-old 801s (£100) for this test, perhaps hooked up to its cheapest electronics. Instead, the company decided to be more inventive, choosing more costly components coupled to a pair of Royal Menuet IIs from Danish speaker specialist Dali. To cut a long story short, the two firms have had close business ties for years through Dali's head honcho Peter Lyngdorf and share distribution via Lenbrook UK, formerly known as the Audio Club.

The Royal Menuet II is a tiny speaker, its wood veneered cabinet measuring just 15x25x17cm (WxHxD) and incorporating an equally dinky 80mm mid/bass cone and a 20mm soft dome tweeter. It's unutterably cute, but when we group tested it in *HFC* 190 it received only faint praise. This was down to the rigorous nature of our group testing

## THE COMPONENTS

### CD PLAYER

NAD C540 £329.95

The C540 is a mix of NAD's traditional standards and the latest DAC technology. Build quality is less than perfect, but its performance ensures it's thoroughly competitive in the £300-£500 bracket.

Socketry: analogue and digital (electrical) outputs, 'NAD Link' in/out.

### AMPLIFIER

NAD C340 £269.95

Top value amps are NAD's speciality, and the C340 doesn't disappoint. It's a smooth and assured performer – not the most thrilling for the money, but a thoroughly dependable buy.

Socketry: five line inputs plus two tape loops, preamp out, main amp in, 'NAD Link' in/out.

### SPEAKERS

Dali Royal Menuet II £399.95

Its size limits its bass, scale and loudness capability, but given the size and price its performance is remarkable when used in the right environment. Sensitivity is rated at 86dB and impedance is four Ohms.

Here's a great small-room system from NAD and Dali. It's important you play to its strengths, as **Tim Bown** discovers.



process, a vital part of which involves our panel's 'blind' listening test against rivals at a similar price – some of these were considerably larger, and served to highlight the Dali's deficiencies as vividly as its strengths.

But look at it another way. If your listening space (or your aesthetic sense) demands you use a speaker of such diminutive dimensions, this is as good as you'll get at £400 and some way beyond. It's considerably better than a Bose sub/sat set-up and virtually as invisible; a sound this good from a cabinet so small is really quite remarkable.

Partnering the Dalis is a brace of components from NAD's ever-growing product portfolio, the quality of which seems to be improving by the month. Spinning the discs is the new C540, a relatively expensive player by this company's standards, although nowhere near the price of the Silverline S500 (£1,100).

The C540 sports NAD's familiar grey battle garb, although its appearance is altogether more 'styled' than that of previous players – it seems even NAD has had to concede that sales are driven by more than just what's under the lid. Thankfully, that doesn't mean skimping on the internals, and a 24-bit DAC and op-amps from Burr-Brown together with neat interference-minimising circuit topology should set it up nicely for its group test next issue.

We tested the C340 amp in *HFC* 192 and found it an eminently ear-friendly performer. It is smooth and civilised yet rarely lacks 'grunt', thanks in part to impedance-sensing circuitry which optimises its delivery according to load – handy, given that the Dali is relatively tough. Our measurements show a fairly hefty output of 62 Watts per channel into eight Ohms, and it's not short of facilities – you get remote control, defeatable tone controls and seven line-level inputs, including two tape loops.

### SYSTEM SOUND

It's important you know this system's limits: for starters, its sound lacks the scale to fill large rooms, so it's important you only consider it if you want hi-fi for a confined space. If you've got a larger area, there's no problem with the electronics, but you'll need to choose a different pair of speakers.

You will also find it restrictive if you like to listen at high volume – push it beyond a low-to-moderate level and the Dali's drivers start crashing the end-stops, particularly with a thumping bass line. It's also a touch fizzy with cymbals and the like, and a little soft-centred when it comes to dynamics. It's not a system to headbang to, so air guitarists should look elsewhere.

However, there's much more to hi-fi than just cavernous volume and pounding bass. If you play within its limits, this is a hugely

enjoyable performer, civilised and communicative, able to hang an image adroitly between the speakers and present a soundstage unbettered by any system in this group. It's not musically fussy: as long as you respect its volume limits, it thumps out trance or rock with solid assurance, while quieter vocal pieces sound fluid and controlled.

But it's its performance with classical material that really sets this system apart from the other five featured in these pages. Listening to *On the Green* from *Carmina Burana*, its sound is cogent and unforced; none sound more 'together' and none bring the piece to life with such three-dimensional depth.

### CONCLUSION

This is a system with a very particular application. If you want discrete hi-fi to play at moderate volumes it delivers in spades.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**SYNERGY** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** **£999.85**

■ A highly enjoyable small room system – as a discrete set-up for the bedroom or office its just about ideal.

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE (NAD)

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE (DALI)

Lenbrook UK ☎ (01296) 482017



# THE PIONEER/B&W SYSTEM

Pioneer is at the cutting edge of the digital media business, being quick to respond with a number of well positioned and highly regarded products for the AV and home recording markets. It has successfully secured its place in the digital future, partnering the Matsushita Corporation in a venture into the delay plagued DVD-Audio format (see *HFC* 198).

Always at the forefront of technological advances, Pioneer's more recent success in the AV field is built on the company's substantial foundation as a well regarded hi-fi electronics manufacturer. With such experience, here is a Pioneer set-up to really get our teeth into.

The amplifier and source components have both appeared in *HFC* before, specifically in our stringent Miller and Gold Mega Tests. Like Denon, Pioneer chose a pair of B&W loudspeakers to complement its electronics in the form of the newly introduced DM602 Series 2, a well regarded speaker in its original guise, but as yet unreviewed here.

The source is Pioneer's PD-S507 CD player which was outperformed by other models in our recent group test (*HFC* 191). However, it makes for just one third of the system, and the

**Here's a meaty looking system from a company whose name befits its outlook. Lee Dunkley finds out if it's in the spirit of hi-fi.**



partnering amplifier and loudspeakers hopefully will prove to be a positive influence.

A £200 player, it employs a centrally mounted transport and an inverted Stable Platter Mechanism. This offers a more secure clamping method, allowing the laser to work more efficiently, but means you must remember to insert the disc label-side down. Features include useful editing functions, full-function remote control and a headphone socket with independent level control. An informative calendar-type display gives the usual track timing information, but can be switched off to minimise front panel clutter.

Amplification comes from Pioneer's A-407R £230 integrated amp, Recommended in *HFC* 186. At a rated 45 Watts per channel, the amp appears to be pricey when compared with others in its class. Further investigation reveal that actual output is 78 Watts into 8 Ohms under dynamic conditions, which is quite credible.

It's an all-singing, all-dancing amp with an array of controls on the alloy front panel, although provision is made for bypassing tone, 'loudness' and balance controls. There are three line inputs plus connection for a turntable and two tape loops. Terminals are provided for two pairs of speakers which can be switched independently but don't accept 4mm plugs. A system remote with volume control is supplied.

But what of the first *HFC* outing for B&W's revised DM602 Series 2 loudspeaker? A replacement for the highly regarded original, this £300 model is the bigger brother to B&W's DM601 Series 2 (as endorsed by Denon, see p72) standing at 49cm tall and derived from the acclaimed Nautilus 800 Series technology. A two-way standmounter, the DM602 Series 2's substantial cabinet employs a larger 180mm mid/bass driver and the same 26mm metal dome tweeter as used in the DM601 Series 2.

## SYSTEM SOUND

First impressions count for a lot, and this combination of components has all the markings of a serious hi-fi set-up. Wired and fired, the system's forthright and appealing sound is keen to impress with a sense of urgency in its portrayal that grabs your attention.

In comparison with the smaller B&W speakers used in the Denon system, the bigger 602s provide oodles of tuneful bass, bringing the music to life with pace and rhythm. Vocals come through clear and detailed with perhaps a hint of midband forwardness, providing an open and transparent air.

Closer scrutiny over prolonged listening sessions reveals a number of less appealing characteristics that counterbalance the initial appeal. Bass is plentiful, and in most instances in good proportion, but it isn't particularly well

controlled. Tracks that exhibit a significant amount of bass weight in their production are turned into a lumpy mess, swamping the music with boominess and detracting from other elements of the recording.

At higher volumes an abrasive and scratchy top end is revealed, which on several occasions resulted in a rapid reduction of volume level to reduce its harshness. These two elements make for a slightly 'boom'n'tizz' sound that goes unnoticed at lower volumes, but crank up the level and it overshadows the music.

## CONCLUSION

An impactful system that shouts "ready for action" both sonically and aesthetically. Has bags of get-up-and-go, but can sound uncomfortable at higher volumes.

## THE COMPONENTS

### CD PLAYER

Pioneer PD-S507 £200.00

An all-singing and dancing CD player with a lively, forward sound, but was outperformed by competitors in our group test in issue 191. Features Pioneer's inverted transport mechanism requiring discs to be played label-side down.

Socketry: analogue and digital (optical) outputs, CD synchro out.

### AMPLIFIER

Pioneer A-407R £230.00

A full-function integrated amplifier with an upfront and not particularly well controlled sound. There are more powerful amps around at a similar price point.

Socketry: three line inputs plus one phono and two tape loops, additional set of speaker terminals.

### SPEAKERS

B&W DM602 Series 2 £300.00

A substantial size for a standmounted speaker with improved technology derived from the Nautilus 800 Series. Little has changed externally from the original: this still rates as a fine speaker, but careful system-matching is called for. Sensitivity is rated at 90dB and impedance at 8 Ohms.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**SYNERGY** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £730.00

■ A serious looking combination of components that is anything but subtle in its sonic performance. Best with pop and dance material, but high level listening can prove fatiguing.

■ ONE YEAR GUARANTEE (PIONEER)

■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE (B&W)

Pioneer ☎ (01753) 789789

B&W ☎ (01903) 750750



# THE SONY SYSTEM

With the DVD-playing PlayStation 2 games console launching its assault this year, Sony's attempt at world domination might just succeed – well, the world of home entertainment at least. People use its products to listen to music, watch TV, play video games, talk to each other or take in a movie (or perhaps make one), with an ever-decreasing number of boxes required to perform each task. More and more homes are joining the Sony Republic; factor in the firm's huge software interests and it's clear Sony's multimedia net is closing. Surely only Microsoft can claim such a powerful position for the future.

But while Sony's rise to the top of, say, the video games tree has been meteoric, its inroad into the UK hi-fi market has been more laboured. It's taken a long time to compete musically with products from specialist brands, even longer to persuade hi-fi purists that Japanese gear can cut it with the best of British.

During the past few years things have changed. Aided and abetted by the talented tweekers at its UK HQ, Sony's hi-fi arm has created some of the most consistently impressive budget-to-mid-priced separates of the late 1990s. And whether you're looking for a multi-channel, DVD-based set-up or two-channel CD sound, its 'one-make' systems are among the best around for 'sound per pound'.

## THE COMPONENTS

### CD PLAYER

**Sony CDP-XB930E £299.99**  
Beautifully built and technically advanced this player is one of the very best below £500. Its sound is keen and engaging, mixing energy with fine detail in a manner that's rare at the price. Socketry: analogue and twin digital (electrical and optical) outputs.

### AMPLIFIER

**Sony TA-FB730R £199.99**  
Its upfront presentation means careful partnering is essential, but get it right and this amp is born to thrill. It's superbly built for the money, and well featured too. Socketry: three line inputs plus one phono and two tape loops, additional set of speaker terminals, RDS EON control.

### SPEAKERS

**Sony SS-86E £99.99**  
You can't expect the world from a pair of £100 speakers, but this model actually holds its head pretty high alongside the excellent electronics. Sensitivity is rated at 85dB and impedance is 6 Ohms.

**Sony has produced some superb value hi-fi components in recent years. Is this system true to form? Tim Bown investigates.**



The set-up Sony submitted for this test starts in the best possible way, with the brilliant CDP-XB930E CD player as source (*HFC* 195). It's a must-hear model for anyone checking out the scene below £500, dropping by with the kind of build quality few companies can aspire to at such a price, then mixing in a sonic cocktail guaranteed to set ears sizzling.

Various UK-specific modifications aim to lift its performance above and beyond, and the sonic result majors on timing and dynamics, with superb resolution in the mid-to-upper region. It's a touch hard and steely at times, but generally thoroughly appealing.

This player's partnering amp was also new in '99, although it bears strong resemblance to models that have gone before. This is no bad thing – Sony's recent two-channel amps have been able contenders and the TA-FB730R, complete with UK-specific tweaks, is arguably the best yet.

The word 'arguably' is important in this context, because not everyone will warm to its presentation. On test in *HFC* 196, some of our blind listening panel found it vital and engaging, while others thought it strident and thin-sounding. We prefer to err on the positive side, given the right partnering gear, because few amps under £200 make music sound so alive. It is well-stocked with facilities too, proving amps don't have to be Spartan to sound good –

you get remote control, tone and balance adjust, five line inputs plus one for phono, two switchable sets of speaker outputs and a 'loudness' control.

Sony had hoped to supply a brand new speaker to match the electronics, but as deadline loomed it was still unfinished. Instead it supplied the SS-86E, a model that's been around years and visibly shows its age – a 10cm paper mid/bass cone, 25mm soft dome tweeter and their mountings appear rudimentary by modern loudspeaker standards. Nevertheless, it remains one of the stronger competitors at £100, with good bass weight and a reasonably smooth and well scaled performance.

### SYSTEM SOUND

The speakers are undoubtedly the limiting factor here, without the resolution, extension and control needed to show the electronics at their best (and occasionally brilliant) light. It also puts quite serious restrictions on the ability to play loud – push the volume knob much beyond "10-to-12" and the sound hardens before serious distortion sets in.

However, given the speaker's particularly modest price, overall results are surprisingly good. The razor-sharp timing and strong dynamic ability of both CD player and amp is pervasive, ensuring music is conveyed with its energetic spirit intact. From the leading

edge of a piano note to the snap of a pulsing rhythm, this system shows resolution rare in a set-up costing less than £600, coupled to a commendable ability to pull ambience from a recording and present a believable sound stage.

It may not be the smoothest musical ride around, particularly when played above moderate volume, but it certainly talks to you with heart and soul.

### CONCLUSION

Consider the speaker as a temporary measure, a good stop-gap for someone who has set his or her heart on the electronics but can't afford to spend much more.

With an upgrade in that department the CD player and amp show they have more to give, but even as it stands this is an impressive little system for the price. Worth a Recommendation, with said provisos attached.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**SYNERGY** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £599.97

■ The speakers are a worthy stop-gap for those with limited funds, and the electronics form the perfect spring-board towards a higher-end sound. Overall, a highly effective place to start.

■ ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

☎ (0990) 111999



# THE YAMAHA SYSTEM

**Y**amaha is a remarkable company. Not only is it a world leader in the manufacture of motorbikes and musical instruments, it has also played a pioneering role in taking multi-channel cinema sound into the home. Its amps and processors have been consistently recommended by critics across the world, making its products an obvious choice for movie fans at both entry-level and mid-market price points. But when it comes to traditional hi-fi – two-channel components created with the express purpose of making beautiful music – it's hardly the first name that springs to mind.

In recent times, the company has been seeking to change that. Well, the last bit anyway. Its CD players and two-channel amps are now seen in a more favourable light, with rave reviews from some quarters suggesting a major change in musical philosophy. And the introduction of a new range of speakers for both two-channel and multi-channel use has made an entire Yamaha system a more viable proposition, whatever your intended application.

For us at *Choice*, it's the speakers that are the real unknown quantity. The one supplied for this system goes by the name of NS-100 and looks impressive for the money – more the sort of thing you'd expect from a dedicated European speaker manufacturer than a Japanese electronics specialist. Its neatly chamfered, 41cm

**Yamaha is very strong in the home cinema market, but can it cut it in the tough world of stereo? Tim Bovern calls judgement.**



tall standmounting cabinet sports a 25mm silk dome tweeter and a 120mm Polymica mid/bass cone, reflex-loaded via a front-firing port.

If the speakers were something of a surprise, the electronics are more familiar territory. We reviewed the CDX-493 CD player in *HFC* 191 and found it to be a spirited performer with good pace and rhythm. However, its resolution is not all that it might be, even at £180. It conveys the fundamental dynamics of the music with urgency, but when it comes to micro-dynamics and fine detail there's not a great deal going on below the surface.

Conversely, the 60 Watts-per-channel AX-392 amplifier (*HFC* 192) doesn't convey a great deal of urgency in its sound, although the same criticisms of indistinct detail could apply. It's smooth and inoffensive, with a clean midband performance worthy of praise, but bass lacks definition and its timing isn't all it could be.

Both electronic components lack the solidity of build offered by the likes of the Sony in this group, but Yamaha's gear has always looked smart and this will no doubt add to the system's value in the eyes of the punter. Both come with a natty remote control, and the amp hides tone, balance and loudness controls behind a neat aluminium flap. A rotary dial is used to select between six source

inputs, including one for phono and two loops for 'tape' and 'MD', twin sets of speaker outputs are provided around the back.

## SYSTEM SOUND

Although lauded in home cinema circles, Yamaha's multi-channel gear has been criticised by some of the hi-fi fraternity for lacking musicality. But on this evidence, its standard two-channel kit is improving: many listeners would find first impressions favourable, particularly at such a low price.

Slip on a CD and it immediately sounds taut, clean and robust, at least relative to plenty of other systems at this level. Compare it with a set-up like the Marantz or Sony, for instance, and you might even prefer it at first, believing it to be crisper and better defined; but the longer you listen, the more its limitations become evident.

First there's the bass. On the plus side, it's reasonably punchy and avoids the over-blown flab some budget set-ups wallow in, but it also lacks weight and tune-fulness. The stereo image and soundstage are flat and shallow, and there's no real depth to the sound – the music's surface appears firm and resolute, but there's a lack of inner detail to bring it to life.

Such is the nature of hi-fi resolution; even at this level it can be attained to a degree, but the

Yamaha ignores such finery and goes instead for solid, upfront immediacy.

Though it lacks the bass, it's a little reminiscent of a half-decent club system. It's got plenty of surface presence and goes quite loud without losing its smooth solidity, and the speaker's tweeter is clearly a capable unit. But in hi-fi terms this simply isn't enough – played alongside the Sony system, Dot Allison's ethereal *Colour Me* sounded Earth-bound, lacking 3D depth, air and ambience.

## CONCLUSION

This system certainly has appeal: it's well featured, smartly dressed and delivers a robust performance, all for £550. But ultimately it's a shallow experience compared with some of the alternatives, and that's no way to start a long-lasting relationship with your music collection.

## THE COMPONENTS

### CD PLAYER

Yamaha CDX-493 £179.99

A player that delivers plenty of vim and vigour, able to grip rhythms tightly and bash out the beats with aplomb. However, its resolution is wanting and its delivery lacks ambience. Socketry: analogue and digital (optical) outputs.

### AMPLIFIER

Yamaha AX-392 £169.99

This smooth budget contender puts in a solid if unspectacular performance. Certainly not the best for the money, but aesthetic detail weighs in its favour. Socketry: three line inputs plus one phono and two tape loops, second set of speaker terminals.

### SPEAKERS

Yamaha NS-100 £199.99

Part of Yamaha's new range of speakers, this model is well put together and thoughtfully designed. It does OK in this system and it'll be interesting to see in a group test context. Impedance is 6 Ohms.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆

**SYNERGY** ★★☆☆☆

**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆

**PRICE** **£549.97**

■ A reasonable package at the price, but more suited to general pop/dance fare than anything more demanding.

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

Yamaha ☎ (01923) 233166



# SUPER TEST SYSTEMS

Good though some of these systems are, you'll have noticed that none are rated as a Best Buy. This is for two reasons. First, all could be improved to some degree with some careful mixing and matching of brands, even at their relatively lowly price points. Second, by reviewing complete systems

we are cutting down the variables open to the user in choosing partnering gear to suit their specific needs. That's fine if one of these set-ups happens to suit your listening space and taste in music to a 'T', but it's impossible to make a universal recommendation.

Here's an example: the NAD/Dali is impressive in the right environment, but would need bigger speakers to work well in a large room. One has to be aware of its limitations to reveal its true strengths.

However, even if none of these systems are ideal for your needs, there are still some excellent starting points for anyone seeking to build an affordable system from scratch. For example, listen to the excellent electronics available from Sony or NAD in tandem with a set of speakers of your choosing. The Dynaudio Audience 40, say, or Acoustic Energy's Aegis 3. The results would be very interesting indeed.

Ultimately, we have judged three of our six systems worthy of Recommendation. The Marantz/Tanoy set-up plays it a little safe sonically, but its virtues outweigh its vices by a considerable margin. It proves that you don't need big speakers to get a big sound.

The NAD/Dali combo is arguably the strongest of the bunch sonically, particularly with classical music, but craves a small room and dislikes being played loud. However, that's largely as a result of the compact and very pretty Dali speakers. Sony's creation can be terrifically engaging, even if the speakers don't show the electronics in their very best light. And by the time you read this, Sony will have more appropriate speakers available.

In fact, all three of these systems would benefit in one way or another from a change of speakers. What's more, if you're prepared to spend some time auditioning you may find an even better sound by combining the best elements of each system. But as a convenient starting point, our favourites here will do very nicely indeed.

## ADDING TO YOUR SYSTEM

### RECORDER

MiniDisc is a brilliantly user-friendly format and an ideal recording partner for affordable systems such as these. Check out models like Sony's MDS-JE530 (£200). If you prefer the less flexible but considerably higher quality CD-R(W) format, Pioneer's PDR-509 would be a sound bet (£300) – or, if you're still into cassette, try Denon's DRM-550 (£160).

### TURNTABLE

For vinyl lovers, Rega remains the classic budget choice – you won't go far wrong with a Planar 2 (£214). It's also well worth checking out Pro-ject, or Dual if you insist on semi-automatic convenience. Don't forget that some of the amps here don't have phono stages built-in. If not, you can run a turntable by adding an off-board phono stage like Musical Fidelity's X-LP (£130 – now in Version 2 form). Even if the amp does have a phono stage, an off-board unit is an effective upgrade.

### CABLES

Separates systems don't supply the cable required between amp and speakers, so remember to budget separately for some good quality wire. On the other hand, CD players come supplied with free interconnects to hook them to the amp – they'll get you running, but audible improvements can be achieved by upgrading to a better set. The cables used throughout this test are ideal for systems such as these – QED's Qudos Silver speaker cable (£5/m) and Qnect 2 interconnects (£30).

### SUPPORTS

Proper support is crucial if your hi-fi is to give of its best, even when you're using 'entry-level' kit. Get hold of a decent, purpose-built rack; there are some good, inexpensive models to choose from, such as Sound Organisation's Z560 (£160) or Standesign's Design 4 (£190). For improved definition, site the speakers on stands like Atacama's SE24 (£70).

## RECOMMENDED SYSTEMS

### MARANTZ/TANNOY £729.80

A smooth, ear-friendly all-rounder from the Marantz/Tanoy partnership. Some may prefer a brighter sound, but few systems at this price are as balanced across a range of music. Midrange performance is excellent and it has a particular penchant for vocals.



### NAD/DALI £999.85

Used correctly, this cogent and fluid-sounding system can soothe and engage in equal measure. It's the most costly set-up here and in many ways it's also the best, although it's only suitable for use in small-ish spaces.



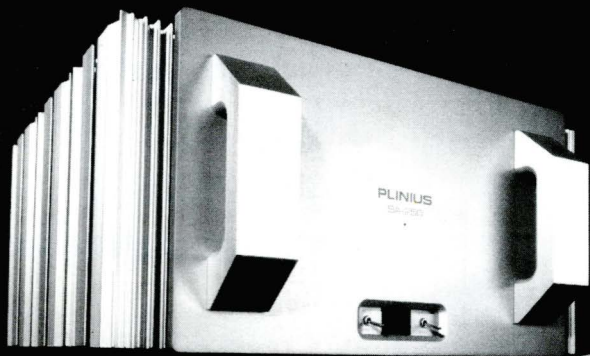
### SONY £599.97

The CD player and amplifier are superbly built and highly capable – an excellent foundation for an affordable hi-fi system. The speaker isn't in the same league, but as a low-cost stop-gap it does enough to earn the entire set-up a Recommendation.





# Dynamic Duo



Equipment pictured  
Plinius SA-250 Class A Power Amplifier  
and Plinius M16 Preamplifier



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Basis - B.A.T. - BKS - DNM  
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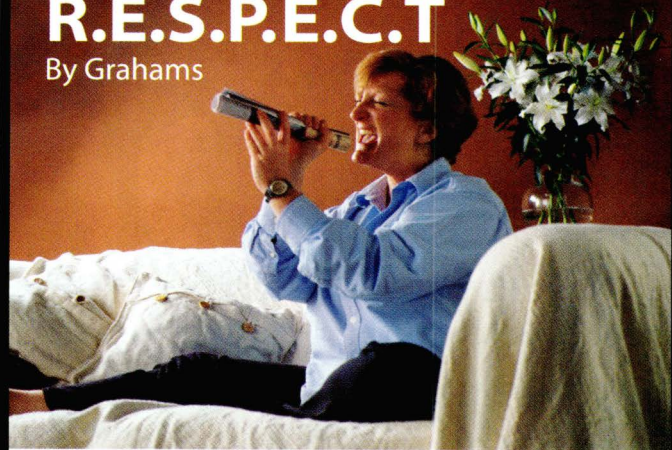
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Jadis JA80. 18 months old. 6550 push pull 60w monos.	£4800	£10000
Audio Note P4. 2 years old parallel 300B 18w monos.	£2100	£4000
Audio Note Dac3 Signature. Valve O/P stage	£1500	£2850
Sonus Faber Guanoni.	£3500	£5795
Sonus Faber Elector Amator	£2000	£2849

### Prosaic

	Sale	New
Solartron SR152 PSU x 2. Valve regulated DC supply	each £300	-----
SJS Arcadia Parallel WE 300B SE - extraordinary.	£4500	£6500
Living Voice RW24 horn bass bin system	£5500	£11500
Vitavox RH330. Mid range horns. Pair cosmetic seconds	£350	£970
Vitavox AK157. 15" bass drivers. 105 dB/w	£550	£900
Lowther TP1 'London' PM2 A.	£995	-----

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	Sale	New
Solartron SR152 PSU x 2. Valve regulated DC supply	each £300	-----
SJS Arcadia Parallel WE 300B SE - extraordinary.	£4500	£6500
Living Voice RW24 horn bass bin system	£5500	£11500
Vitavox RH330. Mid range horns. Pair cosmetic seconds	£350	£970
Vitavox AK157. 15" bass drivers. 105 dB/w	£550	£900
Lowther TP1 'London' PM2 A.	£995	-----

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## LIVING VOICE



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Hi-Fi Choice Editor's Choice

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# YOUR CHANCE TO WIN one of these superb pairs of B&W DM603 S2 loudspeakers worth £550 each



**E**ach year, the Hi-Fi Choice readership survey tells us what you think of our magazine. The results of the survey help us to judge whether you want to see more reviews, or more features? Do you want to see reviews of more expensive kit, or stay close to the bargain basement? Only you can tell us!

It's only fair that we offer something in return for your time and trouble. This year we've teamed up with B&W to offer three pairs of B&W DM603 S2 loudspeakers worth a total of £1,650. Featuring a distinctive kevlar midrange unit, compact neodymium tweeter and separate bass driver, the new 603 likes

to be played loud. The bottom end drive, control and sheer headroom are in a different class to the competition. The emphasis here is firmly on engineering, the 603 was conceived to give maximum sound quality for the money, a fact born out by its Hi-Fi Choice Recommended status. The B&W DM603 S2 loudspeakers will be given away in a Prize Draw, which you enter by filling in your answers to our questions, and posting the whole form by Monday, 28th February 2000 to the FREEPOST address (no stamp required) which is given at the end of the questionnaire.

**DON'T DELAY - WRITE IN TODAY!**

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR PRIZE DRAWS:**

1) All entries must be on the survey form provided. Photocopies will be accepted, but not multiple entries. 2) To be eligible for the draw, the survey form must be completed in full. 3) There is no cash alternative to the prizes. Should a prize be unavailable for whatever reason, an alternative prize of equivalent value will be provided in its place. 4) Employees of Dennis Publishing Ltd, B&W, their agents and associates are not eligible to enter the prize draw. 5) We regret that the competition is only open to UK residents. 6) Survey forms must be received by first post on Monday February 28 2000. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery. 7) The prizes for the draw will be awarded to the first entry chosen at random by the Editor after the closing date on Monday February 28 2000. No correspondence will be entered into, and the Editor's decision is final. 8) Winners will be notified by post. 9) For a full list of winners, write, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope, to: Hi-Fi Choice Reader Survey Winners, Marketing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ, within six weeks of the draw date. 10) Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers from companies other than Dennis Publishing OR if you are under 18 years of age.



**ABOUT THE MAGAZINE**

**1. How many issues of Hi-Fi Choice have you read in the last year?**

- 1-2  1 (6)
- 3-4  2
- 5-6  3
- 7-8  4
- 9-10  5
- 11-12  6
- None  7

**2. How do you obtain your copy of Hi-Fi Choice?**

- From the newsagent  1 (7)
- On subscription  2
- Borrow a copy  3

**3. How many other people read your copy of Hi-Fi Choice?**

- 1  1 (8)
- 2  2
- 3  3
- 4 or more  4
- No one  5

**4. What happens to your copy of Hi-Fi Choice when you have finished reading it?**

- Kept for reference  1 (9)
- Passed on to somebody else  2
- Certain articles cut or copied  3
- Throw it away  4
- Other  5

**5. How do you rate Hi-Fi Choice in terms of the following:**

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Overall appearance	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (10)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (11)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (12)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (13)
Depth of information	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Appeal of articles	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Design of articles	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Overall interest	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Overall usefulness	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Usage as a buyer's guide	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Value for money	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

**6. If you are a regular reader you will notice Hi-Fi Choice has recently been redesigned. Is your opinion that it is now:**

- Better than before  1 (14)
- The Same  2
- Worse than before  3

**7. Overall, how do you find Hi-Fi Choice's product coverage?**

- Too technical  1 (15)
- About right  2
- Not technical enough  3

**8a. How do you rate the balance of personal opinions and product reviews?**

- Too little opinion  1 (16)
- Too few reviews  2
- About right  3

**8b. Which contributor do you feel the most entertaining and informative? (Please rate each one on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is the least entertaining and informative and 10 is the most entertaining and informative).**

- Richard Black  (17)
- Alvin Gold  (18)
- Jimmy Hughes  (19)
- Paul Messenger  (20)
- Paul Miller  (21)
- Phil Strongman  (22)
- David Vivian  (23)

**9. For which of the following reasons do you buy Hi-Fi Choice:**

- To keep up to date with hi-fi products  1 (24)
- Specifically for hi-fi information  2
- To keep up to date with future technologies  3
- As an aid when purchasing equipment/software  4
- Impressed by cover  5
- It was recommended by a friend/dealer  6

**10. To what extent are you influenced by free supplements/cover gifts when buying Hi-Fi Choice?**

- Very influenced  1 (25)
- Slightly influenced  2
- Not influenced at all  3

**11. What type of cover gift would you most like to see?**

- Book  1 (26)
- Supplement  2
- Accessories (e.g. cleaning kit)  3
- Vouchers  4
- CD/tape  5
- Calendar  6
- Cover flap promotion (e.g. special offer)  7
- DVD sampler  8

**12. What would you like to see more or less of in the magazine?**

	More	Same	Less
News	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (27)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (28)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (29)
Short reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
In-depth reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Tests: Product comparison	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Product in isolation	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Complete systems	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Individual components	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Readers' letters	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Surround sound	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Technical features	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
Special Promotions	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x
Hints & tips	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v
Competitions	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (30)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (31)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (32)
Readers' queries	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Readers' systems	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Beginners' guides	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
New technology	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Buying advice	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Buyer's guide	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
DIY features	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Software (music) reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

**OTHER READING HABITS**

**13. Which of the following magazines do you read, and how often?**

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Gramophone	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (33)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (34)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (35)
Hi-Fi News	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Hi-Fi World	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
What Hi-Fi?	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Home Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Men's Lifestyle Magazines (e.g. Maxim)	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Mojo	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Q	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Record Collector	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Stereophile	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
Stuff	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x
T3	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v

**THE EQUIPMENT YOU OWN**

**14. Which of the following items do you own, and which do you intend to buy in the next year?**

	Currently own	Intend to buy
Micro system with CD	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (36)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (37)
Mini system with CD	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
CD personal stereo	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
NICAM VCR	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Surround sound equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Home computer	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
DVD player	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
DVD-A player	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
SACD player	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
MP3 player	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
DAB tuner	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x
Turntable	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v
Arm	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (38)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (39)
Cartridge	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Amplifier	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Surround sound processor	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
CD player	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
DAT recorder	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
D/A converter	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Cassette deck	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
MiniDisc recorder	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Tuner	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
Loudspeakers	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x
Flat panel speakers	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v
Speaker stands	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (40)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (41)
Equipment support	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Cables	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Headphones	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

**PURCHASING HABITS**

**15. When you buy hi-fi equipment, what are your main sources of information?**

- Hi-fi magazines  1 (42)
- Manufacturers' literature  2
- Manufacturers' advertisements  3
- Dealers' literature  4
- Dealers' advertisements  5
- Dealers' demonstrations  6
- Newspapers  7
- Exhibitions  8
- Internet/web sites  9
- Other, please specify.....

**16. How important are the following factors when purchasing your hi-fi equipment? (Please give a score to each factor of 1-10 where: 1 = not important, 10 = very important).**

- Performance  1 (43)
- Reliability  2
- Compatibility with existing equipment  3
- Dealer demonstrations  4
- Value for money  5
- After sales service  6
- Price  7
- Brand reputation  8
- Magazine endorsement  9
- Previous experience with dealer  0
- Previous experience with maker  x
- Product appearance  v
- Availability  1 (44)
- Country of origin  2
- Ease of Use  3

**17. Where do you currently buy your equipment from, and where do you expect to buy it from in the future?**

	Currently buy from	Expect to buy from
Specialist hi-fi dealer	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (45)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (46)
Department store	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
High street chain	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Discount warehouse	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Mail order/off the page	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Second-hand	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Via the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Other, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

**18. How often in the past 12 months have you visited a hi-fi dealer?**

- Once a month or more  1 (47)
- Every couple of months  2
- Once every 6 months  3
- Once a year  4
- Less often than this  5
- Never  6

**19. In miles, about how far would you be prepared to travel to buy hi-fi products?**

- 0-25 miles  1 (48)
- 26-50 miles  2
- 51-100  3
- 101-200  4
- 201+ miles  5

**20. Has advertising in Hi-Fi Choice ever influenced your purchasing decisions?**

- Yes  1 (49)
- No  2

**21. If yes, about how many purchases has it influenced in the last 12 months?**

- 1-5  1 (50)
- 6-10  2
- More than 10  3

**22. What influences do you respond to in an advert?**

- Product specifications included  1 (51)
- Price listings  2
- Offers  3
- Pictures of the product  4
- Company brand name  5
- Humour  6
- Size of advertisement  7
- Full colour advertisement  8
- Position among editorial  9
- Position at front of magazine  0
- Position at back of magazine  x

**23. Have reviews in Hi-Fi Choice ever influenced your purchasing decisions?**

- Yes  1 (52)
- No  2

**24. If yes, about how many purchases have they influenced in the last 12 months?**

- 1-5  1 (53)
- 6-10  2
- More than 10  3

**25. When buying new equipment, have you made up your mind about the brand before reading your hi-fi magazine?**

- Yes  1 (54)
- No  2
- Don't know  3

**26. Do you pass on advice or recommendations to anyone else about their own equipment or about any of the purchases they make?**

- Yes  1 (55)
- No  2

**27. If 'yes', do any of these same people read hi-fi magazines themselves?**

- Yes  1 (56)
- No  2



**28 About how often would you say that you have passed on advice or recommendations to someone else about hi-fi products in the last month?**

- Less than once a month  1 (57)
- Once/month  2
- Twice/month  3
- Three times/month  4
- Four or more times/month  5

**29 Can you remember approximately what the average cost of the item was that you recommended?**

- <£300  1 (58)
- £300-£599  2
- £600-£999  3
- £1,000-£3,999  4
- £4,000+  5

**30 Approximately how much have you spent on the following to date?**

	Nothing	Less than £500	£501-£1,000	£1,001-£3,999	£4,000+
DVD player	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (59)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (60)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (61)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (62)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (63)
CD player	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Tape deck	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Tuner	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
DAB Tuner	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Turntable	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
SACD player	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
MP3 player	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Amplification	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Speakers	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
Speaker stands	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x
Equipment supports	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v
Surround sound equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (64)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (65)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (66)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (67)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (68)
Cables	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Car hi-fi	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Other accessories	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

**31 Approximately how much do you expect to spend on the same hi-fi equipment in the next 12 months?**

	Nothing	Less than £500	£501-£1,000	£1,001-£3,999	£4,000+
DVD player	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (69)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (70)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (71)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (72)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (73)
CD player	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Tape deck	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Tuner	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
DAB tuner	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Turntable	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
SACD player	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
MP3 player	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Amplification	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Speakers	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
Speaker stands	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x	<input type="checkbox"/> x
Equipment supports	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v	<input type="checkbox"/> v
Surround sound equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (74)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (75)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (76)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (77)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (78)
Cables	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Car hi-fi	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Other accessories	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

**32 Approximately how many of the following products have you bought in the last month?**

	1-3	4-10	11-29	30+	None
LPs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (79)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (80)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (81)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (82)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (83)
Cassettes	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
CDs	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Video tapes (blank + pre-recorded)	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
MiniDiscs	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Blank CD-Rs	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Computer software	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

**LISTENING HABITS**

**33 What type of music do you listen to?**

- Classical  1 (9)
- Rock  2
- Opera  3
- Indie  4
- Dance  5
- Jazz  6
- Folk/World  7
- Classic Rock  8

**34 Where do you buy videos/DVD-Videos from?**

- WH Smiths  1 (10)
- John Menzies  2
- Woolworths  3
- HMV  4
- Virgin  5
- Our Price  6
- MVC  7
- Tower Records  8
- High Street chain (e.g. Currys, Dixons)  9
- Blockbusters  0
- Supermarkets  x
- Mail order  v
- Internet  1 (11)
- Specialist independent dealer  2

**INTERNET**

**35 Are you connected to the Internet?**

- Yes  1 (12)
- No  2
- Plan to be in the next year  3

**36. If you are connected to the Internet, where do you access it from?**

- Home  1 (13)
- Work  2
- Other  3

**37 If you are connected, have you visited the Hi Fi Choice web site and, if so, how often?**

- Never  1 (14)
- Yes - occasionally  2
- Yes - frequently  3

**38 How useful do you find the site?**

- Very useful  1 (15)
- Quite useful  2
- No use at all  3

**39 How do you use the Internet in relation to technology products? (tick all that apply)**

- It keeps me informed of the latest technology releases  1 (16)
- To browse company's products  2
- To buy/order products on-line  3
- To obtain specific product details/specifications  4
- To use as a price guide  5

**40 What products have you bought through the Internet?**

- None  1 (17)
- CDs  2
- Books  3
- Travel tickets  4
- Videos  5
- DVDs  6
- Electronics  7
- Financial services  8
- Other  9

**41 Is your main use of the Internet/on-line services for business or pleasure?**

- Business  1 (18)
- Pleasure  2
- Both the same  3

**ABOUT YOUR LIFESTYLE**

**42 Are you...**

- Married/living with partner  1 (19)
- Single  2
- Divorced/widowed/separated  3

**43 Do you...**

- Rent your home  1 (20)
- Pay a mortgage on your home  2
- Own your home outright  3
- Intend to buy/move home  4
- Live with parents  5
- Other  6

**44 Do you have children and if so, how old are they?**

- None  1 (21)
- 0-4 years  2
- 5-10 years  3
- 11-15 years  4
- 15 years old or more  5

**45 Do your children have any influence on the kind of hi-fi products you buy?**

- Yes  1 (22)
- No  2

**ABOUT YOU AND YOUR WORK**

**46 How old are you?**

- 701 Under 15  1 (23)
- 702 15-17  2
- 703 18-24  3
- 704 25-34  4
- 705 35-44  5
- 706 45-54  6
- 707 55-64  7
- 708 Over 65  8

**47 Are you?**

- Male  1 (24)
- Female  2

**48 Which of the following best describes your occupation?**

- 601 Senior managerial/senior professional  1 (25)
- 602 Managerial/professional  2
- 603 Executive  3
- 604 Clerical  4
- 605 Work from home/self-employed  5
- 606 Manual  6
- 607 Unemployed  7
- 608 Retired  8
- 609 In full-time education  9
- 610 Other  0

**49 About how much do you earn a year?**

- 801 Under £10,000  1 (26)
- 802 £10,000-£14,999  2
- 803 £15,000-£19,999  3
- 804 £20,000-£24,999  4
- 805 £25,000-£29,999  5
- 806 £30,000-£39,999  6
- 806 £40,000-£59,999  7
- 806 £60,000+  8

**50 If you are in a long-term relationship, about how much does your partner earn per year?**

- Doesn't work  1 (27)
- Under £10,000  2
- £10,000-£14,999  3
- £15,000-£19,999  4
- £20,000-£24,999  5
- £25,000-£29,999  6
- £30,000-£39,999  7
- £40,000-£59,999  8
- £60,000+  9

**51 What is the cost of your stereo speakers?**

- £1-£299  1 (28)
- £300-£749  2
- £750-£1499  3
- £1500+  4

**52 Is real wood veneer important in your decision making (when purchasing new speakers)?**

- Yes  1 (29)
- No  2

**53 Are the speakers part of a home cinema package?**

- Yes  1 (30)
- No  2

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND TIME**

In order to be entered into the FREE prize draw please fill in your details below, and return your survey to the Freepost address given by Monday February 28th 2000.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

DAYTIME PHONE NO.

EMAIL ADDRESS

Please tick here if you do not wish to receive details of further relevant special offers or new products OR if you are under 18 years of age

**NOW SEND YOUR SURVEY TO:**  
 Hi-Fi Choice Survey 2000, Freepost WD7, BRISTOL, BS32 0ZZ  
 (No stamp needed if posted within the UK)



# RECEIVING loud and clear

It would seem that with the advent of surround sound receivers are set to make a comeback. **Jason Kennedy** investigates Marantz's contributions to the cause.

**H**aving established its multi-channel credentials with the Best Buy SR5000 AV receiver last month, Marantz is seeking to reinforce its foothold with that model's sibling the SR4000. Priced at £399 (£100 less than the SR5000) this all singing unit combines many of the features of its bigger brother with MPEG processing, a phono stage and 5.1 channel inputs for processor-equipped DVD players.

Onboard Dolby Digital processing combined with 80 Watts (RMS/six Ohms) for all three front channels and 40 Watts for the surrounds mean that this receiver should have no trouble creating a persuasive sound-field with music and movies. Outputs for a sub-woofer and centre (stereo) Dolby Pro-Logic enhancing power amp mean the SR4000 has the flexibility to make the most of all current surround formats.

The RDS tuner section works across FM, MW and LW bands and offers 30 presets so that favourite stations, virtually all the radio stations available in any one place in the UK, can be memorised.

A rotary source selector can be used to access any one of six inputs, under labels including DVD and CD-R. The latter reflecting Marantz's expectation that recordable CD will replace CD altogether before too long. Digital sources can be connected in both traditional ways: Toslink optical or coaxial electrical.

Marantz has simplified set-up

(Above) Marantz's new SR4000.

(Below) The Best Buy SR5000.



**"It has a moodier, darker personality that portrays the natural roughness of a performance to good effect."**

by displaying relevant information on the SR4000's display, so there is no need to hook up the TV. Video connections are, of course, supplied for routing the signal from source to monitor.

#### SR5000

In the January issue Paul Miller included the SR5000 in his multi-channel amplifier Super Test. This is what he and his listening panel discovered:

"Our blind panel was unanimous in its view of this amplifier with its big, bold and confident sound. It has a moodier, darker personality that portrays the rawness and natural roughness of a performance to good effect. Both the Cassandra Wilson and Meshell NdegéOcello CDs sounded somewhat sleazier, their voices possessing a live edge that was glossed over by other amplifiers. It was suggested that this encourages a more immediate and bouncier

sound 'that's miked up for a live performance through a PA rather than inside a recording studio'.

"The multi-channel DTS mixes did sound a little cleaner. Lyle Lovett's *She Makes Me Feel Good* was rather less grubby than his two-channel cousin, the guitar strings plucked with equal aplomb regardless of which front, centre or rear speaker he happened to have stumbled across on his acoustic walkabout. Steely Dan's *Gaucho* also delivered a very punchy performance, the driving bass line sounding as dry and positive.

"The explosive timpani that populate the DD-encoding of *Carmina Burana* played directly into the hands of the Marantz with its full-on sound, a combination of gruffness, dramatic presence and sheer 'welly' that blew out the acoustic cobwebs. Once again, the SR5000's musical flair prompted the suggestion it was 'brazen and clearly up for a good time'.

"It's difficult to see how the SR5000, with its onboard decoding and 5.1 channel analogue inputs to accommodate future outboard decoders, can be anything other than an unqualified success."

Not a bad result for a £499 receiver in a field ranging up to £2,500, and clear enough explanation for its Best Buy accolade.

#### RANGES AND PREMIUMS

Of course, the SR4000 and SR5000 are not the only multi-channel amps in Marantz's extensive portfolio. The Range series which includes these two models also contains the SR3000 base model and SR7000 with 100 Watts available on all five channels. Moving up the Range you'll find the AV/MM9000 pre-tuner/multi-channel power amp combo. A THX Ultra certified pairing that offers full DD and DTS decoding, 24/96 converters and HDAM output stages in the controller and five times 140 Watts from the MM9000 power amp.

If you thirst for greater quality, Marantz has a state of the art integrated receiver in its Premium range. The SR-14 is a substantial and glamorous machine offering sound quality that matches the brand's top purist hi-fi designs in a feature packed power house with one of the best remotes in the business.

For more information contact:

Marantz Hi-Fi UK Ltd, Kingsbridge House, Padbury Oaks, 575-583 Bath Road, Longford, Middlesex UB7 0EH.

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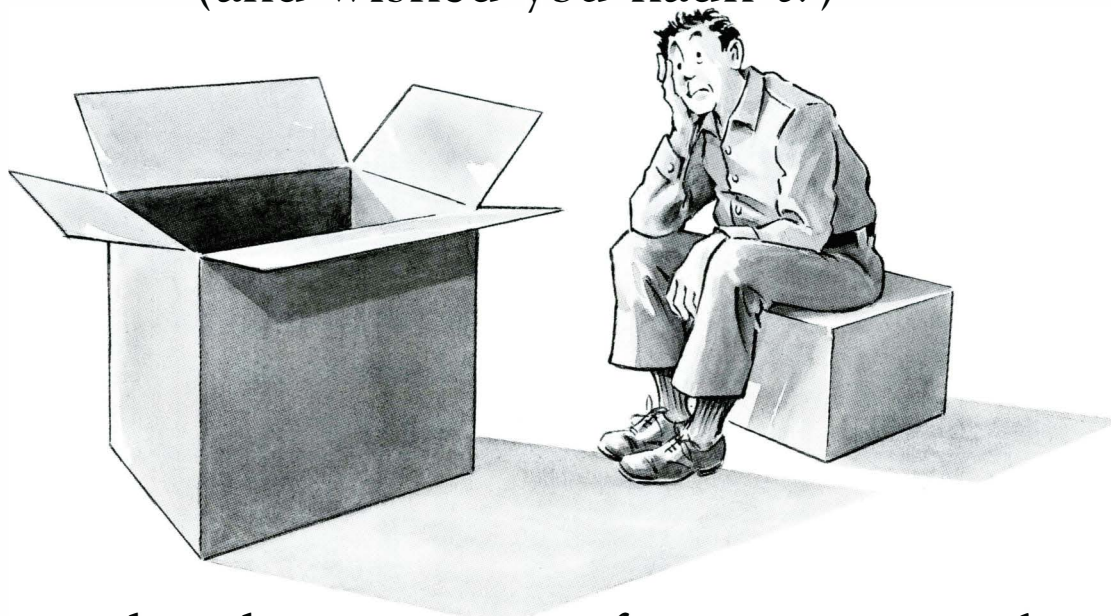


# marantz



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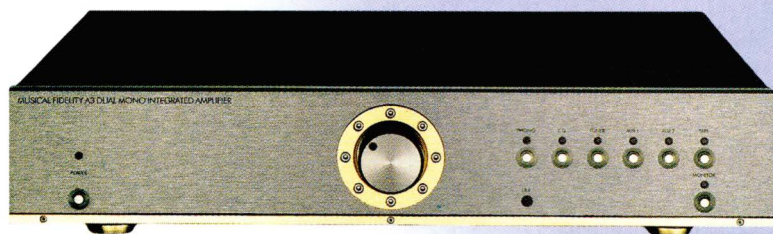
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\*When purchased together with the X-Ray CD Player

\*\*When purchased together with the CD6000 OSE

also available at **selected outlets**

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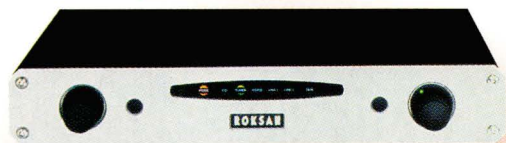
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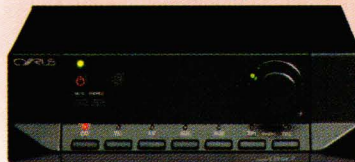
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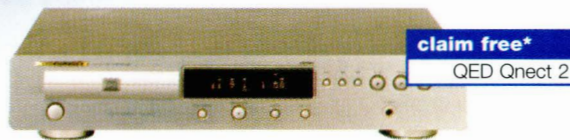
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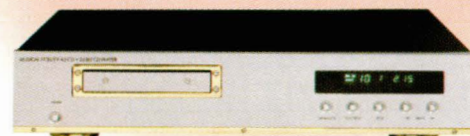
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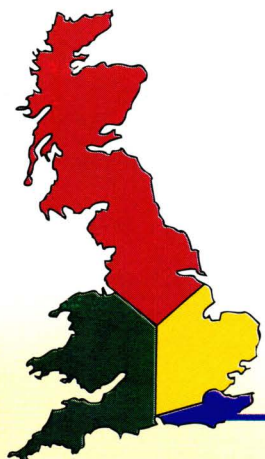
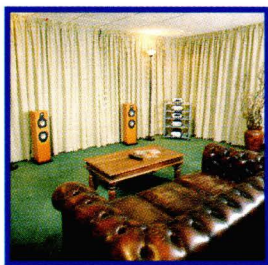
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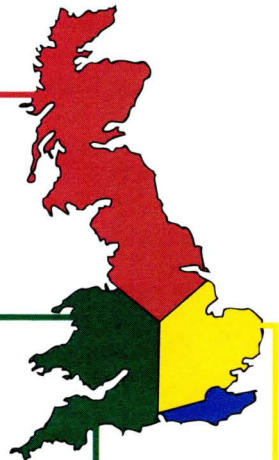
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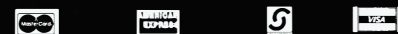
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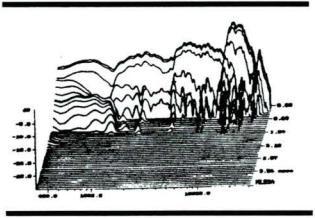
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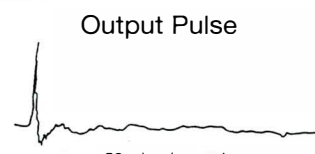
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## SALES & SERVICES

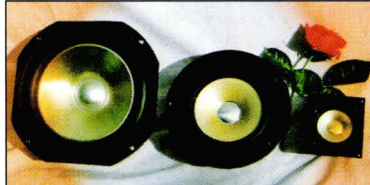
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**Bandor**

Bandor Miniature Loudspeakers  
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 Buckinghamshire, HP15 6XR, England  
 e-mail [bandor@netcomuk.co.uk](mailto:bandor@netcomuk.co.uk)  
 Tel: 01494 714058 Fax: 01494 714058

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# Dealer Guide

## MAIL ORDER

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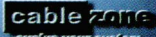
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S3TL	Paper IPL 6.5", 1" Seas treb	903x230x350	£186.00	£9.00
S3TLM	Metal IPL 6.5", 1" Seas treb	903x230x350	£233.00	£9.00
S3TLM RIB	Metal IPL 6.5", A&R Ribbon	903x230x350	£389.25	£9.00
S4TL	Audax 8" bass, Morel 1" treb	960x320x400	£215.00	£10.00
S5TL	Audax 10", 5" HDA mid, 1" treb	1080x320x400	£383.00	£11.00
S5TL GOLD	Audax 10", 5" HDA mid, Gold treb	1080x320x400	£565.56	£11.00

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Website: [www.marketsquare.co.uk/ilfracombe/ipl-acoustics.htm](http://www.marketsquare.co.uk/ilfracombe/ipl-acoustics.htm)

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## MAIL ORDER

### CARTRIDGES

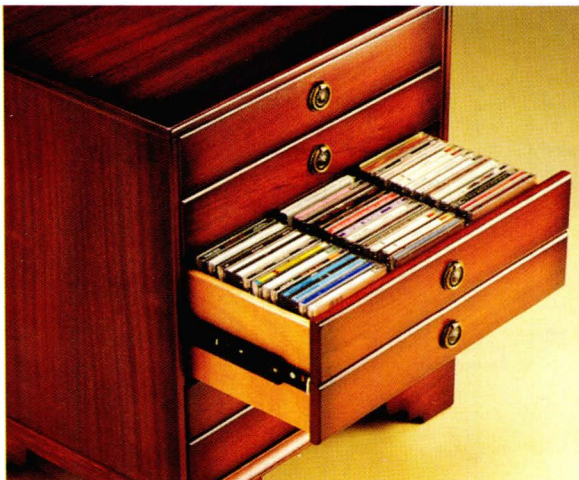
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# HOW TO USE THE BUYERS' GUIDE

## 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:** Components which have outstanding sound quality but do not qualify for BB or R because of non group testing.

## 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 020 7917 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 software!

# 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

Arcam Alpha One	Ⓜ	35W	230
Ariston AX910	Ⓜ	30W	60
Cambridge A1 Mk III	Ⓜ	30W	100
Cambridge A1 Mk3 SE	Ⓜ	30W	120
Cambridge A100	Ⓜ	40W	140
Cambridge A300	Ⓜ	40W	150
Cambridge A31	Ⓜ	60W	200
Cambridge A500RC	Ⓜ	75W	200
Denon PMA-250SE	Ⓜ	30W	140
Denon PMA-350SE	Ⓜ	50W	180
Denon PMA-535R	Ⓜ	50W	230
Denon PMA-100M	Ⓜ	80W	240
Goodmans Delta 900A	Ⓜ	100W	130
H/K HK630	Ⓜ	40W	200
H/K HK3270	Ⓜ	65W	250
JVC AX-A372BK	Ⓜ	40W	200
JVC AX-R5BK	Ⓜ	45W	200
Kenwood KA-1080	Ⓜ	60W	140
Kenwood KA-3080R	Ⓜ	70W	170
Kenwood KAF-3010R	Ⓜ	70W	180
Marantz PM-48	Ⓜ	50W	150
Marantz PM-57	Ⓜ	50W	200
Marantz SR-47	Ⓜ	40W	200
Marantz PM6010 OSE	Ⓜ	65W	230
Marantz PM-66SE	Ⓜ	50W	230
Musical Fidelity E1	Ⓜ	30W	199
NAD 310	Ⓜ	20W	100
NAD C320	Ⓜ	40W	200
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-407R	Ⓜ	45W	230
Pioneer A-405R	Ⓜ	45W	250
Rotel RA921	Ⓜ	20W	100
Rotel RA931	Ⓜ	35W	150
Rotel RA971 Mk II	Ⓜ	70W	250
Sansui AUX-410R	Ⓜ	50W	150
Sansui AUX-510R	Ⓜ	70W	230
Sherwood AX 4050R	Ⓜ	50W	150
Sherwood AX-7030R	Ⓜ	95W	230
Sony TA-FE230	Ⓜ	40W	100
Sony TA-FE330R	Ⓜ	60W	130
Sony TA-FB730R	Ⓜ	40W	200
Teac AE-2000	Ⓜ	50W	180
Teac A-R600	Ⓜ	90W	200
Technics SU-V300	Ⓜ	25W	130
Technics SU-V500	Ⓜ	30W	160
Technics SU-A600 Mk3	Ⓜ	37W	200
Technics SU-V620	Ⓜ	70W	230
Technics SU-A707	Ⓜ	70W	250
Technics SU-A700 Mk3	Ⓜ	45W	250
Yamaha AX-392	Ⓜ	60W	170
Yamaha AX-9	Ⓜ	50W	200
Yamaha AX-492	Ⓜ	85W	220

### £251 TO £500

Arcam Alpha 7R	Ⓜ	40W	300
Arcam Alpha 8R	Ⓜ	50W	380
Arcam Alpha 9	Ⓜ	70W	500
Audio Analogue Puccini	Ⓜ	40W	475
Audioagram MB1	Ⓜ	40W	493
Creek 4330	Ⓜ	40W	279
Creek 4330R	Ⓜ	40W	355
Creek 5250	Ⓜ	50W	450
Cymbal CA1	Ⓜ	40W	499
Denon PMA-735R	Ⓜ	65W	300
Denon PMA-1500R	Ⓜ	70W	500
Edmund Audio ES110	Ⓜ	85W	400
EMF Audio Sequel	Ⓜ	50W	450
H/K HK650	Ⓜ	60W	330
Kenwood KA-5090R	Ⓜ	65W	300
Magnum IA120	Ⓜ	65W	265
Magnum IA170	Ⓜ	96W	330
Magnum IA170SE	Ⓜ	90W	430
Marantz PM-68	Ⓜ	90W	300
Marantz PM-66 KI Sig.	Ⓜ	50W	400
Monnio Asty	Ⓜ	55W	400

Musical Fidelity E11	Ⓜ	60W	300
Musical Fidelity X-A1	Ⓜ	50W	480
Musical Fidelity A2	Ⓜ	25W	500
Myryad T-40	Ⓜ	50W	400
NAD 314	Ⓜ	35W	260
NAD C340	Ⓜ	50W	270
NAD 317	Ⓜ	80W	470
Onkyo A9210	Ⓜ	40W	260
Onkyo A921	Ⓜ	50W	350
Onkyo A922	Ⓜ	70W	400
Pioneer A-607R	Ⓜ	60W	300
Pioneer A-400X	Ⓜ	50W	300
Pioneer A-605R	Ⓜ	80W	400
Pioneer A-300R Precision	Ⓜ	35W	400
Rega Big Brio	Ⓜ	35W	298
Rega Luna	Ⓜ	40W	375
Rega Mira	Ⓜ	60W	450
Roksan Kandy	Ⓜ	60W	475
Shearman 2.5	Ⓜ	35W	499
Sony TA-FB920R	Ⓜ	65W	300
Sony TA-FA30ES	Ⓜ	70W	400
Sony TA-F3000ES	Ⓜ	40W	500
Talk Electronics Storm 1	Ⓜ	50W	500
Teac AH-500	Ⓜ	50W	280
Technics SU-A808	Ⓜ	80W	300
Technics SU-A909	Ⓜ	100W	400
Thule Audio Spirit IA60	Ⓜ	60W	449
Token K50	Ⓜ	55W	350
Yamaha AX-592	Ⓜ	100W	280

### £501 TO £700

Alchemist Kraken APD6A	Ⓜ	55W	600
Alchemist Nemesis	Ⓜ	80W	700
Audio Analogue Puccini SE	Ⓜ	40W	635
Audio Note Kanji Line SE	Ⓜ	9W	699
Audio Note First integrated	Ⓜ	40W	699
Audioagram MB2	Ⓜ	60W	599
CR Dev CR324se	Ⓜ	150W	569
CR Dev Kalypso	Ⓜ	15W	599
CR Dev CR325	Ⓜ	175W	699
Creek 5250SE	Ⓜ	60W	665
Cyrus IIII	Ⓜ	50W	598
Cyrus 7	Ⓜ	130W	700
Densen Beat B-100 MkII	Ⓜ	60W	650
Gamma Gemini	Ⓜ	12W	699
H/K HK690	Ⓜ	100W	530
Hi Q Sound MCI	Ⓜ	30W	565
LFD Integrated 0	Ⓜ	50W	549
Linn Majik (Line)	Ⓜ	33W	650
Lynwood Opal	Ⓜ	80W	685
Magnum IA200	Ⓜ	100W	599
Magnum Class A	Ⓜ	85W	690
Musical Fidelity A220	Ⓜ	50W	700
Myryad MI T20	Ⓜ	60W	700
Naim Nait 3	Ⓜ	30W	590
Primare A20 Mk II	Ⓜ	70W	600
Rose Scion	Ⓜ	65W	615
Shearman Phase 2	Ⓜ	50W	689
Sugden Audition T	Ⓜ	65W	549
Talk Electronics Cyclone 1	Ⓜ	65W	550
Talk Electronics Storm 2	Ⓜ	50W	650
Teac AB-X7R	Ⓜ	50W	700
Thule Audio Spirit IA100	Ⓜ	100W	600
Thule Audio Spirit IA60B	Ⓜ	60W	699
YBA Complete Integre	Ⓜ	50W	699

### £701 TO £1,000

Alchemist Nexus	Ⓜ	799	
Alchemist Forseti Integrated	Ⓜ	100W	1,000
Arcam Alpha 10	Ⓜ	100W	800
Aria S2	Ⓜ	12W	1,000
Audio Note Oto Line PP	Ⓜ	12W	950
AVI S2000M1	Ⓜ	100W	999
Copland CSA8	Ⓜ	60W	899
Creo IMP702	Ⓜ	70W	850
Creo IMP703	Ⓜ	70W	1,000
Electrocompaniet ECI-2	Ⓜ	50W	995
Exposure XX Super	Ⓜ	60W	800
Exposure XV Super	Ⓜ	60W	900
Exposure ROOV	Ⓜ	60W	1,000
LFD 0 LE Integrated	Ⓜ	60W	799
Magnum Class A SE	Ⓜ	80W	795
Marantz PM-17	Ⓜ	60W	900
Meridian 551	Ⓜ	55W	795
Musical Fidelity A3	Ⓜ	85W	849
Musical Fidelity X-A100R	Ⓜ	75W	999
Naim Nait 3 R	Ⓜ	30W	780
Opera Aida	Ⓜ	60W	795
Pioneer A-07	Ⓜ	80W	999
Plinius 2100i	Ⓜ	995	
Roksan Caspian	Ⓜ	70W	795
Shearman Phase 2 Reference	Ⓜ	50W	799
Sonnenteer Alabaster	Ⓜ	50W	900
Sugden A21a Int	Ⓜ	25W	799
Sugden Audition C	Ⓜ	60W	799
TAG McLaren 60i	Ⓜ	60W	800
TAG McLaren 60iRV	Ⓜ	60W	999
Thule Audio Spirit IA150B	Ⓜ	150W	999

### £1,001 TO £2,000

Aria Simply Four P	Ⓜ	24W	1,595
Aria Simply Four T	Ⓜ	11W	1,650
ATC SIA2-150	Ⓜ	150W	1,984
Audio Note Sorro Line PP	Ⓜ	20W	1,200



Audio Note Oto Line SE	Ⓔ	12W	1,200
Audio Note Oto Phono SE	Ⓔ	12W	1,500
Audio Note Soro Line SE	Ⓔ	18W	1,699
Audio Valve Assistant-S 20	Ⓔ	20W	1,250
BB Audio BB 30-60	Ⓔ	30W	1,495
Beam-Echo SA-50	Ⓔ	50W	1,950
Bow Technologies Wazoo	Ⓔ	50W	1,795
Bryston B-60	Ⓔ	60W	1,281
Copland CSA14	Ⓔ	60W	1,199
Copland CSA28	Ⓔ	60W	1,249
Copland CTA402	Ⓔ	35W	1,698
CR Dev Romulus V3	Ⓔ	35W	1,198
CR Dev Athena	Ⓔ	38W	1,499
CR Dev Remus V3	Ⓔ	60W	1,989
Credo LIM 702	Ⓔ		1,191
Credo LIM 703	Ⓔ		1,249
Densen DM-10	Ⓔ	75W	1,375
EAR 859	Ⓔ	13W	1,999
EAR 834	Ⓔ	40W	1,999
Golden Tube Audio SI-50 MkII	Ⓔ	50W	1,100
Graaf Ventricaque	Ⓔ	20W	1,790
Jadis Orchestra	Ⓔ		1,345
LFD Integrated 1	Ⓔ	65W	1,099
Marantz PM-17K1 Sig	Ⓔ	60W	1,300
Meracur Intrare	Ⓔ	60W	1,095
NAD S300	Ⓔ	100W	1,900
Papworth MIH-200	Ⓔ	200W	1,200
Papworth MVH-200	Ⓔ	200W	1,200
Plinius 8150	Ⓔ		1,895
Praecisa Sonoro	Ⓔ	100W	1,800
Primare A30.1	Ⓔ	100W	1,500
Restek Fantasy 2	Ⓔ	100W	1,499
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Integrated	Ⓔ	25W	1,299
T+A R1200R	Ⓔ	90W	1,750
Thule Audio Space IA250B	Ⓔ	250W	1,799
Woodside ISA230 Line	Ⓔ	30W	1,099
Woodside ISA230 Disc	Ⓔ	30W	1,249
YBA a Integré Line	Ⓔ	50W	1,095
YBA a Integré DT Line	Ⓔ	50W	1,395

## OVER £2,000

Adyton Opera	Ⓔ	50W	2,595
AMP Flux System 2	Ⓔ	50W	3,000
Aria Simply 845	Ⓔ	24W	1,995
Art Audio Integra	Ⓔ	25W	2,400
Audio Note Meishu Line	Ⓔ	9W	2,750
Audio Note Ongaku	Ⓔ	26W	56,000
Audio Research CA50	Ⓔ		3,399
Belcanto SET40	Ⓔ	40W	4,450
Belcanto Orfeo 30S1	Ⓔ	35W	5,450
Cary CAD-300SEI	Ⓔ	15W	3,395
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50	Ⓔ	50W	2,495
EAR V20	Ⓔ	24W	2,495
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	2,690
Jadis DA60	Ⓔ	60W	4,485
Krell KAV300i	Ⓔ	150W	2,495
Krell KAV300r	Ⓔ		3,333
Krell KAV500i	Ⓔ	250W	5,000
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 Conentra	Ⓔ	100W	5,500
Sonus Faber Musica	Ⓔ		2,295
T+A R1500R	Ⓔ	135W	2,015
Tube Tech Unity Sig. Int.	Ⓔ	30W	2,300
Tube Tech Synergy PPS	Ⓔ	150W	6,900
Wavac MD811	Ⓔ	15W	2,995
Wavac MD300B-ST	Ⓔ	10W	5,575
Wavac MD300B WE	Ⓔ	10W	6,750

## AMPLIFIERS PREAMPS

### KEY

Ⓔ (etc) - Number of line-level inputs.  
Ph - Phono input fitted as standard  
(may be an option on some other models).

### UP TO £500

Arcam Alpha 9C	Ⓔ		400
Aria Simply Phono	Ⓔ	Ph	500
Audio Analogue Bellini	Ⓔ	Ph	495
Audio Note M Zero	Ⓔ		299
Beam-Echo PP-21	Ⓔ	Ph	499
Bryston BP1	Ⓔ	Ph	438
CR Dev Themis	Ⓔ	Ph	349
Creek OBH-9	Ⓔ		160
Creek P43/R	Ⓔ		350
Creek P52	Ⓔ		499
Crimson CS610C	Ⓔ	Ph	450
Cyrus aEQ7	Ⓔ	Ph	498
Densen DP-Drive/DP-02	Ⓔ		350
DPA Enl'ment phono	Ⓔ	Ph	275
EAR 834P	Ⓔ	Ph	349
EAR 834L	Ⓔ		449
EAR 834P/MC	Ⓔ	Ph	499
Electrocompaniet ECP-1	Ⓔ	Ph	495
Henley HMC50	Ⓔ		150

Henley HMC100	Ⓔ		350
Hi Q Sound LCP2	Ⓔ		149
LFD Mstral Linestage	Ⓔ		449
LFD LSO Linestage	Ⓔ		499
Lumley PP70	Ⓔ		345
Lumley PP1	Ⓔ		345
Magnum MP120	Ⓔ		330
Magnum MP660	Ⓔ		500
Magnum MP330	Ⓔ		500
Monrio ADN-N	Ⓔ	Ph	295
Monrio Asty L	Ⓔ		500
Moth 30 Passive	Ⓔ		149
Moth 30 Phono	Ⓔ	Ph	249
Moth 30 Line stage	Ⓔ		349
Musical Fidelity X10-D	Ⓔ		120
Musical Fidelity X-LP	Ⓔ	Ph	130
Musical Fidelity X-PRE	Ⓔ		200
Musical Fidelity E20	Ⓔ	Ph	400
NAD PP-1	Ⓔ	Ph	40
NAD 114	Ⓔ	Ph	270
NAD 116	Ⓔ	Ph	430
Naim Prefix	Ⓔ		360
Naim NAC92	Ⓔ		485
NVA P50	Ⓔ		350
Parasound P/HP-100	Ⓔ	Ph	130
Parasound P/HP-850	Ⓔ	Ph	400
Plinius Jarrah	Ⓔ	Ph	450
QED Discsaver DS-1	Ⓔ	Ph	35
Rega EOS	Ⓔ	Ph	398
Rega Cursa	Ⓔ	Ph	450
Roksan Artaxenes 10	Ⓔ	Ph	395
Rose RV-23	Ⓔ	Ph	450
Rotel RQ970BX	Ⓔ	Ph	130
Rotel RC971	Ⓔ		150
Rotel RC972	Ⓔ		225
Sunfire Phono	Ⓔ	Ph	430
Talk Electronics Hurricane 1	Ⓔ		500
Technics SU-C1010	Ⓔ		300
Thule Audio Spirit PR100	Ⓔ		400
Trilogy 905	Ⓔ		375
Trilogy 904	Ⓔ	Ph	375
Trilogy 900	Ⓔ	Ph	499

### £501 TO £2,000

Adyton Chorus	Ⓔ		1,995
Alchemist Kraken Pre	Ⓔ		549
Alchemist Forseti Pre	Ⓔ		999
Alchemist Signature Pre	Ⓔ		1,499
Aria Feather One	Ⓔ		795
Aria Mystery Two	Ⓔ		1,750
Aria Mystery One	Ⓔ		1,750
Art Audio Vinyl One MM	Ⓔ	Ph	916
Art Audio VPS Line	Ⓔ		963
Art Audio Vinyl One MM/MC	Ⓔ	Ph	1,307
Art Audio VPS Phono	Ⓔ	Ph	1,460
Art Audio Conductor Phono MC	Ⓔ	Ph	2,000
Audio Note M1 Line	Ⓔ		550
Audio Note M1 RAA	Ⓔ		550
Audio Note M2 Line	Ⓔ		999
Audio Note Discovery	Ⓔ		999
Audio Note M2RIAA	Ⓔ	Ph	1,099
Audio Prism Mantissa	Ⓔ		1,995
Audio Research LS8	Ⓔ		1,449
Audio Research PH3	Ⓔ	Ph	1,490
Audio Research LS9	Ⓔ		1,949
Audio Synthesis Pro Passion	Ⓔ		1,595
Audio Synthesis Passion	Ⓔ		695
Audio Synthesis Passion 8S	Ⓔ		1,295
Audio Synthesis Passion 8M	Ⓔ		1,695
Audio Valve Eklipse	Ⓔ		1,650
AVI S2000MP	Ⓔ		949
AVI S2000MP+P	Ⓔ	Ph	1,199
Beam-Echo SP-21	Ⓔ	Ph	1,116
Bryston BP20	Ⓔ		1,126
Bryston BP-25	Ⓔ		1,326
Bryston BP-25P	Ⓔ	Ph	1,592
Canary Audio CA-606	Ⓔ		1,295
Canary Audio CA-601	Ⓔ		1,595
Cary SLP-50 Mk II	Ⓔ		1,195
Cary PH-301	Ⓔ	Ph	1,695
Chord Phono	Ⓔ	Ph	1,898
Chord CPA 1800	Ⓔ		1,905
Concordant Exhilarant	Ⓔ		900
Concordant Exquisite	Ⓔ		1,950
Conrad-Johnson PV-10AL	Ⓔ		995
Conrad-Johnson PV-10A	Ⓔ	Ph	1,295
Conrad-Johnson PV-12AL	Ⓔ		1,990
Conrad-Johnson EF-1	Ⓔ	Ph	1,990
Conrad-Johnson PF-2	Ⓔ	Ph	1,990
Copland CSA303	Ⓔ	Ph	1,099
Copland CTA301 MkII	Ⓔ	Ph	1,249
CR Dev Carmenta	Ⓔ		659
CR Dev Argento	Ⓔ	Ph	699
Credo CMP004	Ⓔ		1,246
Credo CMP005	Ⓔ		1,876
Cyrus aCA7	Ⓔ		798
Cyrus aEQ7/PSX-R	Ⓔ	Ph	826
Densen Beat B-200	Ⓔ	Ph	1,000
Densen DM-20	Ⓔ		1,200
DNM 3 Start	Ⓔ	Ph	1,000
DNM 3A Start	Ⓔ	Ph	1,650
DPA Enlightenment pre	Ⓔ		795
Dynavecor L200	Ⓔ		995
Dynavecor P100	Ⓔ	Ph	1,495
Dynavecor L100	Ⓔ		1,995
ECA Vista S	Ⓔ		760
ECA Vista HD	Ⓔ		880

ECA Prisma	Ⓔ		880
Electrocompaniet EC-4.5	Ⓔ		1,195
Electrocompaniet EC-4.6	Ⓔ		1,750
Exposure XIII	Ⓔ		800
Exposure XIX	Ⓔ		800
Exposure XVII	Ⓔ	Ph	850
Exposure RC XXI	Ⓔ		1,000
Gate PR101P	Ⓔ		1,195
Golden Tube Audio SEP-2	Ⓔ		990
Golden Tube Audio SEP-3	Ⓔ		1,995
Graaf WFB Two	Ⓔ	Ph	1,350
Graaf WFB One	Ⓔ	Ph	1,750
Henley HMC200	Ⓔ		600
Hi Q Sound MCB2	Ⓔ	Ph	545
Hi Q Sound MCL2	Ⓔ		645
Jadis DPL2	Ⓔ		1,590
Krell KAV250p	Ⓔ		1,999
LFD MC1 Phonostage	Ⓔ	Ph	949
LFD L51 Linestage	Ⓔ		999
LFD MC2 Phonostage	Ⓔ	Ph	1,499
LFD L52 Linestage	Ⓔ		1,599
LFD L5B Linestage	Ⓔ		1,999
Linn Wakonda	Ⓔ		750
Linn Linto	Ⓔ		850
Linn Kairn	Ⓔ		1,400
Lumley LV1.5	Ⓔ		895
Lumley LV1	Ⓔ		1,150
Lumley PV1.5	Ⓔ	Ph	1,700
Lumley PV1	Ⓔ	Ph	1,700
Matisse Atom	Ⓔ		1,000
McIntosh C712	Ⓔ	Ph	1,999
Meracur Ingredi	Ⓔ		925
Meridian 501	Ⓔ		695
Meridian 562	Ⓔ		765
Meridian 562V	Ⓔ		995
Meridian 502	Ⓔ		1,295
Michell Delphini	Ⓔ	Ph	895
Michell Orca	Ⓔ		1,650
Muse Model 3	Ⓔ		1,990
Musical Fidelity F25	Ⓔ	Ph	1,500
Myriad MP100	Ⓔ		600
NAD 118	Ⓔ		1,000
Naim NAC92R	Ⓔ		650
Naim NAC72	Ⓔ		745
Naim NAC102	Ⓔ		1,080
Quad 99 Pre	Ⓔ	Ph	800
Rega Hal	Ⓔ	Ph	998
Roksan Artaxenes X/DS1.5	Ⓔ	Ph	1,150
Roksan ROK-L2.5	Ⓔ		1,250
Rose RV-255	Ⓔ	Ph	525
Rotel RC995	Ⓔ		525
Shearman Phase 6 Pre	Ⓔ		999
Shearman Phase 1 Pre Ref	Ⓔ		1,499
Siemel MC20	Ⓔ	Ph	650
Siemel MM20	Ⓔ	Ph	650
Siemel TU10	Ⓔ		1,599
Siemel TR20	Ⓔ		1,599
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Pre 1P	Ⓔ	Ph	899
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	Ⓔ	Ph	1,999
Sonographe SC26	Ⓔ		995
Sugden Audition Pre	Ⓔ		549
Sugden Masterclass Pre	Ⓔ		1,995
Sumo Athena II Line	Ⓔ		767
Sumo Athena IIB/II LS	Ⓔ		987
Sumo Athena III	Ⓔ		987
Sumo Artemis uP	Ⓔ		1,595
Sunfire The Classic	Ⓔ		1,630
T+A P1200R	Ⓔ		965
TAG McLaren PA10	Ⓔ	Ph	849
TAG McLaren PPA20	Ⓔ	Ph	1,499
TAG McLaren PA20R	Ⓔ		1,499
Talk Electronics Hurricane 2	Ⓔ		650
Talk Electronics Hurricane 3	Ⓔ		900
Talk Electronics Hurricane 4	Ⓔ		1,550
Talk Electronics Hurricane 5	Ⓔ		1,900
Thorens TTP-2000F	Ⓔ	Ph	699
Thule Audio Spirit PR150B	Ⓔ		699
Trilogy 901	Ⓔ		750
Trilogy 906	Ⓔ	Ph	995
Trilogy 902	Ⓔ		1,595
Tron Retro	Ⓔ		1,500
Tube Tech Seer Line	Ⓔ		935
Tube Tech Mac Phono	Ⓔ	Ph	1,150
Tube Tech Prophet	Ⓔ		1,970
van den Hul Pre-amp	Ⓔ		1,800
Wilson benesch Stage One	Ⓔ	Ph	995
Woodside SC27 Line	Ⓔ		949
Woodside SC26 Line	Ⓔ		1,557
XTC PRE-1	Ⓔ		1,350
YBA 3a Line	Ⓔ		995
YBA 2a Line	Ⓔ		1,450

### OVER £2,000

Adyton Temper	Ⓔ		2,495
Adyton Modus	Ⓔ		2,695
Art Audio VPS Dual Mono Line	Ⓔ		2,350
ATC SCA2	Ⓔ		2,599
Atma-Sphere MP-3	Ⓔ	Ph	3,795
Atma-Sphere MP-1	Ⓔ	Ph	7,600
Audio Note M3Line	Ⓔ		2,650
Audio Prism Avanti	Ⓔ		7,995
Audio Research LS15	Ⓔ		3,399
Audio Research LS25	Ⓔ		4,999
Audio Research REF 1	Ⓔ		8,495
Audio Valve Fanfare	Ⓔ		4,995
Audiolabor 511	Ⓔ		6,775

Balanced VK-50	Ⓔ		3,995
Boulder L3AE	Ⓔ		2,100
Boulder L5AE	Ⓔ		



Musical Fidelity E30	100W	500
Musical Fidelity X-A50	50W	500
Myriad T-60	50W	300
Myriad MA 120	60W	500
NAD 912	30W	200
NAD 214	80W	370
NAD 216THX	125W	470
Naim NAP90/3	30W	460
Parasound HCA-750A	75W	450
Quad 99 Stereo Power	85W	500
Rega Maia	85W	450
Rotel RB971	70W	200
Rotel RB981	130W	300
Rotel RB991	200W	500
Shearpe 3.5	35W	489
Talk Electronics Tornado 1	50W	450
Technics SE-A1010	100W	350

### £501 TO £2,000

Alchemist Kraken Pwr	55W	549
Alchemist Forseti Pwr	150W	1,399
Alchemist Signature Power	100W	1,999
Arcam Alpha 10P	100W	600
Aria Power 35	35W	1,500
Art Audio Quartet	15W	1,753
Art Audio Concerto	25W	1,960
Audio Analogue Donizetti	60W	595
Audio Note The P	40W	550
Audio Note P Zero	8W	599
Audio Note P1	12W	750
Audio Note P1SE	12W	999
Audio Note P2	20W	1,000
Audio Note P2SE	18W	1,499
Audio Note Conqueror	8W	1,599
Audio Prism Antares	35W	1,695
Audio Research D130	130W	1,890
Audio Research VT60	35W	1,999
Audio Valve RKV	0.1W	595
Audio Valve PPP25	25W	1,095
Audio Valve PPP45	45W	1,395
AVI S2000MM	150W	1,399
Beaumont Obligato	7W	1,175
Bryston 2B-LP	75W	750
Bryston 3B-ST PRO	150W	1,160
Bryston 3B-ST	150W	1,160
Bryston THX3B	150W	1,262
Bryston 4B-ST PRO	300W	1,756
Bryston 7B-ST	500W	1,815
Bryston 7B-ST PRO	500W	1,815
Bryston THX4B	300W	1,850
Bryston THX7B	500W	1,886
Canary Audio CA-706	40W	1,695
Canary Audio CA-708	50W	1,950
Chord SPM 400	100W	1,425
Chord SPM 600	130W	1,850
Conrad-Johnson MV-55	150W	1,995
Copland CSA515	150W	1,299
Copland CTA505	67W	1,899
CR Dev Amphion	12W	1,949
Credo PMP 804		1,876
Creek AS2SE	100W	599
Cnmson CS630C	100W	800
Cyrus aPA7	150W	1,900
Densen B-300	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
Dynavector HK75	75W	1,995
ECA Lectern S	50W	880
ECA Lectern HD	50W	1,480
Electrocompaniet AW60FTT	60W	1,095
Exposure XVIII Super	75W	900
Exposure XVIII Mono	60W	1,800
Golden Tube Audio SE-40	40W	1,100
Golden Tube Audio SE-300B MkII	8W	1,790
Graaf Venticinque P	25W	1,425
Hi Q Sound MCM	70W	715
Jadis DA5	40W	1,749
Krell KAV150a	150W	1,990
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
Meracur Ciere	60W	1,095
Meridian 555	60W	790
Meridian 556	100W	895
Meridian 557	200W	1,400
Meridian 505	160W	1,590
Michell Alecto Stereo	50W	1,150
Michell Alecto Mono	100W	1,950
Monnio Asty P	100W	950
Moth Stereo 60	60W	599
Moth 30 Mono/100	100W	879
Muse Model 100	100W	1,490
Musical Fidelity X-A200	200W	1,000
Myriad MA240	120W	1,000

### OVER £2,000

Adyton Cordis 1.6	120W	3,495
Adyton Cordis 3B	280W	12,995
Ania Smart 845	24W	3,500
Ania Smart 300B	24W	4,250
Art Audio Symphony	7W	2,500
Art Audio Tempo	30W	2,714
Art Audio Maestro	60W	3,884
Art Audio Diavolo	13W	4,000
Art Audio Jota	18W	6,000
Art Audio Ellesse	10W	8,500
Art Audio Chiara	25W	10,000
ATC SPA2-200PRO	200W	2,056
ATC SPA2-150	200W	2,699
Atma-Sphere S-30 Mk II	30W	2,450
Atma-Sphere M-60 Mk II	60W	4,195
Atma-Sphere MA-1 Mk II	150W	7,995
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	60W	14,500
Audio Prism Debut Mk II	35W	2,495
Audio Prism Mana	100W	12,995
Audio Research VT50	50W	2,950
Audio Research 100.2	100W	3,395
Audio Research VT100 MkII	100W	4,950
Audio Research VT200	200W	8,790
Audio Synthesis Desire Decade	200W	2,495
Audio Valve Avalon	60W	2,195
Audio Valve Challenger 115	115W	2,995
Audio Valve Challenger 140	140W	3,495
Audio Valve Challenger 300	300W	7,995
Audio Valve Baldur 200 Plus	149W	8,995
Audiolabor 500	230W	5,998
Beam-Echo DL7-35	30W	3,525
Belcanto SET40	40W	3,450
Belcanto Orfeo 305	35W	4,750
Belcanto SET80	80W	6,750
Border Patrol 300B SE	9W	3,995
Border Patrol 300B SW (W)	10W	4,495
Boulder 102AE	100W	2,800
Boulder 102M	100W	3,100
Boulder 500AE	150W	4,995
Boulder 500M	150W	5,500
Boulder 2060	600W	25,000
Boulder 2050	999W	43,500
Bryston THX8B	150W	2,385
Canary Audio CA-304	40W	2,695
Canary Audio CA-301	22W	2,995
Canary Audio CA-303	24W	5,495
Cary CAD-572SE	20W	2,250
Cary CAD-2A3 SE	5W	3,150
Cary CAD-300SE	12W	4,495
Cary CAD-805C	50W	7,995
Chord SPM 1000B	200W	2,920

Chord SPM 1200B	250W	3,790
Chord SPM 1200C	350W	4,210
Chord SPM 1400B mono	350W	8,420
Chord SPM 5000	415W	14,570
Conrad-Johnson MF2250	130W	2,295
Conrad-Johnson MF-2500	250W	3,495
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 J1.1	100W	17,550
CR Dev Artemis	4,995	4,995
Credo LPO 804	2,456	2,456
Credo PMP 155	2,676	2,676
Credo LPO 455	6,983	6,983
Credo LPO 155	6,983	6,983
DNM PA3	50W	2,500
DNM PA3S	23W	3,750
Dynavector HX1.2	130W	3,995
EAR 861	32W	3,599
EAR 509 Mk II	100W	3,999
EAR 519	100W	4,699
EAR 549	200W	6,499
Electrocompaniet AW120DMB	120W	2,695
Electrocompaniet AW250R	250W	2,995
Electrocompaniet AW180MB	180W	4,595
Exposure IV	90W	2,199
Exposure XVI	125W	4,000
Gamma Aeon	20W	4,999
Gamma Space Ref	18W	7,999
Gamma Aeon Ref	70W	49,999
Gate TR201A	22W	3,335
Golden Tube Audio SE-100	100W	2,495
Graaf 5050	50W	2,100
Graaf GM20	60W	2,850
Graaf GM100	100W	4,250
Graaf GM200	200W	7,500
Jadis DA8	80W	2,990
Jadis DA7	100W	4,790
Jadis JA30	30W	5,180
Jadis SE300B	10W	7,980
Jadis JA80	60W	9,580
Jadis JA100	100W	10,298
Jadis JA200	160W	13,980
Jadis JA500	400W	19,990
Krell KAV250a	250W	3,145
Krell KAV500/2	100W	3,195
Krell FPB200	200W	5,998
Krell FPB250m	250W	8,994
Krell FPB300	300W	9,500
Krell FPB600	600W	12,900
Krell FPB350m	350W	15,994
Krell FPB650m	650W	23,800
Lexicon 225	250W	2,500
Lexicon 501	500W	5,000
Linn Klout	80W	2,400
Linn Klimax 500	11,200	11,200
Lumley M125	120W	3,750
Lumley M250	250W	7,500
Magnum Class A mono	180W	2,450
Magnum A200SE	275W	3,750
Mana Stealth	300W	4,500
Madrigal 334	125W	5,495
Madrigal 335	250W	7,495
Madrigal 336	350W	8,995
Madrigal 33H	150W	19,995
Matisse Ref Monoblocks	180W	8,000
McIntosh MC150	150W	3,499
McIntosh MC500	300W	3,999
McIntosh MC500	500W	8,999
McIntosh MC1000	999W	14,999
Meracur Tentare	75W	2,245
Meracur 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	2,645	2,645
Papworth M200	3,825	3,825
Plinius SA50/3	2,750	2,750
Plinius SA100/3	3,450	3,450
Plinius SA250/3	5,850	5,850
Roksan ROK-M1.5	2,250	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	2,399
Siemel TA20	50W	2,350
Sonic Frontiers Power 1	50W	2,499
Sonic Frontiers Power 2	110W	4,999
Sonic Frontiers Power 3	8,599	8,599
Sony TA-N1	220W	4,500
Sugden Masterclass Power	75W	2,995
Sumo Model Ten/M	240W	4,200
Sunfire Load Invariant	300W	2,280
Sunfire Signature	600W	2,800
T+A A3000	190W	2,850
TACT Millennium II	150W	7,000
TAG McLaren T2M5	145W	2,399
Talk Electronics Tornado 5	200W	2,100
Trilogy 958T	45W	3,395
Trilogy 958	100W	3,395
Tron Type PX25	5W	6,150
Tron Type KR300B	18W	6,400

Tron Type WE300B	8W	6,550
Tron Type PX25 Mono	5W	9,500
Tron Type WE300B Mono	8W	9,700
Tron Type KR 300B Mono	18W	9,700
Tube Tech Genesis Sig	100W	4,700
Tube Tech Synergy DMA	150W	6,400
van den Hul Power amp	65W	2,500
Wavac MD572	50W	6,250
Wavac EC300B	10W	16,500
Wavac EC838	35W	21,750
Wavac HE 4304	15W	24,750
Wavac HE 833	100W	27,500
Wavac HE 805	45W	27,500
XTC POW-1	200W	2,500
YBA 2a HC Stereo	70W	2,350
YBA 3a Mono	45W	2,425
YBA 2a HCDT Stereo	70W	3,050
YBA 1a HC Stereo	85W	4,400
YBA 2a HCDT Mono	70W	5,000
YBA 1a HC Mono	85W	6,650
YBA Sig. Stereo	100W	6,995
YBA Passion Mono	250W	8,775
YBA Sig. Mono	100W	9,995
YBA Sig. HC Mono	100W	16,650



## CABLES

### Analogue Interconnects

**KEY**

- ⊖ - Stranded construction.
- ⊙ - Solid-core construction.

Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

Acoustic Precision Ekos	⊙	89.00
Apertura Model B	⊙	260.00
Apertura Model A	⊙	469.00
Argento Copper I/C	⊙	120.00
Argento Silver I/C	⊙	255.00
Argento VDM Silver	⊙	865.00
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 x2	⊙	59.95
Audioquest Ruby x3	⊙	80.00
Audioquest Quartz x3	⊙	125.00
Audioquest Opal x3	⊙	200.00
Audioquest Emerald x3	⊙	260.00
Audioquest Lapis x3	⊙	399.00
Audiosource Petros Blue	⊙	48.00
Audiosource Petros Blue Plus	⊙	58.00
Audiosource Stratos Ser. 2	⊙	125.00
Cable Talk Improved 2/CD	⊙	26.00
Cable Talk Advanced 2	⊙	34.95
Cable Talk Improved 2/Tape	⊙	47.00
Cable Talk Monitor 2.1	⊙	50.00
Cable Talk Studio 2	⊙	65.00
Cable Talk Professional 2	⊙	85.00
Cable Talk Broadcast 2	⊙	100.00
Cable Talk Reference 2	⊙	150.00
Cable Talk Signature 2 Gold	⊙	300.00
Cambridge Atlantic	⊙	10.00
Cambridge Arctic	⊙	20.00
Cambridge Pacific	⊙	30.00
Cambridge Studio Reference	⊙	40.00
Cambridge Silver Spirit 40	⊙	70.00
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	⊙	40.00
ChordCo Cobra 2	⊙	55.00
ChordCo Siren	⊙	69.00
ChordCo Chameleon 2	⊙	90.00
ChordCo Chorus	⊙	199.00
Clearaudio Trident	⊙	




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
<b>DNM-Reson TC75</b>	35.00
DPA Slink	41.00
DPA White Slink	75.00
DPA Black Slink	220.00
Ecosse Ref CA1	65.00
Ecosse Ref CS1	75.00
Ecosse Ref MA2	155.00
Ecosse Ref MS2	165.00
Ecosse Ref US1	550.00
Expressive Tech IC-1	700.00
Gamma Wow Balance	799.00
<b>Goertz M1 Interconnect</b>	145.00
CT Audio Intercon	130.00
Harmonix HS-102	195.00
Harmonix HS-101	265.00
Henley HSP10	20.00
Henley HSP50	35.00
Henley HSP100	65.00
Henley HSP200	95.00
Henley HSP250	150.00
Heybrook Black Flash	39.00
Insert Audio Focus 1.2	21.50
<b>Insert Audio IC100 Mk II</b>	46.95
Insert Audio Image 5.1	84.95
Insert Audio Status 3.4	160.00
<b>ixos 104</b>	20.00
ixos 1003	30.00
<b>ixos Gamma 1002</b>	39.95
ixos 103	45.00
ixos 102	60.00
ixos 101	100.00
ixos 100X03	150.00
<b>Kimber PBJ/Ultraplata</b>	68.00
Kimber KCI	96.00
Kimber Hero	110.00
Kimber Silver Stream	180.00
Kimber KCAg	390.00
Kimber KCTG	720.00
LAT International IC-50	37.00
LAT International IC-80 MkII	58.00
LAT International IC-100 MkII	95.00
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
Monster Interlink 100	11.00
Monster Interlink 200	23.00
Monster Interlink 300 MkII	40.00
Monster Interlink 400 MkII	50.00
<b>Moth Leyline Black</b>	100.00
<b>Moth Leyline Grey</b>	200.00
Nordost Magic	35.00
<b>Nordost Black Knight</b>	60.00
<b>Nordost Solar Wind</b>	84.95
Nordost Blue Angel	98.00
<b>Nordost Blue Heaven I/C</b>	150.00
Nordost Red Dawn	300.00
Nordost SPM	825.00
Nordost Quattrofil	1,250.00
Ortofon 7N interconnect	250.00
Precious Metals SS50	50.00
<b>Precious Metals SS35</b>	50.00
Precious Metals SS52	70.00
Precious Metals SS53	90.00
Precious Metals SS100	100.00
Precious Metals SS102	130.00
Precious Metals SS103	160.00
Precious Metals SS104	190.00

Precious Metals SS200	220.00
Precious Metals SS202	290.00
Precious Metals SS203	360.00
Precious Metals SS204	430.00
<b>Prowire Silver</b>	60.00
<b>PAD Elementa</b>	145.00
<b>QED Qnect 2</b>	30.00
<b>QED Qnect 4S</b>	70.00
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
<b>Silver Tone Ex-Static</b>	35.00
Silver Tone Sci-Fi	95.00
SME S2LB-4	46.18
SME S3LB-4	52.06
SME 4900A	76.83
SME 5900A	102.57
SonicLink Red	25.00
<b>SonicLink Silver pink</b>	35.00
<b>SonicLink Black</b>	50.00
<b>SonicLink Lilac</b>	65.00
<b>SonicLink Violet</b>	85.00
SonicLink Maroon	125.00
SonicLink Blue Nickel	150.00
SonicLink Vermilion	195.00
SonicLink Red earth	300.00
SonicLink Black earth	450.00
SonicLink Blue earth	695.00
SonicLink Black Rhodium	995.00
<b>Straight Wire Chorus</b>	40.00
<b>Straight Wire Sonata</b>	80.00
Supra DAC-X	60.00
<b>Supra EFF-SL</b>	80.00
Supra EFF-XLR	90.00
Tara Prism 5	21.95
Tara Prism 5i	100.00
Tara RSC Axiom	137.00
Tara RSC-Prime Gen/2	170.00
Tara RSC-Ref Gen. 2	224.50
Tara RSC Air 3	336.00
Tara RSC Air 2	560.00
Tara RSC Air 1	790.00
Tara ISM The Three	894.00
Tara ISM The 2	1,144.00
Tara ISM The One	2,175.00
Transparent Cable Musicchord	48.00
Transparent Cable The Link	92.00
<b>Transparent Cable Music Link</b>	119.00
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 AI/2	259.00
Vampire Wire SL	412.00
<b>van den Hul Storm II</b>	29.99
<b>van den Hul PB5 HB</b>	50.00
<b>van den Hul Source HB</b>	65.00
<b>van den Hul D102 III</b>	80.00
<b>van den Hul Thunderline HB</b>	145.00
<b>van den Hul First Classic</b>	240.00
<b>van den Hul Second</b>	275.00
van den Hul First Ultimate	320.00
van den Hul MC Gold	550.00
van den Hul MC Silver IT	1,400.00
van den Hul MC Silver IT Bal	1,750.00
Wireworld Orbit	30.00
Wireworld Solstice II	40.00
XLO Type ER-6	30.00
XLO Type ER-2	30.00
XLO Pro 12S	40.00

XLO Type ER-1	40.00
XLO Type ER-5	50.00
XLO Pro 150	70.00
XLO Type ER-4	99.00
XLO Pro 100	119.00
XLO Pro 102	129.00
XLO Ultra 1	169.00
XLO Ultra 2	199.00
XLO Ref 2	330.00
XLO Signature 1.1	625.00
XLO Sig 2.1	675.00
XLO Sig 3.1	750.00
XLO Limited Ed'n	2,200.00

Apertura Model B	139.00
Apertura Model A	255.00
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>	100.00
Audioquest Optlink Pro	150.00
<b>Audioquest Optlink Z</b>	180.00
Audiosource Petros Plus S	35.00
Audiosource Stratos Ser. 2	59.00
Cable Talk Digital 2	78.00
Cardas Audio Lightning	190.00
<b>ChordCo Codac</b>	38.00
ChordCo Optichord	40.00
<b>ChordCo Prodac</b>	50.00
DNM-Reson DIG100	26.00
<b>DPA Opti-link</b>	20.00
<b>DPA Digi-link</b>	27.50
Ecosse Ref MD2	71.50
Harmonix HS-101DIG	240.00
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>	25.00
ixos 106	30.00
<b>Kimber Opti-link</b>	50.00
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
Monster Datalink 100	47.00
Monster Lightspeed 100	47.00
<b>Moth Leyline Datalink</b>	140.00
Nordost Moonglo	155.00




**CABLES**  
**Digital Interconnects**

**KEY**  
 ☉ - Stranded construction.  
 ● - Solid-core construction.

Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

Acoustic Energy AESC-C3	11.95
<b>ALR/Jordan QMM</b>	5.00
Apertura Silver	82.50
Argento Copper	35.00
Argento Copper Ref	65.00
Argento Silver	125.00
Argento Silver Ref	380.00
Art Yam Church M2000	470.00
Art Yam Church 5000	795.00
<b>Audio Note AN-D</b>	4.50
<b>Audio Note AN-B</b>	16.50
<b>Audio Note AN-L</b>	29.50
<b>Audio Note AN-SP</b>	150.00
Audio Note AN-SPx	450.00
Audioquest Type 2	3.50
<b>Audioquest F-18</b>	3.60
<b>Audioquest Type 6+</b>	9.00
Audioquest Indigo +	15.00

Nordost Silver Shadow	335.00
Precious Metals SD35	20.00
Precious Metals SD100	50.00
Precious Metals SD200	110.00
Precious Metals SD202	145.00
<b>QED DigiFlex</b>	20.00
QED Optiflex	25.00
QED Qnect OT	30.00
Roksan ROK-Intercon	45.00
Shinpy Digital	265.00
<b>Siltech HF-6</b>	145.00
<b>SonicLink Green</b>	60.00
Supra ZAC	44.95
Supra EFF-ID	45.00
Supra DAC-XLR	45.00
Tara Prism D-1	59.99
Tara Prism D-2	119.99
Tara RSC Air Dig. 75	345.00
Tara RSC Air Dig. 110	450.00
Tara ISM The One Dig.	995.00
Theta Digital AT&T	550.00
Transparent Cable PDL	199.00
Trichord Pulsewire 75D	75.00
Vampire Wire DI/1	150.00
van den Hul Source HB	35.00
<b>van den Hul Videolink</b>	70.00
van den Hul AES-EBU 110	75.00
<b>van den Hul First</b>	140.00
van den Hul Second	150.00
van den Hul First Ultimate	180.00
XLO Pro 104	60.00
XLO Ultra 4	89.00
XLO Ref 2	180.00
XLO Sig 4.1	325.00
XLO Limited Ed'n	1,100.00



**Speaker Cables**

**KEY**  
 ☉ - Stranded construction.  
 ● - Solid-core construction.

Price per mono metre, unterminated.

Acoustic Energy AESC-C3	11.95
<b>ALR/Jordan QMM</b>	5.00
Apertura Silver	82.50
Argento Copper	35.00
Argento Copper Ref	65.00
Argento Silver	125.00
Argento Silver Ref	380.00
Art Yam Church M2000	470.00
Art Yam Church 5000	795.00
<b>Audio Note AN-D</b>	4.50
<b>Audio Note AN-B</b>	16.50
<b>Audio Note AN-L</b>	29.50
<b>Audio Note AN-SP</b>	150.00
Audio Note AN-SPx	450.00
Audioquest Type 2	3.50
<b>Audioquest F-18</b>	3.60
<b>Audioquest Type 6+</b>	9.00
Audioquest Indigo +	15.00

the **D1** series

- 2-way design
- 30 - 20,000Hz
- 6mm wall aluminium extrusion
- Nominal power holding up to 130 Watts rms
- Solid wood fronts

innovative technology for optimised sonic performance





speaker systems

**Sonic Elegance:**  
Curved space for a flat frequency response

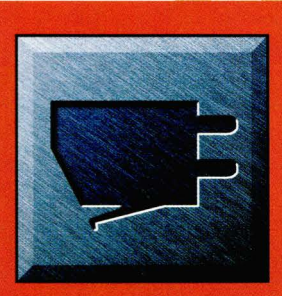
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Audioquest Crystal +	●	25.00
Audioquest Forest +	●	75.00
Audioquest Argent +	●	125.00
Audioquest Clear 3	●	200.00
Cable Talk Theatre 2	⊛	1.50
Cable Talk The Flat One	⊛	2.00
Cable Talk Talk 3.1	⊛	2.25
Cable Talk Talk 4.1	⊛	4.25
Cable Talk Talk 3.1 Biwire	⊛	4.50
Cable Talk Concert 2.1	⊛	8.00
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 Golden5 SC	⊛	175.00
Cardas Audio Golden Cross SC	⊛	789.00
ChordCo Carnival	⊛	3.00
ChordCo Myth	●	6.00
ChordCo Legend	⊛	15.00
ChordCo Odyssey	⊛	17.00
DNM-Reson LSC	●	6.95
DNM-Reson LSCB	●	15.95
Ecosse Ref FS2.16	⊛	1.75
Ecosse Ref CS2.2	⊛	2.50
Ecosse Ref CS2.3	⊛	3.75
Ecosse Ref MS2.15	●	5.75
Ecosse Ref MS2.2	⊛	15.00
Ecosse Ref MS2.3	⊛	20.00
Ecosse Ref MS2.15	⊛	30.00
Ecosse Ref US2	●	450.00
Gale XL105	⊛	1.00
Gale XL189	⊛	1.00
Gale XL315	⊛	2.00
Gale XL160-2	⊛	2.50
Gale XL315-2	⊛	3.99
Gamma Wonder Line	⊛	99.00
Goertz M1	●	16.00
Goertz M2	●	32.00
Goertz Big Boy	●	64.00
GT Audio Speaker	⊛	50.00
Harmonix Harmonic-Strings	⊛	30.00
Harmonix HS-101T-1	⊛	56.00
Harmonix HS-101SC	⊛	88.00
Ixos 607	⊛	2.00
Ixos 6004	⊛	3.00
Ixos 6003	⊛	3.00
Ixos 605	⊛	3.00
Ixos Gamma 6006	⊛	5.00
Kimber 4PR	⊛	5.00
Kimber 4VS	⊛	9.00
Kimber 4TC	⊛	19.60
Kimber 8TC	⊛	32.70
Kimber 4AG	⊛	394.00
Kimber 8AG	⊛	656.00
LAT International SS 800	⊛	16.00
LAT International BWIRE	⊛	23.00
LAT International SS 1000	⊛	36.00
Lieder Pad	⊛	133.00
Lieder Bel Canto	⊛	188.00
Lieder Spoor	⊛	253.00
Lieder Straat	⊛	463.00
Lieder Weg	⊛	663.00
Linn K20	⊛	4.00
Linn K400	⊛	10.00
Linn K600	⊛	15.00
Lumley Silver 12/2	⊛	35.00
Lumley Silver 14/4	⊛	40.00
Monster XP Clear	⊛	2.20
Monster XP Navajo	⊛	2.40
Monster Superflat Mini	⊛	2.75
Monster XP HP	⊛	3.70
Monster Original	⊛	4.40
Monster New Monster	⊛	5.50
Naim NAC A5	⊛	5.70
Nordost Octava	●	3.00
Nordost 4-Flat	●	9.95
Nordost Solar Wind Bi-wire	⊛	27.95
Nordost Blue Heaven Spkr	⊛	58.95
Nordost Red Dawn	⊛	110.00
Nordost SPM	⊛	325.00
Ortofon SPK100	⊛	3.00
Ortofon SPK200	⊛	5.00
Ortofon SPK300	⊛	8.00
Precious Metals SL32	⊛	7.50
Precious Metals SL102	⊛	10.00
Precious Metals SL34	⊛	15.00
Precious Metals SL104	⊛	20.00
Precious Metals SL106	⊛	30.00

Precious Metals SL108	⊛	40.00
Puresonic OFC 7892	⊛	1.20
Puresonic OFC 7844	⊛	1.65
Puresonic OFC 7845	⊛	1.95
Puresonic OFC 7891	⊛	2.85
Puresonic OFC 7816	⊛	3.75
Puresonic OFC 7832	⊛	3.75
Puresonic OFC 7812	⊛	3.75
Puresonic OFC 7825	⊛	6.95
Puresonic PSOCC 7801	⊛	9.50
Puresonic PSOCC 7802	⊛	18.00
Puresonic PSOCC 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	⊛	5.00
QED Profile 4x4	⊛	9.00
QED Profile Silver 12	⊛	15.00
Rega Speaker	⊛	1.58
Rega SC42	⊛	19.98
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 MM	⊛	240.00
Siltech LS4-120	⊛	549.00
Silver Sounds 12 Gauge	⊛	15.00
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
SonicLink AST50	⊛	1.95
SonicLink AST60	⊛	2.50
SonicLink AST75	⊛	2.95
SonicLink AST200	⊛	5.95
SonicLink AST200x2	⊛	9.95
SonicLink S300	⊛	18.00
SonicLink S130x2	⊛	20.00
SonicLink S300x2	⊛	40.00
SonicLink S900	⊛	60.00
SonicLink S600x2	⊛	80.00
SonicLink Black Rhodium 4	⊛	1,000.00
Straight Wire Rhythm	⊛	6.00
Straight Wire Quartet	⊛	8.00
Supra Classic 2.5	⊛	2.49
Supra Linc 2.5 Flex	⊛	3.49
Supra Classic 4.0	⊛	3.95
Supra Classic 6	⊛	4.95
Supra Ply 2.0	⊛	4.95
Supra Linc 4.0 Flex	⊛	4.95
Supra Ply 3.4	⊛	6.95
Supra Quattro 4x4	⊛	8.95
Tara Klara	⊛	2.95
Tara Prism 2+2	⊛	7.95
Tara Prism Nexa	⊛	9.95
Tara Prism Bi-Wire	⊛	18.00
Tara RSC Prime 500	●	43.00
Tara RSC Prime 1000	●	73.00
Tara RSC Ref Gen/2	●	118.00
Tara RSC Prime 1800	●	150.00
Tara RSC Digital 75	●	230.00
Tara RSC Air 2	●	291.00
Tara RSC Air 1	●	466.00
Tara ISM The Two	●	708.00
Tara ISM The One	●	941.00
Tech + Link SP9 79	⊛	1.20
Transparent Cable Musichord	⊛	11.00
Transparent Cable The Wave	⊛	23.00
Transparent Cable Music Wave	⊛	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	⊛	3.99
van den Hul Snowline	⊛	5.49
van den Hul Skytrack HB	⊛	5.99
van den Hul Clearwater	⊛	7.99
van den Hul Snowtrack	⊛	10.99
van den Hul Royal Jade	⊛	10.99
van den Hul CS122 HB	⊛	13.49
van den Hul Cleartrack	⊛	14.99
van den Hul D352 HB	⊛	21.00
van den Hul Teatrack HB	⊛	23.99
van den Hul SCS12	⊛	36.00
van den Hul Magnum HB	⊛	40.00
van den Hul The Wind HB	⊛	44.00
van den Hul Revolution HB	⊛	44.00
van den Hul Revelation HB	⊛	80.00
van den Hul The Third	⊛	120.00
XLO CDA 16/2	⊛	4.45
XLO CDA ER-14 THX	⊛	5.81
XLO CDA 16/4	⊛	8.60
XLO CDA ER-11 THX	⊛	11.62
XLO Pro 600	⊛	16.60
XLO CDA ER-12 THX	⊛	23.24
XLO Pro 1200	⊛	33.20
XLO Ultra 6	⊛	41.50
XLO Ultra 12	⊛	83.00
XLO Ref 2	⊛	216.00

XLO Sig 5.1	⊛	398.00
XLO Limited Ed'n	⊛	1,660.00



**CARTRIDGES**

**KEY**

**MM** - Moving-magnet type.  
**MC** - Moving-coil type.

**UP TO £100**

Audio Note IO1	MM	99
Audio Technica AT-91	MM	15
Audio Technica AT-95E	MM	20
Audio Technica AT-110E	MM	28
Audio Technica AT450E	MM	70
Audio Technica AT440ML	MM	90
Benz-Micro MC20EII	MC	70
Denon DL110	MC	70
Denon DL160	MC	90
Denon DL103	MC	100
Goldring Elan	MM	19
Goldring Elektra	MM	29
Goldring 1006	MM	59
Goldring 1012GX	MM	79
Goldring 1022GX	MM	99
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 OM 3E	MM	16
Ortofon OM 5E	MM	20
Ortofon OM 10	MM	30
Ortofon 510	MM	40
Ortofon OM DJ	MM	50
Ortofon OM 20	MM	70
Ortofon 520	MM	70
Ortofon MC1 Turbo	MC	75
Ortofon Concorde DJ	MM	80
Ortofon OM 30	MM	90
Ortofon 530	MM	100
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-2-S	MM	55
Pickering XV15-7575	MM	60
Pickering XV15-625DJ	MM	60
Pickering XV15-1800S	MM	70
Pickering TL35	MM	80
Pickering XEV-3001E	MM	95
Pickering XLZ-3500	MM	100
Pickering TL-4-S	MM	100
Rega Bias	MM	39
Rega RB78	MM	39
Rega Super Bias	MM	59
Rega Elys	MM	85
Shure M70BX	MM	21
Shure M92E	MM	22
Shure SC35C	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	MC	100

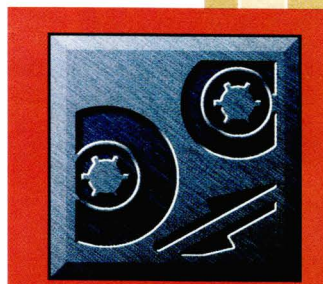
**OVER £100**

Allaerts MC1 Eco	MC	850
Allaerts MC1 B	MC	1,250
Allaerts MC1 B MkII	MC	2,200
Allaerts MC2 Finish	MC	2,995
Audio Note IO2	MM	139
Audio Note Soara	MC	795
Audio Note IO1V	MC	1,095

Audio Note IO1Ld	MC	4,500
Audio Technica AT-OC9ML	MC	330
Audio Technica AT-33PTG	MC	489
Benz-Micro The Glider	MC	600
Benz-Micro Reference	MC	1,100
Benz-Micro Reference Ruby	MC	1,500
Benz-Micro Ruby Open Air	MC	1,600
Clearaudio Alpha Mk 2	MM	135
Clearaudio Beta Mk 2	MM	190
Clearaudio Beta-S Mk 2	MM	250
Clearaudio Virtuoso	MM	295
Clearaudio Sigma	MC	590
Clearaudio Gamma-S	MC	810
Clearaudio Victory	MC	960
Clearaudio Signature	MC	1,540
Clearaudio Accurate	MC	2,515
Clearaudio Insider	MC	5,165
Clearaudio Insider Ref.	MC	6,810
Denon DL304	MC	200
Dynavector 10X4II	MC	189
Dynavector DV20XH	MC	299
Dynavector DV-20XL	MC	299
Dynavector DV20XL	MC	299
Dynavector 17D2	MC	450
Dynavector XX-1L	MC	998
Dynavector Te-Katora	MC	998
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	148
Grado Signature Junior	MM	150
Grado Signature 8M2	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	1,359
Koetsu Red K Sig	MC	1,899
Koetsu Urushi	MC	1,999
Koetsu Signature	MC	2,999
Koetsu Gold PR	MC	5,498
Linn K9	MM	125
Linn Klyde	MC	500
Linn Arkiv	MC	1,000
London Decca Maroon	MM	294
London Decca Gold	MM	359
London Decca Maroon Dp	MM	379
London Decca S Gold	MM	439
London Decca Gold Dp	MM	439
London Decca S Gold Dp	MM	519
London Decca Jubilee	MM	999
Lyra Lydian Beta	MC	599
Lyra Clavis Da Capo	MC	995
Lyra Parnassus DC1	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 MC25E	MC	200
Ortofon MC25FL	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	1,000
Ortofon MC3000 II	MC	1,200
Ortofon MC Jubilee	MC	1,250
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
Rega Super Elys	MM	150
Rega Exact	MM	248
Reson Mica	MM	185
Reson Recca	MM	250
Reson Aciore	MC	299
Reson Etile	MC	455
Reson Lexe	MC	1,300
Roksan Corus Black	MM	150
Roksan Shiraz	MC	990
Shure V15XMR	MM	295
Stanton 890AL/X	MM	120
Sumiko Blue Point Special	MC	250
Transfiguration Spirit	MC	950
Transfiguration Spirit	MC	950
Transfiguration Temper Supreme	MC	2,250
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	1,200
van den		



van den Hul Grasshopper IIIICLA **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  
 van den Hul Black Beauty **MC** 3,000  
 Wilson Benesch Matrix **MC** 786  
 Wilson Benesch Analog **MC** 1,572  
 Wilson Benesch Carbon **MC** 1,573



## CASSETTE DECKS

**KEY**  
 ⇌ - Autoreverse - no need to remove and turn around the tape.  
**3-H** - 3 heads, i.e. separate record and replay heads.

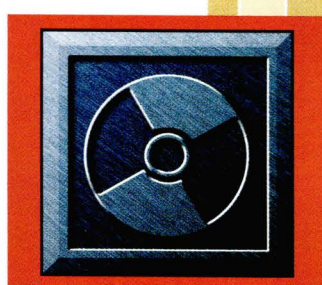
### UP TO £200

Ariston WX-510	70
Denon DRM-550	160
Denon DRW-585	200
Goodmans Delta 801	130
H/K DC520	200
JVC TD-X372BK	170
JVC TD-R472BK	200
Kenwood KX-W4080	160
Kenwood KX-3080	160
Kenwood KX-W6080	200
Kenwood KX-5080S	200
Marantz SD-455	170
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-WE435	130
Sony TC-KE230	130
Sony TC-WE635	150
Sony TC-KB820S	180
Sony TC-WE835	200
Teac W-416	100
Teac V-615	130
Teac RH-300	160
Teac W-790R	170
Teac V-1050	180
Teac RH-500	200
Technics RS-BX501	170
Technics RS-TR373	180
Technics RS-TR474	200
Technics RS-A26	200
Yamaha KX-393	130
Yamaha KX-W521	170
Yamaha KX-493	180

### OVER £200

Denon DRM-650S	230
Denon DRM-740	270
Denon DRS-810	310
H/K TD420	250
JVC TD-V662BK	270
JVC TD-W718BK	300
NAD 613	230
NAD 614	270
NAD 616	300
Nakamichi DR-10	800
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	460
Pioneer CT-S550S	250
Pioneer CT-W806DR	300
Pioneer CT-S550S Precision	340
Pioneer CT-S830S	500
Pioneer CT-9	1,000
Rotel RC960BX	250
Sony TC-KA6ES	600
T+A CC1200R	1,180
Teac W-860R	230
Teac W-6000R	450
Teac V-6030S	550
Teac V-8030S	650
Technics RS-AZ7	270
Technics RS-TR575	280

Yamaha KX-5805E 250



## CD PLAYERS

**KEY**  
 ⇌ - Multiplayer: can be loaded with more than one disc.  
 [D] - Electrical (coaxial) digital output.  
 [D] - Optical (Toslink) output.

### UP TO £250

Ariston CDX700	50
Ariston CDX710	70
Ariston CDX720	80
Cambridge CD5	100
Cambridge D100	120
Cambridge CD4	150
Cambridge CD4SE	200
Denon DCD-435	130
Denon DCD-635	180
Denon DCD-735	230
Eclipse CD101a	40
H/K HD720	200
H/K FL8350	200
JVC XL-V120BK	110
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 DPF-3010	180
Kenwood DP-R6090	200
Kenwood DP-4090	250
Marantz CD-38	130
Marantz CC-38	200
Marantz CD-48	200
Marantz CD-57	230
Marantz CD-67II	250
NAD 522	170
NAD 510	200
NAD 524	250
NAD 523	250
NAD 512	250
Pioneer PD-106	130
Pioneer PD-206	150
Pioneer PD-S507	190
Pioneer PD-F606	200
Pioneer PD-M603	200
Pioneer PD-F706	250
Rotel RCD-930AX	180
Sansui CD220	180
Sherwood CD-4030R	180
Sherwood CDC680	180
Sherwood CDC6050R	180
Sony CDP-XE220	90
Sony CDP-XE330	100
Sony CDP-M305	120
Sony CDP-XE530	130
Sony CDP-CE335	160
Sony CDP-XB720E	200
Sony CDP-CX57	250
Synergy CDJ1210	120
Teac CDP-1120	100
Teac CD-P1820	130
Teac CD-P1440	200
Teac CD-P3450SE	200
Teac PD-D2400	200
Teac PD-H500i	240
Technics SL-PC390A	90
Technics SL-PC490A	100
Technics SL-PC590A	120
Technics SL-PD6	140
Technics SL-PD8	160
Technics SL-PS670D	200
Technics SL-PS770D	250
Yamaha CDX-393 II	130
Yamaha CDC-575	180
Yamaha CDX-493	180
Yamaha CDX-9	200
Yamaha CDX-593	230
Yamaha CDC-675	230

### £251 TO £500

Arcam Alpha MCD	350
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Arcam Alpha 7 SE	350
Arcam Alpha 8	450
Arcam Alpha 8SE	500
Cambridge CD6	300
Cyrus dAD1.5	399
Denon DCD-835	280
Denon DCM-260	300
Denon DCD-1550AR	350
H/K HD740	300
H/K FL8550	300
H/K HD760	500
JVC XL-Z674BK	300
Kenwood DP-R7080	300
Kenwood DP-9090	300
Kenwood DP-5090	300
Kenwood DP-7090	400
Marantz CD-675E MkII	300
Marantz CD6000 OSE	300
Marantz CC-870	400
Marantz CD-631KI	400
Musical Fidelity E60	300
Musical Fidelity A2 CD	500
Musical Fidelity E624	500
Myryad T-10	400
NAD 513	290
NAD 515	350
NAD 514	370
NAD 517	400
Nakamichi MB10	399
Onkyo DX 7210	260
Onkyo C721	290
Onkyo DXC 320	380
Onkyo DX 7510	400
Onkyo CM 716	450
Parasound C/DP-1000	499
Pioneer PD-S707	300
Pioneer PD-F805	300
Pioneer PD-S705	350
Pioneer PD-F906	350
Pioneer PD-S904	400
Pioneer PD-S505 Precision	460
Roksan Kandy	475
Rotel RCD-951	300
Rotel RCD-971	350
Sony CDP-XB930E	300
Sony CDP-CX350	350
Sony CDP-XA20ES	450
Sony CDP-X3000ES	500
Sony CDP-CX260	500
Synergy CDJ2010	300
Technics SL-MC7	300
Yamaha CDX-993	400

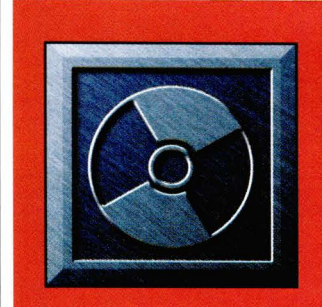
### £501 TO £1,000

Acurus ACD11	899
Alchemist Nexus	600
Arcam Alpha 9	800
Audio Analogue Paganini	750
Audio Note CD1	599
Audio Note AN-CD2	999
Audiomeca Obsession	999
AVI S2000MC 24 Ref	999
Creek CD43	599
Cyrus dAD3Q	598
Cyrus dAD3	898
Denon DCD-1650AR	700
DPA Renaissance int CD	950
Helios Model 3	700
Helios Model 2	950
Linn Mimik	875
Linn Genki	995
Magnum CD2020	595
Marantz CD-17	800
Monrio Asty PL	675
Monrio Privilege	995
Musical Fidelity X-RAY	799
Musical Fidelity A3 CD	799
Myryad T-20	600
Myryad MC100	800
Pioneer PDS-06	550
Primare D20	700
Quad 99	600
Roksan Caspian	895
Rotel RCD991	750
Sony CDP-XA555ES	1,000
Sugden Audition	649
Talk Electronics Thunder 2	700
Talk Electronics Thunder 3	1,000
Teac VRDS-8	600
Teac VRDS-9	700
Teac VRDS-25X	1,000
Thule Audio Spirit CD100	600
Thule Audio Spirit CD150B	699
Trichord Genesis	569
Trichord Digital Jukebox 25	619
Trichord Digital Jukebox 50	669
Trichord Digital J'box 100	719
Trichord Revelation	819
YBA Complete	649
YBA Special	695

### OVER £1,000

Acoustic Precision Eikos	1,850
Advantage CD15	3,995
Alchemist Kraken CD	1,249
Alchemist Forseti Int.	1,249

Alchemist Forseti	1,995
Audio Research CD2	3,399
Audiolabor 531	7,550
Audiomeca Keops	1,500
Audiomeca Talisman	2,150
Audiomeca Talisman SE	2,300
Balanced WK-D5	3,995
Cary CD-301	2,350
Classe CDP-3	1,395
Conrad-Johnson DF-2	1,695
Conrad-Johnson DV-2b	2,495
Copland CDA-266	1,199
Copland CDA277	1,649
Copland CDA289	1,898
Copland CDA288	1,999
Cymbal CDP12	1,299
Exposure CD Player	1,050
Helios Model 1	1,250
Helios Stargate	2,250
Jadis Orchestra	1,345
Krell KAV250cd	2,490
Krell KAV300cd	3,599
Krell KPS25s	19,995
Linn Ikemi	1,950
Linn Sondek CD12	12,000
Marantz CD-17KIS	1,100
Marantz CD-7	3,500
Madrigal 39	4,995
McIntosh MC7009	3,699
Meracus Tanto	1,395
Meracus Imago Player	4,495
Meridian 506	1,100
Meridian 508	1,995
Myryad MCD500	1,300
NAD S500	1,100
Naim CD3.5	1,050
Naim CDX	2,200
Naim NACDSII/XPS	5,625
Oracle CD Player	9,499
Pink Triangle Numeral	1,049
Pink Triangle Litaural	2,200
Primare D302	1,500
Proceed CDP	3,395
Resolution CD50	2,995
Roksan Attesta-DP3P	1,495
Shearman Phase 7	1,499
Sherwood CD1	1,100
Sony Frontiers Anthem CD1	1,699
Sonic Frontiers SFCD-1	3,799
Sony SCD-1	2,700
T+A CD1210R	1,185
T+A CD1220R	1,540
TAG McLaren CD20R	1,250
Theta Digital Miles SE	2,390
Tube Tech Fusion	1,100
Tube Tech Fulcrum	2,800
Wadla 960	7,450
XTC CDP-1	1,350
YBA Integre a	1,095
YBA CD3a	1,850
YBA CD2a	2,950
YBA CD1a	3,895



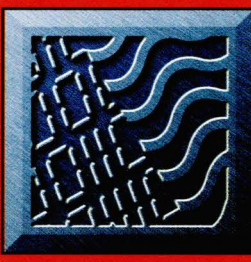
## CD TRANSPORTS

**KEY**  
 [D] - Electrical (coaxial) digital output.  
 [D] - Optical (Toslink) output.

Alchemist Forseti Drive	1,100
Altis CDT III	4,995
Audio Note CDT Zero	399
Audio Synthesis Transcend Decade	3,295
Audiomeca Damnation	999
Audiomeca Damnation SE	1,100
Audiomeca Talisman	1,850
Audiomeca Talisman SE	1,999
Audiomeca Talisman DOB	2,250
Conrad-Johnson DR-1	1,795
DPA Enlightenment Drv	775
Jadis JD3	1,999
Jadis JDI	9,190
Linn Kank	1,850
Madrigal 37	3,995
Madrigal 31.5	9,295
Meracus Imago	3,995
Monrio Bitmatch	950



Muse Model 5	1,800
Muse Model 8	3,500
Oracle CD Drive	7,399
Pink Triangle Cardinal II	909
Resolution VT960	3,500
Roksan Atessa-DP3	1,295
Sonic Frontiers Transport 3	5,999
T+A CMI 200R	875
TAG McLaren CDT20R	1,499
Teac VRDS-T1	550
Teac P-30	2,500
Theta Digital Pearl	1,349
Theta Digital Jade	2,650
Thorens TCD-2000	999
Trichord Digital Turntable	719
Wadia 8	3,195
Wadia 20	4,370



## DIGITAL TO ANALOGUE CONVERTERS (DACs)

**KEY**  
4 - Number of digital inputs.

Alchemist TS-D-1	300
Alchemist Forseti DAC	1,100
Altis Reference	4,995
Audio Note DAC Zero	369
Audio Note DAC1	675
Audio Note DAC2	1,099
Audio Note DAC3	1,750
Audio Research DAC5	2,335
Audio Research DAC3 MkII	3,999
Audio Synthesis DAX Decade	2,795
Audiomeca Elixir	799
Audiomeca Ambrosia	1,850
Boulder 2020	21,000
Chord DSC900	1,850
Chord DSC1100	2,765
Chord DSC1500	4,800
Conrad-Johnson D/A-3	1,195
Conrad-Johnson D/A-2b	1,990
dCS Elgar	8,500
DPA Little Bit 3	325
DPA Renaissance DAC	595
DPA Enlightenment DAC	850
DPA SX128	2,000
DPA SX256	4,000
DPA SX512	8,000
Harmonix Reimyo DAP-77	2,790
Jadis JS2	2,499
Jadis JS1	6,990
LFD DAC2	1,950
LFD DAC3	3,000
Linn Numerik	1,500
Madrigal 360	4,395
Madrigal 360S	6,895
Madrigal 30.6	16,495
Meracur Auriga	1,295
Meracur Flagrante	2,495
Meridian 566	1,095
Monrio 1882	795
Muse Model 2	2,190
Muse Model 2 Plus	2,500
Muse Model 2/96	3,000
Musical Fidelity X-ACT	200
Musical Fidelity X-24K	300
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	300
Onkyo DX 7310	330
Resolution D92	1,500
Roksan Atessa-DA2	595
Sonic Frontiers Processor 3	5,999
Sumo Theorem II	945
Sumo Theorem IIB	1,155
TAG McLaren DAC20	1,249
Teac D-T1	500
Theta Digital Chroma 396 Std	799
Theta Digital Pro Geny	1,099
Theta Digital Pro Prime IIa	1,699
Theta Digital Pro Basic IIIa	2,990
Theta Digital Casablanca LS	6,158
Thorens TDA-2000	700
Trichord Pulsar Ser One	1,395
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  
DT - Portable

Denon DMD-1000	MD	300
Kenwood DMF-9020	MD	499
Kenwood DM-7090	MD	500
Kenwood DM-9090	MD	550
Marantz CM635	MD	500
Marantz DR700	MD	600
Ornkyo MD-121	MD	450
Ornkyo MD 122	MD	700
Philips CDR770		1
Philips CDR775		1
Philips CDR570		1
Philips CDR951		1
Pioneer MJ-D707	MD	199
Pioneer PDR-555RW		480
Pioneer PDR-04		700
Pioneer D-05	DAT	900
Pioneer PDR-05		1,000
Pioneer D-C88	DAT	2,000
Sharp MD-R1 MkII	MD	180
Sharp MD-R3H	MD	300
Sharp MD-R2	MD	300
Sharp MD-MS200H	MD	350
Sharp MDXV300H	MD	1,000
Sony MZ-R55	MD	1
Sony MDS-540	MD	1
Sony MZ-R37	MD	1
Sony MZ-RS5T	MD	1
Sony MDS-JE530	MD	200
Sony MDS-JB930	MD	300
Sony MDS-JA20ES	MD	500
Sony MDS-JA55ES	MD	650
Teac MDH300	MD	300
Teac MD-H500i	MD	350
Teac MD-8	MD	600
Teac MD-5	MD	600
Teac MD-10	MD	900
Traxdata Traxaudio 900		399
Yamaha MDX-595	MD	230
Yamaha MDX-793	MD	300
Yamaha MDX-9	MD	300



## HEADPHONES

**KEY**  
'D' - Dynamic type, compatible with virtually all normal headphone outputs.  
'E' - Electrostatic type; generally includes a separate power supply.  
OB - Open-back construction.  
CB - Closed-back construction.

AKG Rox	D	30
Aural Envelope DX200	D	20
Aural Envelope DX220	D	30
Beyer DT111	D	15
Beyer DT211	D	31
Beyer DT211TV	D	35
Hama SL273	D	20
Hama SL275	D	25
JVC HA-CD88	D	18
JVC HA-D525	D	20
JVC HA-F65	D	20
JVC HA-D626	D	25
Kenwood KPM-310	D	18
Kenwood KPM-410	D	25
Maxell HP-2000	D	20

Pioneer SE-A40	D	20
Pioneer SE-A20V	D	23
Pioneer SE-M250	D	25
Pioneer SE-M350	D	30
Sennheiser HD56	D	18
Sennheiser HD433	D	20
Sennheiser HD400	D	25
Sennheiser HD470	D	35
Sennheiser HD60TV	D	40
Sony MDR-250V	D	18
Sony MDR-A34L	D	18
Sony MDR-ED228LP	D	18
Sony MDR-G52LP	D	20
Sony MDR-E848LP/MP	D	20
Sony MDR-ED238ML	D	22
Sony MDR-G56V	D	25
Sony MDR-G62LP	D	25
Sony MDR-G59G	D	30
Sony MDR-G72LP	D	30
Sony MDR-V300	D	30
Sony MDR-IF130K	D	30
Sony MDR-EX70LP	D	35
Sony MDR-ED268LP	D	35
Stanton ST Pro	D	25
Technics RP-HT355	D	20
Technics RP-F200	D	25
Technics RP-F400	D	30
Technics RP-HT550	D	35
Technics RP-F500	D	40
Vivanco SR200	D	20
Vivanco SR150	D	20
Vivanco SR250	D	20
Vivanco IR5700	D	30
Vivanco IR5800	D	40

<b>OVER £41</b>		
AKG K301	D	70
AKG K240DF	D	100
AKG K222IR	D	100
AKG K401	D	120
AKG K501	D	150
AKG K333IR	D	150
AKG K444IR	D	180
AKG K290S	D	250
AKG K1000	D	700
Audio Technica ATH910PRO	D	80
Audio Technica ATHD40FS	D	100
Audio Technica ATH-M40	D	120
Audio Technica ATH911	D	120
Beyer DT311	D	50
Beyer DT411	D	63
Beyer DT331	D	65
Beyer DT431	D	81
Beyer DT511	D	106
Beyer DT801	D	125
Beyer DT831	D	140
Beyer DT811	D	145
Beyer DT1100	D	160
Beyer DT901	D	160
Beyer DT911	D	170
Denon AH-D210	D	45
Denon AH-D350	D	65
Denon AH-D550	D	80
Denon AH-D650	D	95
Denon AH-D750	D	130
Denon AH-D950	D	150
Grado SR40	D	45
Grado SR60	D	79
Grado SR80	D	100
Grado SR125	D	150
Grado SR225	D	200
Grado SR525	D	300
Grado RS2	D	495
Grado RS1	D	695
Hama SL276	D	50
Hama IR Cordless	D	60
Jecklin Float Model 1	D	79
Jecklin Float Model 2	D	99
Jecklin Float ELS	E	399
JVC HA-D727	D	43
JVC HA-D50	D	45
JVC HA-W60	D	49
JVC HA-D910	D	65
JVC HA-W200RF	D	75
JVC HA-DX1	D	200
JVC HA-DX3	D	250
JVC HA-D1000	D	250
JVC HA-F25	D	699
Koss TD/80	D	50
Koss R/100	D	100
Philips SBC 3396	D	70
Philips SBC HP9000	D	90
Pioneer SE-M550	D	50
Pioneer SE-M750	D	60
Precide Ergo Model 1	D	120
Precide Ergo Model 2	D	140
Sennheiser HD200	D	50
Sennheiser IS 380	D	50
Sennheiser HD490	D	50
Sennheiser HD495	D	60
Sennheiser HD500	D	70
Sennheiser RS400	D	80
Sennheiser HD270	D	80
Sennheiser HD25 SP	D	90
Sennheiser HD570 Symphony	D	90
Sennheiser HD545 Ref	D	100
Sennheiser IS450	D	110

Sennheiser HD265 Linear	D	125
Sennheiser HDC 451-1	D	130
Sennheiser HD250II	D	150
Sennheiser HD590	D	150
Sennheiser HD565 Ovat'n	D	150
Sennheiser HD25-13	D	160
Sennheiser HD25	D	160
Sennheiser HD 580 Precision	D	200
Sennheiser HD600	D	250
Sennheiser IS850	D	859
Sennheiser HE60/HEV70	E	998
Sennheiser Orpheus	E	9,652
Sony MDR-V500DJ	D	50
Sony MDR-RF830RK	D	60
Sony MDR-V700DJ	D	100
Sony MDR-D77	D	130
Sony MDR-F1	D	200
Sony MDR-CD1700	D	200
Sony MDR-DS5000	D	400
Stanton DJ Pro 101/HB	D	65
Stanton DJ Pro 1000	D	95
Stanton DJ Pro 1001	D	150
Stax SR-001	E	280
Stax SR-Lambda Nova C	E	370
Stax SR-Lambda Nova Basic	E	449
Stax SR-Lambda Nova S	E	450
Stax Omega	E	1,896
Technics RP-F800	D	50
Technics RP-HC100	D	55
Technics RP-DJ1200	D	130
Vivanco SR650	D	45
Vivanco FMH 3000	D	50
Vivanco SR750	D	50
Vivanco SR850	D	50
Vivanco FM7980	D	60
Vivanco SR950	D	80
Vivanco FM8180	D	99
Vivanco SR2000FL	D	100



## EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS Hi-Fi Tables

**KEY**  
4 - Number of shelves.

Avik Furniture A4	4	350
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 VR17/17	3	190
Alphason GR17/17-AS	4	275
Apollo Soprano	4	275
Arcici Air Head 1	1	275
Arcici Air Head TNT	1	725
Arcici Suspense 5	5	1,895
Atacama Europa	4	240
Audiophile Base 01	1	79
Audiophile S4T120	4	280
Audiophile S4T120P	4	560
Audiophile Furniture Base	4	615
Avid Isoshelf	5	1,100
BCD Model 1006/8	1	795
BCD Model 1000	3	1,250
Custom Design Aspect 650	4	250
Custom Design Aspect 850	5	280
Custom Design e'lite E5	5	280
Custom Design Aspect 500AV	3	290
Custom Design e'lite XE5	5	300
Custom Design e'lite AVE	8	350
Deadrock 701	1	60
Deadrock 802	2	90
Deadrock 703	3	130
Deadrock 705	5	230
Deadrock 704	4	250
Elemental Isotube X1	1	169
Elemental Isotube B5	1	199
Elemental Isotube TS	1	209
Elemental Isotube IS	1	209
Elemental Reference B1	1	329
Elemental Isotube X2	2	379
Elemental Isotube X3	3	489
Elemental Reference B5	1	499
Elemental Reference X1	1	499
Elemental Reference TS	1	549
Elemental Reference IS	1	549
Elemental Reference X2	2	799
Elemental Isotube X4	4	849
Elemental Isotube X4/Ref	4	1,199



Elemental Reference X3	3	1,199
Elemental Isotube X4Rse	4	1,349
Elemental Reference X4	4	1,599
<b>Fi-Rax R4</b>	6	399
Finite Elemente A03 pagode	4	479
Finite Elemente E03 pagode	4	649
Finite Elemente HD03	4	1,995
Frameworks H175	1	139
Frameworks FS1	1	150
<b>Frameworks H500</b>	3	265
Frameworks FT2	2	285
Frameworks FT3	3	350
Frameworks H700	3	355
Frameworks H900	3	389
Impulse Iso-plate	1	190
JPW 3 Tier	3	80
JPW 5 Tier	5	100
Linn K3000	1	85
<b>Mana Sound Frame</b>	125	
Mana Mini Table	150	
Mana Power supply table	150	
Mana Reference flat top	150	
Mana Sound Shelf	175	
Mana Sound Stage	200	
Mana Sound Table	235	
Mana Ref Shelf	325	
<b>Mana Reference Table</b>	350	
Mana 2 Tier Stand	375	
Mana 3 Tier Stand	450	
Mana 4 Tier Stand	500	
<b>Mana 5 Tier Stand</b>	600	
Mana 6 Tier Stand	700	
Mana 7 Tier Stand	800	
Mana 8 Tier Stand	900	
Mission Stance	100	
Optimum C4/Pedestal	5	130
Optimum OPT 3406	3	149
Optimum C5/Pedestal	6	150
Optimum OPT 4906	4	199
Optimum OPT 3000	3	200
Optimum OPT 6606	5	249
Optimum OPT 340	3	249
Optimum OPT 5000	5	280
<b>Optimum OPT 490</b>	4	299
Optimum OPT 440	4	299
Optimum OPT 10206	6	299
Optimum AV 300	3	329
Optimum OPT 700	5	349
Optimum OPT 610	5	349
<b>Optimum OPT 660</b>	4	349
Optimum OPT 1020	6	399
Optimum OPT 8000	8	400
Optimum OPT 1190	7	450
Projekt A3	3	145
<b>Projekt A4</b>	4	215
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
<b>Quadraspire Q4 table</b>	4	250
Quadraspire Q4SP Table	4	320
Quadraspire QAV table	3	350
Quadraspire QAVSP Table	3	400
Quadraspire QK Cabinet	4	450
Reson DOMOPS	1	195
Reson DOMOWS	1	195
Solid Steel Model B	1	141
Solid Steel Model A	1	152
Solid Steel Series 3	4	220
Solid Steel Series 5	4	310
Solid Steel H.3	5	372
Solid Steel H.5	5	517
Sound Org Z022	1	65
Sound Org Z021	2	78
Sound Org Z030	3	100
Sound Org Z060	4	120
<b>Sound Org Z038</b>	5	135
Sound Org Z540	4	140
<b>Sound Org Z560</b>	5	160
<b>Sound Org Z545</b>	4	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
<b>Soundstyle X100</b>	4	230

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
<b>Soundstyle Radius SR100</b>	4	280
Soundstyle X6058	5	290
<b>Soundstyle X6105</b>	5	300
<b>Soundstyle Finewoods W105</b>	5	320
<b>Standesign Design 4</b>	4	190
Stands Unique Isolation Platform	1	55
Stands Unique Sound Support	4	260
<b>Stands Unique Sound Tower</b>	5	299
Stands Unique Compact Sound Supp	4	329
Stands Unique Sound Support 10	4	329
Stands Unique Sound Twr Cabinet	5	389
Stands Unique Ref Wall Support	1	560
Stands Unique Ultimate Tower	10	720
Stands Unique Ref Floor Support	6	840
<b>Target B5</b>	5	175
Townshend Seismic Sink 1-CD	1	110
Townshend Seismic Sink 1-3D	4	400
Townshend S/Sink Stand 1-4	4	999
<b>Townshend Seismic Sink Stand</b>	4	1,245
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
<b>Wilson benesch Asside Basic</b>	4	590
Wilson benesch Asside	4	720
Wilson benesch Triptych	1	990



## EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS Speaker Stands

**KEY**  
60 - Height of stand in cm.

Acoustic Solutions Platform Eight	180	
Aliante Base	425	
Aliante Vela	750	
<b>Alphason NCI</b>	60	47
Alphason Akros 1	60	49
Alphason RS1	120	49
<b>Alphason NCII</b>	60	84
Alphason HDS	60	85
<b>Alphason Titan S</b>	60	125
Apollo Olympus	60	75
<b>Apollo AZ6</b>	66	80
<b>Atacama BD21</b>	56	55
Atacama BD17	55	
Atacama BD25	60	
Atacama SE16	65	
Atacama SE12	65	
Atacama SX500	67	
Atacama F2	70	
Atacama F1	70	
Atacama SX600	70	
Atacama SL200	70	
<b>Atacama SE24</b>	61	70
Atacama SE20	70	
Atacama SX700	73	
Atacama SL300	73	
Atacama TP600	75	
Atacama TP500	75	
Atacama SE615	75	
Atacama SE515	75	
Atacama SE415	75	
Atacama SL400	76	
Atacama SE1000S	80	
<b>Atacama R724</b>	60	150
<b>AVF Tower P6144BP</b>	60	35
BCD Model 1010	60	595
<b>Black Box Speaker Stand</b>	100	797
Credo STD 001	284	
<b>Custom Design R/S 300</b>	60	75
Custom Design M Range	56	85
Custom Design Ref. stands	60	200
<b>Deadrock 903</b>	60	60
Deadrock 902	47	60
Deadrock 901	39	60
Elemental Reference SB1	8	399
Elemental Isotube SZ	49	499
<b>Elemental Isotube SZse</b>	61	599
Elemental Isotube SCZ	49	699
Elemental Isotube SCZse	49	799
Elemental Reference SZ	52	999
Elemental Reference SCZ	52	1,499
Harbeth HL-Stands	21	249

Heybrook Stand-S6	63	69
JPW MS2	45	45
JPW MS3	61	55
JPW MS1	46	80
<b>JPW HS1</b>	61	120
JPW HS2	45	120
Mana Sound Base	60	175
Opera WS1/E	60	235
Opera S1	60	295
Opera S2	60	345
<b>Partington A-4</b>	60	119
Pioneer CP-7	50	50
Pioneer CP-8	80	80
Projekt Signature	55	80
Royd Royd	55	99
<b>Russ Andrews Torlyte</b>	61	599
Silverado Silverado 1 Stand	60	350
Solid Steel SL	63	186
Solid Steel SS	63	333
Solid Steel SS801	25	366
Sonus Faber Ironwood	475	
Sonus Faber Stonewood	497	
Sound Org Z037	55	55
Sound Org Z027	55	55
Sound Org Z026	55	55
Sound Org Z518	45	65
<b>Sound Org Z524</b>	61	69
Soundstyle X6118	42	100
Stands Unique Speaker support	59	165
<b>Stands Unique Tuned Spkr Support</b>	59	230
Stands Unique Tuned Carbon Fibre	59	299
<b>Stands Unique Vivas CF Spkr Supp</b>	60	349
<b>Target TR60</b>	60	68
<b>Target R1</b>	53	280



## LOUDSPEAKERS

**KEY**  
 1 - Floorstander; larger models requiring no separate stand.  
 2 - Stand mount; smaller models designed to be raised above the floor.  
 3 - Wall mount; designed to be sited on or near the wall.  
 4 - Box type, including infinite baffle, reflex and transmission line types.  
 5 - Horn type; mostly large and very efficient.  
 6 - Panel type, including electrostatic and planar magnetic types.

<b>UP TO £130</b>		
Allison Micro Monitors	95	
Allison Mini References	120	
Ariston MSX 03	30	
Ariston MSX 05	50	
<b>Celestion 12i</b>	119	
Denon SC-M2	80	
Denon SC-E313SE	130	
Gale Mini Monitors	70	
Gale Gold Monitors	90	
<b>Gale 2i</b>	130	
Genexxa GX300	80	
Genexxa GX330	80	
GLL Arena	90	
GLL Imagio IC208	100	
Goodmans Active 75	65	
<b>Heybrook Prima 2</b>	129	
Interaudio XL1000	130	
Jamo Studio-80	70	
Jamo D-110	100	
Jamo SAT-170	110	
Jamo Studio-110	110	
Jamo Artina	120	
Jamo D-115	120	
Jamo 28	125	
Jamo Cornet 145	130	
JBL CM40	90	
JBL MX300	90	
JBL Control 1X	100	
JBL CM42	130	
JPW ML110i	90	
JPW ML210i	100	
JPW ML310i	120	
JPW ML410i	130	
JVC SX-SC1VBK	60	
JVC SP-V50	80	
JVC SP-X220TBK	100	

JVC SP-X550BK	130
<b>KEF Coda 7</b>	129
Kenwood LS-90UK	130
<b>Mission 700</b>	130
NAD 801	100
Paradigm Micro v2	100
Paradigm Atom v2	120
Pioneer CS-3030	120
Polk AB410	100
Realistic Minimus 26	56
Realistic Minimus Pro-77	100
Sony SS-86E	100
Tangent Monitor 3	60
<b>Tangent Monitor 5</b>	80
<b>Tannoy Mercury M1</b>	120
TDL Nucleus 1	75
<b>TDL Nucleus 2</b>	130
Teac LS-X8 Mk II	80
Technics SB-CS65	100
Wdale Valdis 100	80
Wdale Diamond 7.1	100
Wdale Valdis 200	110
Wdale Modus Micro	110

### £131 TO £200

Acoustic Energy Aegis One	150
Acoustic Energy AE100i	200
Allison Model 4A	170
<b>B&amp;W DM302 Ser II</b>	150
<b>B&amp;W DM601 Ser II</b>	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
<b>Cerwin-Vega CT-165</b>	200
Eltax Liberty 3+	149
Genexxa GX650	140
<b>Genexxa Pro</b>	160
GLL Imagio IC218	140
GLL Imagio IC318	200
Heybrook HB1/2000	150
<b>Heybrook Heylette B</b>	199
Heybrook HB2/2000	200
Interaudio XL2000	200
Jamo Cornet 165	150
Jamo 38	150
Jamo 525	150
Jamo 560	150
Jamo 660	170
Jamo Studio 180	180
Jamo D165	200
Jamo 68	200
Jamo 892	200
JBL CM52	150
JBL MX1000	170
JBL LX20	200
JBL MX1500	200
JMLab Tantal 505	199
<b>JPW ML510i</b>	150
JPW ML610i	180
<b>KEF Cresta 2</b>	149
<b>KEF Coda 8</b>	189
KEF Model 60S	199
<b>KEF Q15</b>	200
Kenwood LS-200G	200
Magnat Vector 22	179
Mission 701	160
Mission 771e	200
Mission 702e	200
M-A Monitor 1	200
Mordaunt-Short MS206	200
Paradigm Mini Monitor	200
Pioneer CS-5030	170
Polk M2	180
Polk RT3	200
Polk AB610	200
Royd A7X	155
Sequence 200	199
Sony SS-126EB	150
Sony SS-176E	200
<b>Tangent Monitor 9</b>	150
Tangent Monitor 11	180
<b>Tannoy Mercury M2</b>	140
<b>Tannoy Revolution R1</b>	200
TDL Nucleus 3	200
Technics SB-CS95	150
<b>Technics SB-M20</b>	200
TLC Maestro 70S	159
Wdale Valdis 300	150
Wdale Diamond 7.3	150
Wdale Modus Music Two	200
<b>Wdale Diamond 7.2 Ann'y</b>	200
<b>Wdale Valdis 400</b>	200
Yamaha NS-45E	200
Yamaha NS-B10	200
Yamaha NS-100	200

### £201 TO £300

Arcaydis Baby 1	299
Audio Gem Opal	230



B&W DM602 Ser II	300
Blueroom Mimpod	250
Bose 151	220
Bose 301 IV	300
Boston 361	219
Boston CR8	239
Boston 381	259
Boston CR9	279
Boston Voyager	299
Castle Isis	250
Celestion C1	299
Celestion 23f	299
Cerwin-Vega VS-8	250
Cerwin-Vega CT-330	300
Chario Syntar 100	249
Chario Ref 100	299
Chario Hiper 1000	300
Dali 102B	260
Dali 150	300
Eltax Linear Response	249
GLL Imagio IC238TL	250
Heybrook Optima	259
Heybrook Heylios	269
Heybrook HB3/2000	300
Interaudio XL3000	230
Interaudio XL4000	260
Jamo Cornet 175	230
Jamo Classic 4	250
Jamo Art	300
Jamo D265	300
JBL CM62	250
JM Lab Tantal 507	299
JPW ML710i	250
JPW ML810i	300
JVC SX-SW10	300
KEF Coda 9	299
KEF Model 705	299
Linn Kan	295
Mission 750	248
Mission 772	250
Mission 703	300
M-A Monitor 2	250
M-A Silver 3	300
Mus Tec Kestrel SE	300
NAD 802	280
Paradigm Monitor 5	250
Paradigm Monitor 7	300
Pioneer CS-7030	230
Pioneer CS-9030	280
Pioneer S-LC1	300
Polk AB505	220
Polk M3 II	220
Polk RT5	250
Polk RT7	300
Polk M5	300
Promenade SP1	299
Rega Aria	250
Royd The Envoy	249
Royd Minstrel	275
Ruark Epilogue	239
Sequence 300	249
Sony SS-176EB	250
Tannoy Mercury M3	230
TDL Nucleus 4	300

TLC Maestro 130S	289
TLC Voyager 350	289
W'dale Modus Music Four	230
W'dale Valdis 500	300
Yamaha NS10M	300
Yamaha NS-200	300
ZYP A1	229
ZYP A2S	299

£301 TO £500	
Acoustic Energy AE105SE	350
Acoustic Energy AE109	350
Acoustic Energy Aegis Three	350
Acoustic Energy AE120	500
Allison Model 2A	420
Arcaydis Baby 2	399
Arcaydis ASC	399
Arcaydis AK1	449
Audiovector C1	399
AVI Neutron	499
AVI NuNeutron	500
B&O Beovox CX50	325
B&O Beovox CX100	425
B&W DM305	350
B&W CDM2SE	400
Bandor Pictures	352
Boston Micro 90 Sat	369
Boston Micro 80 Sys	369
Boston VR20	380
Castle Kendal	400
Castle Inversion 15	425
Castle Eden	500
Celestion 25i	399
Celestion 30i	449
Celestion 35i	499
Cerwin-Vega VS-10	350
Chario Syntar 100T	399
Chario Ref 1000	499
Dali 104B	370
Dali Royal Menuet MkII	400
Dali 606	400
Dali Royal	500
Def Tech Celsius	395
Dynaudio Audience 40	399
Epos ES12	499
GLL Imagio IC248TL	350
GLL Imagio IC258TL	450
GLL Imagio IC348TL	500
Heybrook Heylo	359
Heybrook Ultima	399
Heybrook HBA/2000	500
Jamo Classic 6	330
Jamo Cornet 195	350
Jamo BX-100A	350
Jamo 98	350
Jamo D365	400
Jamo Classic 8	400
Jamo Graphic	400
Jamo 128	450
Jamo BX-150A	450
Jamo Atmosphere	500
JBL LX60	350
JBL Ti 200	400
JMLab Tantal 515	499

Jordan Watts JHFLG	289
Jordan Watts JH200	289
JPW ML910i	300
JPW ML1010i	300
KEF Q35	300
KEF Q55	300
KEF RDM One	499
Linn Sekrit	395
Magnat Vector 55	349
Magnat Vector 77	449
Mission 751f	348
Mission 773e	400
Mission 704	450
Mission 774	500
Mission 705	500
M-A Monitor 3	350
M-A Silver 5	400
M-A Studio 2SE	500
M-A Monitor 4	500
M-A 700 PMC	500
Mordaunt-Short MS207	400
Mordaunt-Short MS208	500
Mordaunt-Short MS817	500
Mus Tec Harner	400
Mus Tec PM15	475
NAD 804	400
Neat Critique	445
Opera Duetto	395
Opera Prima	495
Origin Live OL-1AS	399
Origin Live Monarch	399
Paradigm Studio/20	350
Paradigm Monitor 9	400
Pioneer S-LC2	450
Polk AB705	330
Polk RT8	400
Polk RT10	500
Polk AB805	500
Prof Monitor Co TB15	470
Promenade SP2	399
Promenade SP3	499
Rega Alya	350
Rega Jura	450
Rega ELA	498
Royd The Squire	350
Royd Minstrel SE	399
Royd Doublet	485
Ruark Icon	399
Sequence 400	329
Sony SS-X7	400
S Coast Odette	325
Spendor S3/5	499
System 1130	500
Tannoy Revolution R2	350
TDL G20	380
TDL Chiltern CF100	450
TDL G30	500
Technics SB-M300	300
Technics SB-M500	450
TLC Altus 300	366
Triangle Cometes	359
W'dale Modus Music Six	330
W'dale Modus Music Eight	430
W'dale Modus Music 1/6	500
Yamaha NS-300	400

Harbeth BBC LS3/5A	699
Harbeth HL-P3ES	799
Heybrook Duot	799
Infinity Kappa 60	595
Infinity Kappa 70	795
Jamo BX-200A	530
Jamo Classic 10	600
JBL LX80	550
JBL Ti 400	550
JBL SVA1500	650
JBL Ti 600	650
JMLab Cobalt 807	599
JMLab Tantal 520	599
JMLab Cobalt 810	799
Jordan Watts JH400	515
KEF LS3/5a	649
KEF RDM Two	699
KEF Q65	799
Kelly KT2	700
Linn Tukan Passive	550
Linn Keiligh Passive	750
Magnat Vintage 710	799
Meridian A500	750
M&K S-85	700
Mission 752f	578
Mission 753f	798
M-A Silver 7	600
M-A 702PMC	600
M-A 703PMC	800
Mus Tec Falcon	680
Naim Intro	680
Neat Mystique 2	575
Neat Petite II	745
Opera Seconda	595
Opera Platea	795
Origin Live Resolution	732
Paradigm Studio/60	650
Paradigm Studio/80	750
Polk RT12	600
Polk RT16	799
Polk LS50	800
ProAc Tablette 2000	649
ProAc Studio 100	749
Prof Monitor Co TB15M	517
Prof Monitor Co TB1	529
Prof Monitor Co TB1M	576
Prof Monitor Co XB1	640
Promenade SP4	650
Roksan ROKone 1	595
Roksan Ojan 3	795
Royd The Sorcerer	595
Royd Abbot	695
Ruark Templar II	559
Ruark Sceptre	599
Ruark Talisman II	799
Ruark Prologue One	799
Shiny Polarys	595
Silverado Raider	695
Solli K5	795
Solloquy 5.0	795
Sonus Faber Concertino	599
S Coast Hades	695
S Coast Lancelot	795
Spendor S1	549
System 1150	750
T+A TB 100	700
Tannoy Definition D100	689
TDL Cotswold CF200	650
Titan Logic T/2B	600
Titan Orbital	699
Titan T/2	790
TLC Classic 2	535
TLC Classic 1	800
Totem Mite	599
Totem Rokk	765
Triangle Zephyr II	599

£501 TO £800	
Acoustic Energy AE505	700
Acoustic Precision Eikos FR1	800
Aliante Sile	580
Aliante Voce	600
Allison Model 3A	525
Arcaydis AK3	599
Arcaydis AS2	699
Arcaydis AK4	699
Audio Gem Emerald	540
Audio Note AN-K/D	620
Audio Note AN-J/B	799
Audiovector M1	759
Audiovector C2	700
AVI Biggatron	599
B&O Beolab 2500	750
B&W 603 S2	550
B&W CDM1 SE	600
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Bose A'mass AM3	650
Boston VR30	600
Castle Severn 2	600
Celestion A Compact	599
Celestion 45i	599
Celestion C2	699
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Cerwin-Vega VS-15	700
Chario Constellation Lynx	549
Chario Ref 100T	599
Chario Hiper 1000T	699
Cura CA-10	699
Dali 107	600
Dali 350	600
Dali 450	700
Dali 109	800
Def Tech BP6B	750
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Dynaudio Audience 50	577
Dynaudio Audience 60	729
ELAC CL310i JET	800
Epos ES14	675

£801 TO £1,500	
Acoustic Energy AE509	850
Acoustic Energy AE520	1,000
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Acoustic Solutions Eight	1,375
Aliante Moda	1,200
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B&O Beolab 4000	1,100
B&W DM604 Ser II	849
B&W CDM7SE	1,000
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Bandor Trident	846
BKS Audio Hybrid 107	1,500
Bose A'mass AM5	900
Bose 701	1,000
Boston VR40	1,000
Carlsson OA-52.2	1,500



B&W Nautilus 805.







Celestion CSW MkII	329
Celestion S1i	349
Celestion A6s	800
Cerwin-Vega HT-10D	200
Cerwin-Vega HT-12D	250
Chario Syntar Bass	299
Chario Hipex Bass	499
Credo SDC 001	3,054
GLL Le Bass	350
Jamo SW303E	200
Jamo SW400E	250
Jamo SW410e	300
Jamo SW505E	300
Jamo Sub One	400
JBL Control Sub 6	200
JBL Control Sub 10	300
JMLab Tantal SW20	349
JMLab Cobalt SW27A	599
JMLab Electra SW33A	899
JMLab Sub Utopia	2,200
JPW Subwoofer	130
JPW SW40	240
JPW SW60	350
JPW SW-120	500
KEF Model 20B	349
KEF Model 30B	499
KEF Model AV1	2,499
Kenwood SW500	250
Kenwood SW501	349
Linn AV5150	2,850
L. Voice RW24	11,500
Magnat Vector Sub 30P	149
Magnat Vector Sub 30A	299
Meridian M2500	1,595
M&K VX-7MKII	450
M&K V-75 MKII	650
M&K V-125	800
M&K V-125 (THX)	800
M&K MX-70	900
M&K MX-150 (THX)	1,500
M&K MX-700	1,595
M&K MX-200	1,800
M&K MX-350THX	1,995
M&K MX-5000 (THX)	2,900
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M-A ASW110	500
M-A ASW210	700
Mus. Tec. PMS 45	500
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Paradigm Servo 15A	800
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Polk PSW150	500
Polk PSW300	750
REL Q50	375
REL Q-100E	495
REL Strata III	600
REL Storm III	800
REL Stadium II	995
REL Stentor II	1,800
REL Studio II	4,000
Revel Sub-15	2,195
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Tsunami TS300	300
Tsunami TS200	300
Tsunami TS210	399
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Wilson Audio Puppy 5.1	8,450
Wilson Audio Whow III	10,999
Wilson Audio XS	17,000
Yamaha YST-SW45	140
Yamaha YST-SW90	180
Yamaha YST-SW160	280
Yamaha YST-SW300	350

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 Souther TQ-1	#	1,670
Clearaudio Master TQ-1	#	3,620
Dynavector 507	⊙	1,995
Graham Mk 2.0 Basic	⊙	1,810
Graham Mk 2.0 Deluxe	⊙	2,650
Helius Orion 4 Copper	⊙	549
Helius Cyalene 2	⊙	1,495
Kuzma Stogi 5	⊙	399
Kuzma Stogi	⊙	750
Kuzma Stogi Ref	⊙	1,250
Linn Akito	⊙	500
Linn Ekos	⊙	1,500
Moth Mk I	⊙	109
Moth MkIII Stainless	⊙	146
Moth Mk III Tungsten	⊙	174
Moth Moth 900	⊙	598
Naim ARO	⊙	1,070
N'harm Interspace Arm	⊙	370
N'harm Space	⊙	450
N'harm Mentor	⊙	800
N'harm Foot	⊙	1,100
N'harm Anna Log Arm	⊙	1,500
Pro-Ject 9	⊙	350
Rega RB250	⊙	109
Rega RB300	⊙	174
Rega RB900	⊙	598
Rockport Series 7000	#	6,000
Roksan Tabriz	⊙	350
Roksan Tabriz Zi	⊙	450
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
Triplanar V1A	⊙	3,500
Triplanar V1B	⊙	3,750
Wilson benches Act 0.5	⊙	795
Wilson benches ACT2	⊙	1,350
Zeta AS	⊙	469
Zeta VDH	⊙	549

McIntosh MR7084	P50	2,499
McIntosh MX118	P50	4,999
McIntosh MX130	P50	6,999
Meridian 504	P30	695
Musical Fidelity E50	P20	300
Myryad T-30	P29	400
Myryad MT100	P39	600
NAD 412	P24	190
NAD C440	P30	200
NAD 414RDS	P30	250
NAD 710	P24	270
NAD 712	P24	330
Naim NAT03	P24	615
Naim NAT02		1,130
Naim NAT01		1,780
Onkyo T 421 ORDS	P30	180
Onkyo T 409	P30	230
Onkyo T 411 RDS	P30	260
Pioneer F-204RDS	P30	140
Pioneer F-504RDS	P40	250
Pioneer F-504RDS Precision	P40	300
Quad 99	P25	700
Quad 77FM	P25	700
Rega Radio	P24	298
Roksan Kandy	P50	375
Roksan Caspian	P50	695
Rotel RT-935AX	P20	160
Rotel RT940AX	P20	200
Sony ST-SE200	P30	100
Sony ST-SE300	P30	110
Sony ST-SE500	P30	140
Sony ST-SB920	P30	180
Sony ST-SA3ES	P30	250
Sony ST-S3000	P30	250
T+A T1200R	P60	790
TAG McLaren T20	P39	1,099
Teac T-R400	P40	100
Teac T-R460	P40	120
Teac T-H500	P30	170
Technics ST-GT350L	P30	130
Technics ST-GT550L	P39	180
Technics ST-GT650L	P39	230
Thorens TRT-2000	P59	499
Thule Audio Spirit TU100	P40	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
YBA Complete	P14	490



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Thorens TD-180 AT91	⊙	210
Thorens TD-280 IV/UK	⊙	230
Thorens TD166 VI AT95E	⊙	370
Thorens TD-166 V/UK/RB	⊙	400

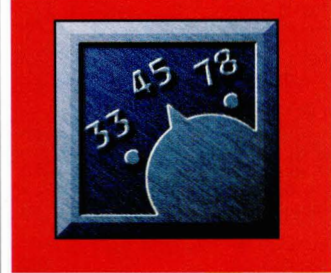
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Audio Note AN-TT 2		995
Audio Note AN-TT 3		1,995
Audiomeca Romance	⊙	1,895
Audiomeca J1		3,500
Avid Volvere		1,399
Avid Accutus		3,995
Basis 2000		1,995
Basis 2011		2,995
Basis Ovation II		5,400
Basis 2500		5,495
Basis 2800	⊙	7,495
Basis Debut Gold Std III		8,200
Basis Debut Gold Vacuum		10,300
Chantry QT Level 2	⊙	705
Clearaudio Solution		925
Clearaudio Evolution		1,095
Clearaudio Revolution		2,500
Clearaudio Reference		3,835
Clearaudio Master Ref.		8,510
DNM-Reson Rota 1		3,900
DNM-Reson Rota 2	⊙	5,600
Garrard 501		5,278
Impulse Moskito	⊙	695
Kuzma Stabi S		695
Kuzma Stabi		1,950
Kuzma Stabi Reference		3,750
Linn LP12 Basic		1,100
Linn LP12 Lingo		1,750
Michell Gyro Spider Ed'n		775
Michell Gyrodek		875
Michell Orbe SE		1,725
Michell Orbe		1,995
N'harm Spacedeck		750
N'harm HyperSpacedeck		1,500
N'harm Mentor		2,600
N'harm Anna Log		5,500
Oracle Delphi		3,370
Oracle Delphi 15th Anniv		3,800
Pink Triangle Tarantella II		850
Pro-Ject Perspective	⊙	750
Rega P25	⊙	598
Rega Planar 9	⊙	1,598
Reson R5TM	⊙	695
Reson Rota 1	⊙	3,900
Rockport Capella II	⊙	7,500
Rockport Sirius III	⊙	90,000
Roksan Xerxes 10		1,295
Roksan TMS		2,750
SME Model 10A	⊙	3,333
SME Model 20/2		3,403
SME Model 20/2A	⊙	4,863
SME Model 30/2		10,675
SME Model 30/2A	⊙	12,135
SOTA Comet	⊙	995
SOTA Millenia		5,795
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
Verdier Nouvelle Platine		2,250
Verdier Platine Verdier		4,350
Well Tempered Record Player	⊙	1,995
Well Tempered Classic V	⊙	3,500
Well Tempered Reference	⊙	5,500
Wilson benches Circle		795
Wilson benches WB Turntable		1,775
Wilson benches Full Circle	⊙	1,995



**TUNERS**  
KEY  
# - Number of presets.  
RDS - Radio Data System; receives text information on station, programme type etc.

Arcam Alpha 7	P24	230
Arcam Alpha 8	P24	280
Arcam Alpha 10 DRT	P07	800
Ariston TX-510	P20	50
AVI S2000MT	P16	599
AVI S2000MT2	P99	899
Cambridge T500	P64	180
Creek T43	P64	399
Cymbol Digital Radio	P08	899
Cyrus FM7.5	P29	398
Davidson-Roth FM Ref Classic		5,590
Denon TU-260L MkII	P40	130
Denon TU-215RD	P40	150
Denon TU-425RD	P40	200
Denon TU-1500RD	P40	250
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		499
Magnum Dynalab FT-101A		795
Magnum Dynalab Etude		1,250
Magnum Dynalab MD108		4,990
Marantz ST-48	P60	120
Marantz ST-17	P60	600



**TURNTABLES**  
KEY  
⊙ - Arm included.  
⊙ - Cartridge included.  
UP TO £500

Audio Note AN-TT 1		349
Dual CS435-1	⊙	140
Dual 505-4 UK	⊙	220
Dual CS-750-1	⊙	330
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'harm Interspace	⊙	500
Pioneer PL-J2500-C	⊙	80
Pioneer PL-990	⊙	130
Pro-Ject 0.5/OM10	⊙	170
Pro-Ject 1/510	⊙	200
Pro-Ject 2/510	⊙	250
Pro-Ject Classic/510	⊙	360
Pro-Ject 6/510	⊙	400
Pro-Ject 6.9	⊙	500
Rega Planar 78	⊙	214
Rega Planar 2	⊙	214
Rega Planar 3	⊙	274
Roksan Radius	⊙	470
Sherwood PM8550	⊙	160
Sony PS-LX150H	⊙	90
Sony PS-LX300H	⊙	150
Technics SL-J110D	⊙	120
Technics SL-BD20	⊙	160
Technics SL-BD22	⊙	180
Technics SL-1210MKII	⊙	400
Technics SL-1200MKII	⊙	400



**TONEARMS**  
KEY  
⊙ - Pivoted.  
# - Parallel tracking.

Air Tangent IC	#	4,600
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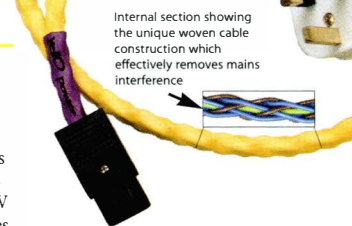
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Internal section showing the unique woven cable construction which effectively removes mains interference

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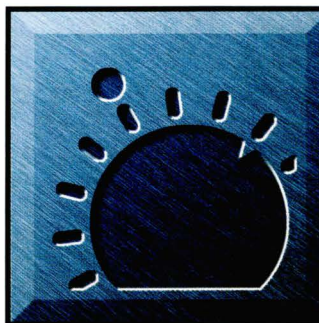
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## Amplifiers

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 infra-red 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 the penultimate page of the mag.  
**ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B BEST BUY** **R RECOMMENDED** **E EDITOR'S CHOICE**

## Amplifiers

### SPECIFICATIONS

LINE INPUTS  
MM PHONO INPUTS  
MC PHONO INPUTS  
REMOTE CONTROL  
HEADPHONE SOCKET  
POWER OUTPUT (W)  
RECEIVER  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	RECEIVER	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Alchemist Kraken APD6A	599	Compact, with Darth Vader styling, yet sound quality is meek and mild, despite strong midband dynamics	5	●	●	●	●	55	●	2150	175
R AMC 3025a	140	Surprisingly potent and easy on the ear, if not especially analytical – classic bargain-basement material, in fact	4	●	●	●	●	30	●	2045	171
R AMC 3050a	170	Tremendous value for money, and a full, big, if rather uninformative sound	4	●	●	●	●	45	●	1970	167
B Arcam Alpha One	230	Rather like an Alpha 7 but without the remote control and what appears to be better sound quality still	6	●	●	●	●	35	●	2470	186
Arcam Alpha 7R	300	Decent, if slightly system fussy amplifier that no longer pulls all the right strings	5	●	●	●	●	45	●	196	
B Arcam Alpha 8R	380	The Alpha 8R sets a high level of resolution and stability, and has some useful features for home cinema users	5	●	●	●	●	50	●	2634	192
R 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
R 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	●	2318	181
E ATC SIA2-150	1,984	An impressive sounding integrated amp with a dynamic, open and detailed sound	4	●	●	●	●	150	●	192	
Aria S2	1,000	Glamorously packaged valve amp produces a real eyes closed, feet up kind of sound	4	●	●	●	●	12	●	190	
B 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	●	2314	181
Audiogram MB1	493	The only flaws are the amateurish build, a number of technical problems and inconsistent sound quality	4	●	●	●	●	40	●	2235	178
R 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
R Cambridge Audio A500RC	200	Solid value, decent build and a surfeit of watts make this an attractive proposition, but it can sound slightly loose	6	●	●	●	●	50	●	2466	196
R 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
R Copland CSA 28	1,249	Elegant Scandinavian cool, abundantly detailed if somewhat system dependent	5	●	●	●	●	60	●	2542	189
Copland CTA 402	1,698	A unusually flexible valve amp with an attractive and textured sound	5	●	●	●	●	35	●	193	
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	●	2315	181
Symbol CA1	499	Lacklustre amplifier tends to underperform with complex material. Best with straightforward compact loudspeakers	6	●	●	●	●	40	●	2236	178
R Creek 4330	279	Diminutive but classy amp will drive anything, and can be specified in various configurations	4	●	●	●	●	40	●	2630	192
R Cyrus SL	398	Articulate amplifier with build quality to die for, superb, outgoing midband and lean but well-extended bass	6	●	●	●	●	50	●	168	
Cyrus IIIi	598	Beautifully presented, but mid-dominated balance was not liked. Upgradeable using PSX PSU unit	6	●	●	●	●	50	●	1854	162
R Cyrus 7	700	Welcome return to form for the Cyrus stable: this is the best sounding audio brick around	6	●	●	●	●	60	●	196	
R Denon PMA-250SE	140	This amp can sound rough when extended, but within its limits it is open, detailed and likeable	5	●	●	●	●	30	●	2046	171
R Denon PMA-350SE	180	Reinvented in the minimalist tradition, this SE model is a control freak, but can sound wonderful	5	●	●	●	●	50	●	1856	162
Denon PMA-535R	230	The kind of amp they made in the 70s, dressed to the nines, and nowhere to go	5	●	●	●	●	50	●	2627	192
Denon PMA-725R	350	Warm, bold, up-front presentation, but musically unexciting	5	●	●	●	●	97	●	1802	157
R Denon PMA-1500R	500	Recommended for its outrageous power, especially with problem speakers	5	●	●	●	●	70	●	2316	181
R 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	●	2151	175
Densen DM-10	1,375	Big, bold and expressive amplifier, but sometimes rough around the edges, and not as powerful as it appears	6	●	●	●	●	75	●	2546	189
Edmund Audio ES110	400	Honest but unexciting straight line amp from REL associate company	6	●	●	●	●	85	●	2635	192
Exposure XX Super	700	Rather transistorised, unexciting sound. Good coherence and rhythm. Best played loud	6	●	●	●	●	55	●	1743	154
Exposure RCXV	1,000	Unaccountably rather underwhelming top of the line integrated sounds a little soft and detached	6	●	●	●	●	60	●	2543	189
B Electrocompaniet EC1-2	995	A 50 Watt amplifier which sounds more powerful, and makes 'real-sounding' music	4	●	●	●	●	50	●	2158	175
B Harman/Kardon HK610	180	Lively and friendly sound, but could prove too exciting for the faint hearted	6	●	●	●	●	30	●	1465	149
R Harman/Kardon HK630	200	Sharp, clean but sometimes slightly raw-sounding budget amp	4	●	●	●	●	40	●	2628	192
B 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
Harman/Kardon HK690	530	Bold, dynamic amplifier with plenty of balls, but not the most sophisticated sound on earth	6	●	●	●	●	100	●	196	
Holfi Audis Signature	750	A 'no-feedback' circuit giving outstanding resolution, but significant load dependency	4	●	●	●	●	65	●	2319	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 KAF-3010R	180	Plenty of twiddly bits yet weak on inputs, and basically good, but somewhat uneven sound quality	4	●	●	●	●	70	●	2463	186
Kenwood KA-5090R	300	Large, well equipped and high tech integrated, but TRAITR output still gives a harsh, unsubtle performance	5	●	●	●	●	65	●	2053	171
Krell KAV-500i	5,000	More at home in background listening/home cinema applications than out-and-out audio maniac set-ups	5	●	●	●	●	250	●	192	
Lundahl Mag Amp	1,735	Unusual valve/magnetic amp hybrid with relaxed balance and good timbre	5	●	●	●	●	23	●	196	
R Magnum IA120	265	Mirror finish amplifier with bold, colourful delivery, but needs careful system matching to avoid loss of clarity	6	●	●	●	●	65	●	2054	171
B Magnum IA170	330	Gives a realistic sense of instruments playing within a very believable acoustic, preserves colour and dynamics	6	●	●	●	●	96	●	1260	142
R Magnum IA200	599	Sweet, valve-flavoured solid state amplifier which flatters where it doesn't cast light	7	●	●	●	●	160	●	1860	162
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



CONTINUED

# Amplifiers

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

MM PHONO INPUTS  
MC PHONO INPUTS  
REMOTE CONTROL  
HEADPHONE CONTROL  
POWER SOCKET  
RECEIVER  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	5	4	3	2	1	0	50	100	200	2464	186
Marantz PM-48	150	Fine entry-level amplifier has excellent midband resolution and top, with a slightly coarse textured bass	5	●					50			2464	186
Marantz PM-57	200	Well equipped but ultimately anodyne amplifier which lacks for nothing but star quality	5	●					50			2049	171
Marantz PM-68	300	Rather matter-of-fact delivery, lacks transparency and detail	6	●					90			2631	192
Marantz PM-6010SE	229	Good starter amplifier, with characteristic smooth, low key delivery	5	●					50				196
<b>B</b> Marantz PM66 KI-Signature	400	<i>It knows how to rock and roll with holographic detail and stereo, but prefers small/medium scale acoustic material</i>	5	●					50			2005	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			2323	181
Marantz PM-17 KI-Signature	1,300	Full feature audiophile amp where the end results don't quite justify the fantastic ingredients	6	●					60			2544	189
Monrio ASTY	400	Engaging, but ill-disciplined, even OTT amplifier with unpredictable system compatibility	5	●					55			2237	178
<b>H</b> Musical Fidelity E1	199	<i>Richly flavoured tone and realistically-scaled imagery distinguish this entry-level Richer Sounds special</i>	6	●					30			2050	171
Musical Fidelity E11	299	Well built minimalist amp with a 5 year guarantee, but can sound congested when extended	6	●					60			2232	178
<b>B</b> Musical Fidelity X-A1	479	<i>Idiosyncratic visuals just another plus for an amp that is powerful, well built, and serves the music superbly</i>	6	●					50			2317	181
Musical Fidelity A3	849	Similar to the XA-100R internally, and a little too relaxed for some	5	●					85				196
<b>H</b> Musical Fidelity X-A100R	999	<i>Sings like a thoroughbred, but better with Mozart than Mötörhead</i>	6	●					75			2545	189
Myriad T-40	400	The T-40 is a well built and sensible, but needs more dynamics and finesse	6	●					50			2636	192
<b>H</b> Myriad M1120	600	<i>Well styled, well built: a good, even tempered amplifier, although it can sound rather brittle</i>	6	●					60			2152	175
<b>B</b> NAD 310	100	<i>Fleet and sure of foot, it seems likely to set all appendages tapping with its blend of enthusiasm and artfulness</i>	5	●					20			1468	149
<b>B</b> NAD C320	200	<i>Excellent budget amp from the maker of the seminal 3020 offers better clarity and neutrality and good build</i>	6	●					40			2467	186
<b>H</b> NAD C340	270	A classic NAD amplifier copes with any speaker, delivers plenty of power, and does so with calm decorum	6	●					50			2632	192
<b>H</b> NAD 317	470	Build quality aside, the current improved version is a real powerhouse, but smooth and detailed too	6	●					80				196
NAD S300	1,900	Substantial integrated with loads of power and no shortage of finesse, slightly bass-strong	5	●					100				189
<b>H</b> Naim Nait 3	575	Distinctive and highly musical sounding integrated amp. Perhaps too distinctive for some tastes	5	●					30			1748	154
<b>H</b> Naim Nait 3R	780	Remote control variant of the basic Nait has a similarly dynamic credible sound but ultimately lacks power	5	●					30			2536	189
<b>B</b> 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	5	●					50			1469	149
<b>B</b> Pioneer A-407R	230	Clean, consistent, finely detailed sound, good finish and (mainly) good build	5	●					45			2471	186
<b>B</b> Pioneer A-607R	300	Lively, articulate amp with plenty of drive and a hint of brightness	5	●					60			2633	192
<b>B</b> Pioneer A-300R Precision	400	<i>Sophisticated variant of the A-300R. Not an obvious winner, but will slowly ply you with its subtle charms</i>	5	●					35			1863	162
Pioneer A-07	999	Curious blend of high-end attributes and inconsistent, though undeniably detailed sound	5	●					80			2160	175
<b>H</b> Precisa Acustica Sonoro	1,800	It is not often that transistor amplifiers are made to sound so palpably valve-like	5	●					100			2547	189
<b>B</b> Primare A-20 Mk II	799	Everything except packaging has changed in Mk II version: but balsier model has lost none of its refinement	5	●					70			2321	181
<b>B</b> Primare A30.1	1,499	<i>Superb build and aesthetics, and undemonstrably musical down to its smallest screw</i>	6	●					100			2548	189
Rega Elex	398	Minimalist amplifier, derived from Elicit, is a little uninspiring, although at least it is well behaved	4	●					50			1865	162
Restek Fantasy II	1499	Muscular, but ultimately rather strident amplifier which needs careful system matching	6	●					100			2549	189
<b>B</b> Roksan Caspian	695	<i>Well-built, open and articulate amplifier, which is also consistent from system to system</i>	6	●					70			2014	168
Rose Scion	615	Unique two-box integrated gives real subtlety and low level resolution, but the sound lacks scale and weight	5	●					65			2009	168
Rotel RA-931	150	Rather dry and unforgiving sound from this internally well specified and attractively priced amplifier	4	●					35			2048	171
<b>B</b> Rotel RA-971 MkII	225	<i>Improved AR971 is a chip off the old block: bags of power, but with added precision and clarity</i>	6	●					60				196
<b>B</b> Sony TA-FB730R	200	<i>Brilliantly sharp and realistic sound is offset by some obvious sonic flaws – and maxi feature set doesn't help</i>	5	●					40				196
<b>H</b> Sony TA-F448BE	250	Minimalist interface is matched to carefully considered circuit with satisfactory effect – but keep the volume in check	5	●					55			2055	171
<b>B</b> Sony TA-F3000ES	500	<i>Champagne 'shoobox amp' may lack power reserves, but is quick and articulate. In every sense a knockout</i>	5	●					35			2239	178
T+A PA-1220R	1,445	Unique presentation and feature set, but sometimes rather relentless sound quality	7	●					100			2550	189
Tact Millennium Mk II	7,000	This digital class D amplifier represents a bold declaration on the future expansion of digital audio in the home	n/a						150				194
TAG McLaren 60i	800	Clean, slightly antiseptic sound from this beautifully turned out entry level Audiolab 8000LX replacement	6	●					60			2540	189
TAG McLaren 60iRv	999	Looks, feels and sounds better than the Audiolab it supersedes. Smooth, open, refined but lacks body and drive	6	●					60				184
<b>H</b> Talk Electronics Storm 1	500	<i>Good soundstaging and strong detail are provided by this unassuming and not especially powerful model</i>	6	●					50			1868	162
Talk Electronics Cyclone 1	550	Much improved build quality and silver finish, but the sound lacks physicality and can sound strained	6	●					65				196
<b>H</b> Talk Electronics Storm 2	650	<i>Crisp, clean, well defined sound, arguably lacking warmth, but a good midrange purchase overall</i>	6	●					50			2154	175
TEAC A-E2000	180	Has the potential to cause significant damage in the budget amp sector once the wrinkles are ironed out	6	●					50				195
Teac A-BX7R	700	Characterful balance mars a meticulously designed amplifier. Includes a balanced input, optional MM/MC stage	5	●					50			1869	162
Technics SU-A660 Mk 3	200	Plenty of wellie for the price, but the sound can be a tad coarse and lacking in fine detail	5	●					37				186
Technics SU-A700 Mk 3	250	Fully equipped, high-tech amplifier ultimately fails the authenticity test, and can sound messy and inarticulate	5	●					45			1870	162
Technics SU-A808	300	Intriguing amplifier, with abundant detail but dynamically rather flat	6	●					55				196
<b>H</b> Technics SU-A800D Mk 2	300	<i>Two-box amplifier looks great, has plenty of gadgets, and makes good, if slightly over-exuberant, music</i>	5	●					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	5	●					70			2149	175
<b>H</b> Token Audio K50	350	<i>Stainless steel finish, others available. Sound is warm and attractive, though a little undynamic</i>	5	●					50			2472	186
Yamaha AX-392	170	Standard budget fare, and it's easy to pick holes, but in undemanding surroundings it works creditably	6	●					60			2629	192
<b>H</b> Yamaha AX-492	220	<i>Powerful, well equipped amplifier at an attractive price, offers powerful and engaging music-making</i>	5	●					85			2231	178
Yamaha AX-592	280	Fine, middle ranking amplifier, with a detailed midband but performance declines at frequency extremes	5	●					100			2056	171



## OPERA DUETTO

“So luxurious that it sets new standards for speakers in the sub-£500 bracket” – Hi Fi News  
*Opera Duetto* is an unusual loudspeaker. We use one inch thick solid hardwood for the cabinet, to give high mass, great rigidity and complete freedom from resonance. As well as being acoustically inert, real wood is a beautiful, natural material, and Duetto is a tribute to our cabinet makers’ art, refined and supremely elegant.

*Beneath* the elegant exterior, advanced acoustic research and top quality components combine to give a sound rich in detail, space and warmth. *What do the reviewers say?* Hi Fi World gave top-star rating with the words: “A genuinely transparent and musical sound”. Hi Fi News called the Duetto: “So luxurious that it set new standards for speakers in the sub-£500 bracket”. And What Hi-Fi? called it simply: “A class act”. *If you are looking* for quality and refinement from affordable loudspeakers, Duetto will enthral you. And at just £395 for the pair, so will the price.

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CONTINUED

# Amplifiers

SPECIFICATIONS

MM PHONO INPUTS MC PHONO INPUTS REMOTE CONTROL HEADPHONE SOCKET POWER OUTPUT (W) RECEIVER FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT (€) COMMENTS

PREAMPLIFIERS

	Amp Flux System 2	3,000	Three-box affair with a clean, spacious sound and plenty of slam. A touch steely, but undeniably potent	5				50		187
	Alchemist Kraken APD7A MkII	549	Unusual looks and unusual sound too, rather rough and lacking detail	6						187
R	Arcam Alpha 9C	400	Well specified and flexible preamp with sound only just lacking in greatness	6						187
	Audio Note M Zero	299	Neat shoe box-size preamp. Able to impart music with real life and soul when partnered with P Zero power amps	5						191
R	Copland CTA-301MkII	1,249	Sweet sounding, but never gets bogged down in audio treacle	4	●					1630 151
R	Creek P43R	350	Excellent sound, remote control operation and upgrade options from this fine value preamp	6						187
R	Crimson CS610	450	Good, clear sound, including a decent phono stage, but flexibility is limited	3	●	●				187
	Cyrus aCA7	798	A decent enough unit at the price but not as good as the Cyrus aPA7 power amp it was tested with	5						190
	Densen Beat B-200	1,000	A versatile preamp with a high 'air-guitar' factor and Densen's characteristic styling	6	●	●				191
R	ECA Vista	760	Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system. (Tested with Lectern power amp)	5						1302 145
	Exposure XVII	850	Superbly rhythmic; maybe a bit overpowering in the midband. (Tested in sessions with XVIII Super)	5	●	●				142
E	Levinson 380	3,995	True high end preamplifier combines precision and warmth with unusual configurability	6						195
	LFD Mistral Linestage	449	Strong ergonomics, generally decent sound, but a little lacking in detail	6						1930 165
	Meridian 501	695	Tight, positive sound, but dispassionate; intense at high levels. (Tested with 555 power amp)	5	●					1303 145
	Meridian 502	1,295	Extremely sophisticated analogue controller with tremendous flexibility and a fast and tidy presentation	7						162
	Michell Orca	1,650	Line-level design with a gorgeous remote and focused, spacious sound. (Tested with Alecto power amps)	6						187
	Moth 30 Active Line Stage	349	Excellent-sounding ultra-simple miniature preamp	4						1931 165
	Muse Model Three	1,990	Natural sounding tranny preamp with useful audiophile features. Works beautifully with 160 power amp	5						166
R	Musical Fidelity X-PRE	200	Cleverly configured preamp with many upgrade options, and open, lively and engaging sound	4						2152 175
	Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista	1295	Fully remote, nuvistor tube equipped, with fine coherence and musicality	5	●	●				182
R	NAD 114	270	Beer-budget preamp which sounds focused, detailed and consistent	6	●	●				1932 165
	Naim NAC92R	630	Upgradeable preamp uses proprietary socketry. (Tested with NAP90 power amp)	5						1936 165
	NVA P50	350	Passive preamp that's more likely than most to cause treble loss	4						187
R	Quad 77 Pre	850	Sophisticated design with 2-way remote control console; open colourful sound and very flexible	4	●	●	●			1941 165
R	Rega Hal	998	Passive line stages dedicated to Exon power amps	6	●	●	●			1942 165
	Rotel RC-971	150	Low price is offset by rather coarse sound quality with certain types of music. (Tested with RB-971 power amp)	5						178
	TAG McLaren PA20R	1,500	Refinement of Audiolab original with clean, detailed sound but limited thrill power. (T/w 125M monoblocks)	6						184
	Talk Hurricane 2L	649	Design of integrity which gets to the heart, if not the soul, of the music	6						1937 165
	Technics SU-C3000	2,997	Price includes SE-A3000. Supremely clean and even sounding combo, though it could be more musically involving	5	●					188
	Thule Spirit PR100	400	High-tech preamp slightly marred by tendency to veil the sound	5						187

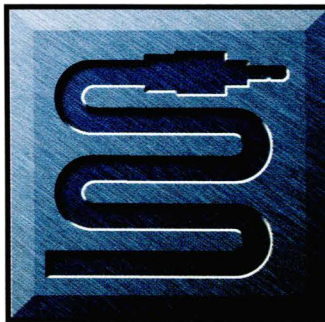
POWER AMPLIFIERS

	Alch. Kraken APD8A Mk II	549	Unusual looks and unusual sound too, rather rough and lacking detail	1					55		187
R	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
R	Arcam Alpha 10P	600	Well made and flexible: upgradeable to 3 channels. Good sound lacking the last degree of detail	1					100		187
	Audio Note P Zero	599	Neat shoe box size valve monoblocks, priced per pair. Impart music with life and soul. (Tested with P Zero preamp)	1					8		191
E	Border Patrol 300B SE	3,995	Single ended valve power amp with passion, grace and fire, and plenty of grunt to boot	1					8.5		186
	Cary CAD 2A3SE	1,575	Monoblock valve power amp. Low power but gives delightful speed, coherence and transparency	1					5		196
	Copland CTA-505	2,099	Grown-up amplifier with a refined, yet never over-civilised air	1					67	1630	151
R	Creek A52SE	599	Well designed and built amplifier with plenty of power, detail and refinement	6					100		187
R	Crimson CS630	800	Space-saving slimline monoblocks with both grunt and finesse	1					100		187
	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
	Cyrus aPA7	1,896	Low feedback design that's a positive departure from the transistorised norm. (Tested with Cyrus aCA7 pre)	1					150		190
R	Densen B-300	800	Expensive but highly musical. Colourful and warm sound with strong timing and listener involvement	1					100		183
R	ECA Lectern	880	Tested with Vista. Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system	1					50	1302	145
E	Garnut D200	2,995	Single MOSFET pair per side gives tremendous resolution and timing (balanced only). Formerly Sirius	1					200		183
E	Levinson 334	5,495	A mailed fist in a velvet glove; refined, authoritative and transparent	1					125		195
	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 Monoblocks	1,950	Hefty beasts offering real power and striking imaging. Not the last word in timing. (Tested with Orca preamp)	1					100		187
	Moth 60 Watt Stereo	599	Miniature power amp lacks control and finesse – not comfortable with difficult speaker loads	1					60	1931	165
R	Moth 30 Series Monoblocks	879	Tested with Active Preamp. Demonstrated solid balance and proved adept at delivering vital musical qualities	1					100		155
R	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 on MI120 integrated – see letter for comments, but sounds significantly better when bi-amped with MI120	1					60	1935	165
R	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
	NVA A60	560	Rather coarse and uninviting sound	1					60		187
	Technics SE-A3000	2,997	Price includes SU-C3000. Supremely clean and even sounding combo, though it could be more musically involving	1					● 100		188
	Thule Spirit PA100	600	More successful than matching preamp: sound is gutsy and lively, and generally clean	1					100		187
R	Rega Exon	1,196	Monoblock, priced each, dedicated for Hal preamp. Bold, outgoing, in-command kind of sound	1					125	1942	165
	Roksan Caspian Power	595	Excels musically and in conventional hi-fi terms. A power amp for people with long-term satisfaction in mind	1					70		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
	TAG McLaren 125M	2,400	Refined Audiolab replacement monoblocks with clean sound but limited thrill power. (T/w PA20R preamp)	1					145		184
	Talk Tornado 2	600	Good, but slightly retiring sound which lacks the authority to stand out in a crowd	1					65	1937	165

PHONO STAGES

R	Creek OBH-9	160	A neat little unit with an essentially neutral and listenable character	0		●					189
	Cyrus aEQ7/PSX-R	826	Very hi-tech product which tends too much towards smoothness except at dimaxes, which can be rough	0	●	●					189
	Densen DP-Drive/DP-02	350	Quite unusual design in many ways: sound is mostly good but never quite shakes off a 'synthetic' quality	0							189
R	Electrocompaniet ECP-1	495	An excellent phono amp that combines well-rounded balance with detail and low noise	0	●	●					189
R	Michell Iso/Lithos	599	With the Lithos power supply upgrade, the Iso is a very capable phono stage with just a hint of bass fullness	0		●					189
R	Moth 30 Series Phono	249	Fine sound all round, in any kind of music, from this bargain phono stage	0	●	●					189
R	Musical Fidelity X-LP	130	A little bass lightness does not seriously mar the performance of this fine value unit	0	●	●					189
	NAD PP-1	40	A basic phono stage that does its job rather coarsely: a bit bass-shy too	0	●						189
R	QED Discsaver DS-1	35	It's cheap, it's cheerful, it's OK – perfectly adequate for use with a phono-less integrated, though not very refined	0	●						189
	Roksan Artaxerxes X/DS1.5	1,150	Delicate and well balanced, slightly congested at dimaxes. Power supply expensive, but runs two Roksan components	0	●	●					189
	TAG McLaren PPA20	1,549	One of the best-equipped phono stages available. Resolution is excellent, but timing is marginally behind the best	0	●	●					187





# 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 ad on the penultimate page of the mag.
- ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY   **R** RECOMMENDED   **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Cables

## SPECIFICATIONS

SYMMETRICAL   COAXIAL   STRANDED   SOLID CORE   COPPER   SILVER   DIG CABLE TYPE   FACTSBACK NO.   ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT (E) COMMENTS

### ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS (PRICES PER TERMINATED METRE PAIR)

PRODUCT	(E)	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG CABLE TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Acoustic Precision Eikos	89	Not entirely neutral: probably best suited to upbeat music. Very stiff construction					●	●	●		188
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 X2	60	Well made but let down by a pervading sense of muddle and congestion in the sound	●				●	●	●		188
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
Cambridge Silver Spirit 60	100	Good bass but a lack of detail and differentiation of instruments	●				●	●	●		188
Chord Cobra 2	50	Good, strong sound with full-bodied music, less happy with smaller forces					●	●	●	2167	176
Chord Chameleon 2	90	Deep bass is fine but despite that the sound can be a bit hard and lacking body and resonance	●				●	●	●		188
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
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 PBJ	68	Assured sound, solid and natural bass and clear treble – excellent performance all round					●	●	●		188
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 Solar Wind	85	Good tone and dynamics, with just occasionally a touch of bass-lightness in busy music	●				●	●	●		188
Nordost Blue Heaven	145	Very good bass and only slightly grainy treble add up to a well integrated, natural-sounding cable	●				●	●	●		176
Precious Metals SS35	50	Extended bass, but dry character suits electronic music better than acoustic					●	●	●		188
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



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## Esoteric High Fidelity CABLES

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CONTINUED

# Cables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

SYMMETRICAL  
COAXIAL  
STRANDED  
SOLID CORE  
COPPER  
SILVER  
DIG. CABLE TYPE  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG. CABLE TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER	
QED Qnect 4S	70	Some coloration and roughness in the midrange and treble, but bass is gratifyingly solid	●				●				188	
Reference CS1	75	A moderate performer, with a little coloration and a tendency to lose bass at climaxes	●				●				188	
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	
SonicLink 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	
SonicLink Lilac	65	Some dryness can affect transient sounds, though tone is generally good, especially in the bass	●				●				188	
Straight Wire Chorus	40	A very confident cable with good bass, though perhaps a shade of treble loss			●		●			2173	176	
Straight Wire Sonata	80	Tonal balance favours lower frequencies but despite this it's a very listenable cable					●		●		188	
Supra EFF-ISL	80	Excellent sound in all areas – nothing to criticise	●				●		●		188	
Tara Labs Prism 22	64	Mild tendency to plumminess offsets some hardness in complex music with mixed results				●		●			188	
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 PBS	50	A highly neutral cable with fine dynamic and rhythmic performance too – excellent				●		●			188	
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 information				●		●		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 (PRICES PER TERMINATED LINEAR METRE)</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 colorations; 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 (PRICES PER METRE LENGTH)</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 F-18	3.60	Slightly lumpy bass and lack of midrange detail: can also be a bit dry	●					●	●			192
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 Talk 4.1	4.25	Smooth and cultured sound that lacks fine detail and is a bit too restrained					●		●		1800	157
Cable Talk Concert 2.1	8	Can make stereo images recede, and favours the upper bass	●					●	●			192
DNM LSC350	6.95	Majors on midband and lower treble lucidity at the expense of bass and extreme treble extension	●					●	●			168
Chord Company Odyssey	17	Relatively vice-free cable with good detail throughout the range and generally neutral bass	●				●		●			192
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
Gale XL315	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
Ixos Gamma 6006	5	Bass is better than treble, which can become spitty and sibilant – though only slightly	●				●		●			192
Kimber 4PR	90 (5m)	Considering the price, this cable's very slight dryness is forgivable when everything else is so right					●		●			192
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, unsubtle music – can be dry and edgy	●				●		●			183
Naim NAC A5	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
Nordost Flatline Gold II	9.50	Exciting sound but a bit too 'in-yer-face', and bass is not always even	●					●	●			192
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



CONTINUED

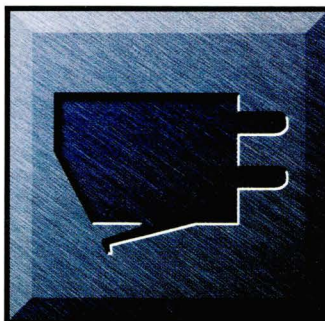
# Cables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

SYMMETRICAL COAXIAL STRANDED SOLID CORE COPPER SILVER DIG CABLE TYPE FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG CABLE TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
QED Profile 4x4	9	Good midrange and treble balance, but bass is rather slack and detail not outstanding									168
<b>B</b> QED Qudos Silver	5	A few minor flaws but overall performance is very assured for this price	●				●	●			192
Silver Sounds 12 gauge	15	Basic 'homemade' construction gives fairly neutral sound. Price not outstandingly competitive	●				●	●			168
SonicLink S300	18	Happiest with simple music; tends to smudge detail in complex pieces	●				●	●			168
<b>R</b> SonicLink AST50	1.95	It may look like bell-wire, but AST50 sounds detailed, ordered and balanced					●	●		1800	157
<b>R</b> SonicLink AST150	3.95	Slightly plummy bass and a useful way of holding musical strands together					●	●		1800	157
Sonic Link AST200x2	5.95	At its best with exciting music, this cable seems shy of subtler details	●				●	●			192
Straight Wire Rhythm	6	Its major flaw seems to be woolly and indistinct bass, which pervades most types of music	●				●	●			192
<b>B</b> Straight Wire Quartet	8	A good all-rounder with full tone, clear detail and natural ambience	●				●	●			183
<b>R</b> 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
<b>R</b> 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 CS122	12	Good dynamics can make for exciting sound, but fine detail suffers and the treble is often dry	●				●	●			192
van den Hul The Magnum	38	Touted as vdH's most prestigious twin-lead cable, The Magnum sounds soft and old-fashioned					●	●	●		109
<b>R</b> 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 ad on the penultimate page of the mag.
  - **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY **R** RECOMMENDED **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Cartridges

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

MM MC REPLACEABLE STYLUS OUTPUT (mV) MASS (g) FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	MM	MC	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	OUTPUT (mV)	MASS (g)	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>B</b> Audio Technica AT-95E	20	Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced	●			2.8			48
Audio Technica AT-OC9ML	330	A well-finished cartridge with a sound that's smoothly detailed, but also rather unexciting		●		0.4	8		192
<b>B</b> Clearaudio Signature	1,495	A great all-round performer with fine dynamic vitality and a seductive midband intimacy	●			0.55	11.5	2142	175
<b>B</b> Denon DL110	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>B</b> Denon DL304	200	Uncoloured, detailed, tracks superbly. Top notch altogether, and a bargain at the price		●					103
<b>R</b> Dynavector DV-20X L	299	Articulate-sounding, with impressive treble resolve, though lightweight at times. Needs a high quality turntable and arm		●		0.25	8.6		192
Dynavector Karat 17D2 mk2	450	Clean and controlled sound with taut, tuneful bass. Detailed and musically cogent		●		0.15	5.3		158
<b>R</b> 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
<b>R</b> 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
<b>R</b> Goldring Elan	19	A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM apparently based on Nagaoka MM4 body	●			5.0	7		67
<b>R</b> Goldring 1012GX	79	Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency coloration apparent	●			6.5	7		85
<b>R</b> Goldring 1022GX	99	As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved	●			6.5	7		85
<b>R</b> 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
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> 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
<b>R</b> Lyra Lydian Beta	599	A thoroughly enjoyable cartridge – smooth, agile and dynamic in character		●		0.5	8		192
<b>R</b> Lyra Lydian	649	Superbly capable all-round musical performer that improves markedly when its body cover is removed		●		0.3	7		158
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> Ortofon 510/P	38	For the price, a good blend of virtues – weight, clarity and neutrality	●			3.0	5		85
<b>R</b> Ortofon 520/P	65	Sensitive to load capacitance, but the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound	●			3.0	5		67



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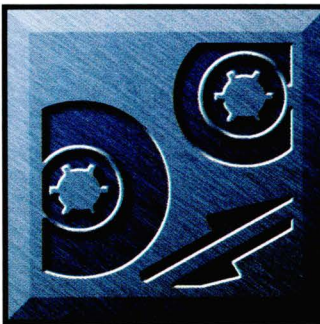
# Cartridges

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
<b>B</b> Ortofon MC3 Turbo	130	The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but subtle – take it as it comes	●			3.3	4		103
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> Ortofon MC 10 Supreme	300	A full and cultured-sounding cartridge, with collective attributes far outweighing its shortcomings	●			0.5	10.7		192
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	525	Highly detailed and even-sounding cartridge that has a special affinity with female vocal recordings	●			0.5	10.7		158
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> Ortofon MC3000II	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
<b>B</b> Rega Elys	85	Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is more detailed, accurate and convincing	●		●	5.0	5		67
<b>B</b> Reson Reza	250	If you're after a high quality moving magnet cartridge, they don't get much better than this	●		●	6.5	6.3		192
<b>B</b> Roksan Corus Black	130	Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but smoother and more civilised	●		●	6.5	5		91
<b>B</b> Sumiko Blue Point Special	250	A no-nonsense performer with engaging musical properties – one of the best around for less than £300	●		●	2.5	9		192
<b>B</b> 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	76		158
<b>B</b> van den Hul MC-10	750	A neutral, balanced performer, gives fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass	●		●	0.4	6		60
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> van den Hul MC-Two	1,200	MC-Two rewards with a highly detailed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal	●		●	0.4	6		72
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> Wilson benesch Matrix	786	Extraordinarily well balanced cartridge: neutral and detailed yet lively and rhythmically assertive	●		●	0.58	6		158
<b>B</b> 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 the penultimate page of the mag.

**ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Cassette Decks

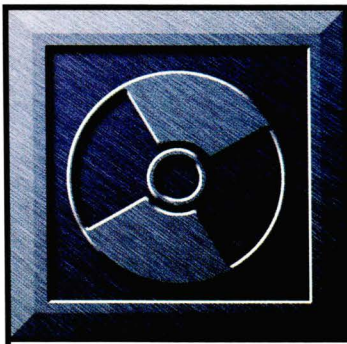
STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY C  
DOLBY S  
DOLBY HX-PRO  
3-HEAD  
TWIN DECK  
AUTO REVERSE  
AUTO CALIBRATION  
ADJUSTABLE BIAS  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	DOLBY C	DOLBY S	DOLBY HX-PRO	3-HEAD	TWIN DECK	AUTO REVERSE	AUTO CALIBRATION	ADJUSTABLE BIAS	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER	
<b>B</b> Aiwa AD-F450	120	Basic but well-designed deck. Astonishing value; only the poor metering gives the game away	●								1513	136	
<b>B</b> Aiwa AD-WX727	170	High-class twin for those who want bells, whistles – and music	●								1377	146	
<b>B</b> 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	
<b>B</b> Denon DRS-640	200	Draw-loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well-adjusted sound	●								1591	140	
<b>B</b> 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	
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	
<b>B</b> JVC TD-R472	200	Excellent auto-reverse deck which doesn't suffer the usual disadvantages and is very sharply priced	●									158	
<b>B</b> 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	
<b>B</b> Kenwood KX-W6080	200	Modestly decent-sounding twin deck, with some transport instability and ragged bass	●								2040	171	
Marantz SD455	170	Works well as a single deck, especially on replay, but dubbing at high/low speed compromises sound	●									184	
NAD 613	230	Rough and ready, but enjoyable sound, though marred by mechanical motor noise	●									158	
NAD 616	300	Twin deck with basic features. No Dolby setting memory, transport is too unstable for audiophile use	●								2041	171	
Nakamichi DR-10	800	An ergonomic oddity, but one of the last of the great cassette decks. Worth considering against MD	●									195	
<b>B</b> Onkyo K-611	460	Cute drawer-loading mini-size component with 3 heads and dual cassette transport	●								1384	146	
<b>B</b> 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	
<b>B</b> Pioneer CT-S830S	500	High-class mechanism, if lacking in battleship externals, and superb sound	●	●							1385	146	
<b>B</b> Sony TC-KE600S	300	Mild setting-up problems notwithstanding, this UK-tweaked design has a smooth, open sound	●	●								158	
Teac V-1050	180	One of the cheapest 3-head machines around, but it shows in very 'thick' sound	●									184	
<b>B</b> 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	
<b>B</b> 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	
<b>B</b> Yamaha KX-490	200	Electrifyingly transparent and capable deck whose only flaw is a trace of audible wow and flutter	●									158	
<b>B</b> 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 p129). 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 convertor, 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 analogue output for amplifiers equipped with balanced inputs.
- **BAL ANALOGUE OUTPUT:** Balanced analogue output for amplifiers equipped with balanced inputs.
- **HEADPHONE SOCKET:** For 'can' 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 the penultimate page of the magazine.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared. Factsback information page.

**B** BEST BUY

**R** RECOMMENDED

**E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# CD/DVD Players

## SPECIFICATIONS

- ▲ 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

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
<b>B</b> 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
Advantage CD1S	3,995	A CD player of some stature - what it lacks in dynamics it makes up for in subtlety and flow	●	●	●	●					20bit	193
Alchemist Kraken	1,249	Distinctive looking player likely to suit a Alchemist system, but will result in variable results elsewhere	●	●							24/96	190
<b>R</b> Alchemist Nexus APD32A	597	Refined treble, constrained yet capable bass and attractive all-round presentation	●	●							Hyb	169
AMC CD8A	150	Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable	●	●							BS	2071 172
<b>R</b> AMC CD9/DAC8	200	Beer-budget two-box system (player plus 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
<b>B</b> Arcam Alpha 7SE	350	Revamped starter model is a clear improvement on very likeable predecessor	●	●							MB	195
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha MCD	450	Excellent bass and natural midband, but just a touch of treble dryness, from this very listenable changer	●	●							MB	2220 178
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha 8	520	Refined, intricately detailed but a little cautious. Should be broadly compatible with a variety of amps	●	●							BS	1873 163
<b>B</b> Arcam Alpha 8SE	600	Excellent (and very reasonably priced) HDCD-compatible player is a strong all-rounder	●	●							1bit	176
<b>B</b> Arcam Alpha 9	800	Refined, articulate player which employs new DAC technology to great effect	●	●							Ring	188
Audio Analogue Paganini	750	Basically good, but sometimes heavy-handed player	●	●							24bit	191
Audio Research CD1	3,290	Suspends disbelief with a real yet obviously coloured sound. A rare proposition among CD players	●	●	●	●					BS	1875 163
Audio Note AN-CD1	600	Easy on the ear, and for a valve player, easy on the pocket, but a bit Radio 2-flavoured	●	●							Hyb	188
Audio Note AN-CD2	999	High output impedance makes performance unduly system fussy	●	●							MB	195
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
<b>R</b> 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
Balanced Audio Tech VK-D5	3,995	A valve-infused player with a big and engaging sound. Lacks a little subtlety	●	●							18bit	194
<b>R</b> Cambridge Audio CD4	150	Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up-and-at-'em sound quality	●	●							Hyb	1268 147
<b>B</b> Cambridge Audio CD4SE	200	Among the best encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than the CD4	●	●							BS	1877 163
<b>B</b> Cambridge Audio CD6	250	A sharp, articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems	●	●							BS	159
<b>R</b> Copland CDA-266	1,199	Simple yet elegant design is unexpectedly sophisticated under the skin, and effective in execution	●	●							MB	2183 176
Copland CDA 289	1,898	Beautifully built and musically enjoyable. Lacks some precision, but still among the best below £2,000	●	●							20bit	194
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
<b>R</b> Cymbol CDP12	1,299	Clean, detailed and airy HDCD-equipped player with minimalist trappings	●	●							Hyb	2184 176
<b>R</b> Cyrus dAD1.5	395	Improved dAD1 variant has improved digital filter for a more natural, easy on the ear quality	●	●							Hyb	191
<b>R</b> Cyrus dAD3	598	A relaxed style of delivery that convinces with guile and subtlety rather than orchestral grandeur	●	●							BS	1887 163
<b>R</b> Cyrus dAD3Q	898	Lucid, transparent and uncontrived sound quality, superb build, and readily upgradable	●	●							MB	1887 169
<b>R</b> Denon DCD-435	130	Good low cost player, and a step up from the DCD-425, its predecessor	●	●							DS	191
<b>B</b> Denon DCD-635	180	Modest presentation gives little clue to the thoroughbred electronics ticking away inside	●	●							MB	2075 172
Denon DCD-625	200	DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear	●	●							MB	1269 147
<b>R</b> Denon DCD-835	280	Refined version of Denon's multibit technology is a bit of a star	●	●							MB	184
Denon DCD-1550AR	350	Disappointing bland and ploddy sound from an immaculately constructed, high-tech player	●	●							MB	2266 179
Denon DCD-1650AR	700	Powerful, authoritative, and well equipped too, but this player sometimes lacks subtlety	●	●							MB	195
<b>R</b> Denon DCD-3000	1,000	Sings with the temperament of a huge orchestra under the baton of a timid conductor	●	●							MB	1881 163
Exposure CD player	1,049	Slightly weak sounding, but otherwise well optimised, if costly player	●	●							MB	188
Harman/Kardon HD710	200	A player of integrity, but can sound a bit hard and rough when extended, and is amplifier fussy	●	●							1bit	159
<b>R</b> Harman/Kardon HD740	300	Powerful but subtle and involving player: welcome back, Harman/Kardon	●	●							DS	191
<b>R</b> Harman/Kardon FL8300	300	Generally capable changer with relaxed sound and firm bass. Just a hint of roughness on occasion	●	●							MB	2220 178
Harman/Kardon HD760	500	Sophisticated internally, but mildly disappointing when treading the boards in anger	●	●							MB	195
Helios Model 3	650	Disappointing entry level model from Helios lacks verve and transparency	●	●							DS	188
<b>R</b> 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
<b>R</b> JVC XL-V184BK	120	Excellent budget player, well presented, a little opaque, but its heart is in the right place	●	●							1bit	2072 172
<b>R</b> 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
<b>R</b> JVC XL-Z674BK	300	Even-handed, but glosses over the most intimate moments	●	●							1bit	1637 151
<b>B</b> Kenwood DP-3080	170	Bold, dynamic and outgoing sound, although somewhat aggressive. Poor build quality and finish	●	●							1bit	159
Kenwood DPF-3010	180	Grey, somewhat mechanical sounding player	●	●							Hyb	191
<b>B</b> Kenwood DP-4090	250	Focuses a clear, wide aperture lens on the music - and has CD Text too	●	●							1bit	2076 172
Kenwood DP-5090	300	Disappointing senior brother to the excellent DP-4090, but surface interface is good	●	●							1bit	2267 179
<b>B</b> 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-48	200	Somewhat inconsistent, middle ranking player which hints at better things	●	●							1bit	2077 172
Marantz CD6000 OSE	300	A genuine evolution on the older CD63/67 series with a very energetic, foot-tapping performance	●	●							BS	196
<b>R</b> Marantz CD-63 MkII KI Sig	400	It's the quintessential sound of Marantz - warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault	●	●							Hyb	169
<b>R</b> Marantz CD-17	800	Fabulous packaging and an excellent all round performer: smooth, detailed and consistent	●	●							BS	1763 155
<b>R</b> Marantz CD-17KI Sig	1,100	Minor QC problems aside, this is a superbly turned-out machine, but ultimately a little bland	●	●							BS	2181 176
<b>R</b> Marantz CD-7	3,500	A superbly designed CD player, both inside and out. Precise and dramatic in equal measure	●	●							16bit	194



CONTINUED

# CD/DVD Players

**SPECIFICATIONS**

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

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
Meracur Tanto	1,395	Believable tonal colours and textures, refinement takes preference over dynamics – but it's not cheap	●								DS	169
Meridian 506	1,100	Revised 506 includes MSR remote and a new D/A chip, which makes it livelier and more detailed	●	●							1bit	2182 176
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 E624	500	Similar to X-RAY, but both better sounding and cheaper	●	●							MB	188
Musical Fidelity X-RAY	799	Brilliantly packaged and clean but slightly antiseptic sounding player	●			●					MB	184
Musical Fidelity A3 CD	799	Based on the E624 and X-Ray players, this version sounds warm but richly detailed	●			●					BS	196
Myryad T-10	400	Rather ordinary player fails to shine with good music recordings	●								DS	184
Myryad T-20	600	Matter of fact styling and sound quality, a tad bright for some systems	●								DS	195
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									1bit	2262 179
NAD 524	250	Clean, clear and essentially musical player in the NAD mould	●								MB	191
NAD Silverline S500	1,100	It sounds as good as it looks, which is notably refined and easy on the ear	●	●	●		●				MB	195
Naim Audio CD3.5	1,000	Forward and explicit sound needs careful system matching									Hyb	188
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
Naim NACDSII/XPS	5,625	Brings you the Naim sound, but for once doesn't have to rely on Naim ancillaries to get the results									MB	188
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
Parasound C/DP-1000	499	Comes on like a high end player, but ultimately sounds a bit weak and soft-centred	●								Hyb	184
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-S507	200	Low cost Legato Link implementation sounds gentle but slightly muddled				●			●		DS	191
Pioneer PD-S707	300	Idiosyncratic Legato Link dominated sound, but always subtle and interesting	●	●				●			MB	184
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
Primare D20	799	Well presented player doesn't quite cut the mustard, though it performs promisingly									BS	188
Revox Exception E426	2,250	Very stylish with a light, agile sound that extends superbly and has fine timing	●					●			BS	182
Roksan DPSP	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-951	300	Disappointing chopped-down RCD-971 – buy the original	●								MB	191
Rotel RCD-971	350	Odd disc handling logic, but bold, detailed and refined sound make this a must	●								MB	184
Rotel RCD-991	750	Confirms Rotel's status as must watch brand: great stuff	●	●	●		●				MB	195
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				●					1bit	179
Sony CDP-XE510	180	Souped up CDP-XE500 which tells a rather bland and unengaging story				●			●		1bit	172
Sony CDP-XB720E	200	Good basic performance and a number of filter settings make this an interesting player for tweaks	●			●			●		Low bit	184
Sony CDP-XA20ES	450	High tech, with a long list of gadgets, oddly configured player that ultimately sounds less than compelling	●	●				●			1bit	2177 176
Sony CDP-X3000ES	500	Shoebbox format player, looks to die for, switchable digital filters to tweak the already excellent sound	●	●							BS	169
Sony CDP-XB930E	500	Yet another first rate UK optimised player with all the bells and whistles	●	●							Pulse	195
Sony SCD-1	2,500	The first SACD player sounds fabulous but there's not much competition and limited software as yet	●	●			●				BS	194
T+A CD1210R	1,185	Intriguing player with rather pushy basic sound, but has switchable digital filters	●	●							DS	188
Talk Electronics Thunder 2	699	Fine player, slightly lacking in dynamics, but readily, if expensively upgradable in various ways									1-bit	191
Talk Electronics Thunder 3	1,000	Clean, fast, and availability of a complete upgrade path make this a good long term proposition									DS	195
TAG McLaren CD20R	1,249	Dry and unatmospheric, but plenty of presence – recommended with caution	●								BS	188
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 upbeat – but short in the trouser department	●			●			●		BS	1643 151
Teac VRDS-8	600	Superb build quality is matched to good, but not exceptional sound quality	●			●			●		MB	184
Teac VRDS-9	700	Well-presented. This Teac is crisp, yet shallow, and inconsistent in sound quality and partnering skills	●						●		1bit	2178 176
Teac VRDS-10SE	850	Superbly built and presented, but rather leaden bass, with an over-prominent mid/top	●			●					BS	169
Teac VRDS-25x	1,000	Excellent, individualistic player with bold, colourful sound, but test sample had iffy CD-R compatibility	●			●		●			MB	195
Technics SL-PC480A	130	Full driving sound, but somewhat uneven in balance with a unsubtle, slightly harsh top end									1bit	159
Technics SL-PS670D	200	Fine, middle ranking player which sounds solid, sometimes even a little stolid				●			●		1bit	2264 179
Technics SL-PS770D	250	High tech and well built technology battleship which smooths 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
Thule Spirit CD100	600	Definitely a try before you buy machine, but the bass and mid are excellent	●								DS	188
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
Tube Technology Fusion	1,100	Our early test sample was primitive and flawed, but showed signs of greatness	●			●					PA	195
Tube Technology Fulcrum	2,800	An imaginative two-box player with a smooth sound that lacks some lustre	●	●							24bit	194
XTC CDP-1	1,250	Bright and sometimes abrasive, but detailed player	●								MB	2186 176
Wadia 830	3,000	Envelope busting dynamics, power and imaging in a rather unexciting box (digital volume control)						●			MB	183
Wadia 860	7,450	Flagship CD player has unique digital volume control, superb neutrality and awesome bass	●	●	●	●	●				MB	189
Yamaha CDX-493	180	Open and lively, but this player is also messy and lacking resolving power				●			●		Hyb	191
Yamaha CD-X993	400	A bit of a lush, though the sound is singularly free of grain, and equipment levels are strong	●			●			●		BS	184
YBA Spécial	695	There is nothing here to justify the pricing or the high-end parentage. Avoid									MB	195
YBA CD1α	3,895	A remarkably fluid and graceful sound – one of the best we've heard below £5,000	●								18bit	194
<b>TRANSPORTS</b>												
Audio Note CDT Zero	399	Neat shoe box size transport sounds smooth and fluid in the right system. (Tested with DAC Zero)	●									191
Linn Karik	1,850	Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing	●			●						1323 144
Roksan Attessa ATT-DPS	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
Trichord Digital Turntable	699	Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving, a first-rank performer	●	●								1867 162



CONTINUED

# CD/DVD Players

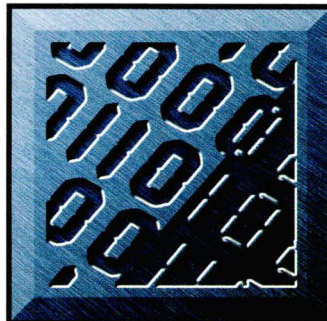
STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

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

PRODUCT (€) COMMENTS

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
<b>DACS</b>												
Alchemist TS-D-1	300	24/96-equipped DAC sounds tidy but a little shut-in with both 16-bit CDs and 24-bit, 96kHz DVDs									BS	187
Audio Note DAC Zero	369	Neat valve-equipped DAC sounds smooth and fluid in the right system. (Tested with CDT Zero transport)									Hyb	191
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
Musical Fidelity X-24K	300	24/96 ready with a warm, natural sound and good soundstaging (tested with Pioneer DV-717)									MB	187
PS Audio UltraLink 2 HDCD	2,590	The sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail. (Tested with Lambda transport)									MB	1106 133
PS Audio Reference Link	4,550	Consolidates reputation of PS Audio for high performance digital electronics									MB	1069 132
Roksan Atessa 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
Thorens TDA2000	700	Lively and up-front presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble									BS	1867 162
Trichord Pulsar Series One	1,395	Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer. Switchable phase, dither etc.									Hyb	1867 162
<b>DVD PLAYERS</b>												
Denon DVD-2500	500	Good picture, but nondescript sound, except when using the digital output at full 24/96 throttle	●	●							DS	198
Denon DVD-3000	700	Enjoyable rather than analytical, includes 24/96 and AC-3/MPEG-2 Audio	●	●							BS	180
Denon DVD-5000	1,600	The first DVD-V player that ain't bad as a CD player. A fine musical device	●	●							BS	187
Hitachi DV-P2E	400	DVD player, based on last generation Pioneer, is good but uninspiring	●	●							24/96	190
JVC XV-S2000	475	DVD player with excellent picture but flat sound in most modes	●	●							PEM	190
JVC XV-D711	500	Good video player, but rather undeveloped musically - CD Text is neat, though	●	●							DS	198
Kenwood DVF-9010	1000	DVD player with brilliant picture and clean, lively sound	●	●							24/96	190
Nakamichi DVD-10	800	Not the most compelling model in the resurrected Nakamichi line-up	●	●							DS	198
Panasonic DVD-A150	400	Simple, mid-market DVD player is vice-free but limited for the audiophile	●	●							24/96	190
Panasonic DVD-A360E	580	Powerful equipment, and unthrottled digital output notwithstanding, sound quality is modest at best	●	●							DS	198
Philips DVD750	400	Clever DVD with CD-R/CD-RW compatibility and surprisingly keen sound	●	●							DS	198
Pioneer DV-515	400	Unusually well equipped (CD-R compatible etc) DVD with more than fair sound and picture quality	●	●							MB	190
Pioneer DV-626D	450	Superbly equipped, and more than respectable sound quality	●	●							DS	198
Pioneer DV-717	550	Superb DVD player with good picture quality and which really knows how to play 24/96 discs	●	●							MB	190
Samsung DVD-907	500	DVD player with below average picture, and lacklustre sound quality	●	●							24/96	190
Sony DVP-S7700	950	Powerfully endowed player offers articulate and believable sound	●	●							DS	198
Teac DV-1000	400	Blowsy, and occasionally astringent sounding, but otherwise straightforward and reasonably priced	●	●							DS	198
Theta DaVID	4,650	A top-notch CD transport, that also plays DVD-Video discs well. Pricy for a DVD transport, but worth it	●	●	●						24/96	191
Thomson DTH2000	380	This DVD player's main attributes are reasonable pricing and fair to good all round performance	●	●							24/96	190
Toshiba SD9000	800	Costly, high tech player with stunning pictures and crisp, slightly lightweight sound	●	●							DS	198
Yamaha DVD-S795	529	Fare price, and an unconstrained digital output, but otherwise unexciting	●	●							DS	198



## 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 re-recordable 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 'dones' of pre-recorded 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 socketry for optical cable.
- **ELEC IN/OUTPUTS:** Digital socketry for electrical cable.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback section of our Archive page.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *HI-FI CHOICE* in which an original review appeared.

**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

PRODUCT	(€)	COMMENTS	FORMAT	DAC TYPE	ADC TYPE	PORTABLE	OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS	ELEC IN/OUTPUTS	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>MINIDISCS</b>										
Denon DMD-1000	300	A good machine, but it still doesn't manage to shake off the MiniDisc plague of losing the listener's interest	MD	BS	N	●	●			184
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
Kenwood DMF-9020	500	One of the best MD decks yet for sound quality, and the first to make titling a practical proposition	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191
Kenwood DM-9090	550	Slight sibilance and image vagueness do not detract from excellent balance and solid bass	MD	BS	BS		●	●	2194	177
Marantz CM635	500	CD player and MD recorder in one box: a practical idea but sound and features don't really match the asking price	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191
Onkyo MD-121	450	Midi-sized deck that sounds slightly coloured at times, though immediate and lively	MD	BS	BS		●		2195	177
Pioneer MJ-D707	250	A handy set of features for the price, though sound is not outstanding	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191
Sharp MD-R1 MkII	200	It's cheap: sound is not outrageously bettered by rather pricier competition. A bit thin on features though	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191
Sharp MDR3H	300	Nifty machine combining a 3-disc CD changer with a MD recorder. Sound on both is rather below par, though	BS	BS	N		●	●		184
Sharp MD-R2	300	Budget recorder that loses little or nothing in comparisons with much more expensive models - highly capable	MD	BS	BS		●	●	2196	177
Sony MDS-JB920	300	One of the better MD decks, its sound is neutral and dynamic. European Audio Recorder of the Year '98-'99	BS	BS	N	●	●			184
Sony MDS-JA20ES	500	Sound quality about as good as it gets with MD to date, and a very comprehensive features set too	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191
Sony MDS-JA55ES	650	Probably the best MD deck to date, with consistently less quality loss over a wide range of programme. Lots of features	MD	BS	BS		●	●		194
Yamaha MDX-793	300	Nice machine to use and has some useful features, but sound quality a little wanting	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191
<b>CD RECORDERS</b>										
Marantz DR700	600	Dearer than Philips and Traxdata equivalents, with apparently only a smarter front panel to show for it	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●		191
Philips CDR-880	499	Capable of making perfect copies of CD digital, and very acceptable copies of anything analogue too	BS	BS	N		●	●		184
Pioneer PDR-555RW	480	Competitor to Philips' CDR-880; can't make perfect copies but has the edge in replay and analogue record sound	BS	BS	N	●	●			184
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 PDR-05	1,000	The first domestic CD-R deck - excellent sound quality	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●	1652	152
Traxdata Traxaudio 900	499	Identical to Philips and Marantz models: it makes bit-perfect copies of CDs and has perfectly acceptable replay	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●		191





# 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.
- **CIRCAURAL:** 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.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback section of our Archive page.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *H-FI Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY      **R** RECOMMENDED      **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Headphones

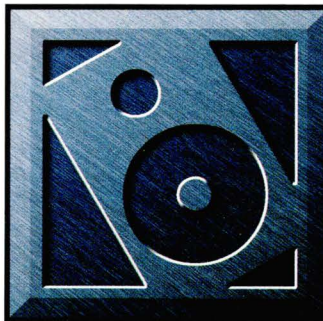
## SPECIFICATIONS

TYPE SUPRA-AURAL CIRCAURAL OPEN BACK CLOSED BACK MASS (g) IMPEDANCE (Ω) 3.5mm JACK ADAPTOR FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(E)	COMMENTS	TYPE	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCAURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK	MASS (g)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	3.5mm JACK ADAPTOR	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
AKG 301	70	Big 'phones with even and detailed sound but lacks sufficient bass weight	D					230	100			194
AKG K 240 DF	100	Inoffensive 'phones that are very laid back, if lacking in grunt	D					240	600			186
<b>R</b> AKG K1000	700	One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs	D					270	120			99
<b>R</b> 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
<b>R</b> Audio Technica ATH-D40fs	100	Detailed and involving sound with a professional 'studio' quality appeal	D					250	66			194
<b>R</b> Audio Technica ATH-M40	120	Incredible detail and honesty from these classically designed studio 'phone	D					250	60			186
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 DT331	65	Clear and extremely detailed sound with rather thin bass	D					210	40			194
Beyer DT431	81	Nice looking 'phones that may not be the best players on the field, but will always give 100 per cent	D					210	40			186
<b>R</b> Beyer DT511	106	Superb midband clarity and speed slightly at odds with soft bass. Even so, high tingle factor	D					200	250		2063	172
<b>R</b> Beyer DT531	135	A good buy for serious, heavy-duty music making	D					245	250			144
<b>B</b> Beyer DT831	140	These provide silky, smooth textures in abundance and we're not just talking about the velvet ear pads	D				1/2	295	250			186
Beyer DT100	160	Rugged, modular professional design, but bass is woolly and treble lacks detail	D					350	600			157
<b>R</b> 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
<b>B</b> Grado SR60	79	For sheer musical enjoyment these are hard to beat. Retro styling may not be to everyone's taste	D					200	32			194
Grado SR-80	100	Open and dynamic with pedantically open mid-band. Crude physical design, rough frequency extremes	D					60	8		1801	157
<b>R</b> Grado SR125	150	What these 'phones lack in style they make up for ten-fold in physical quality	D					200	32			186
<b>R</b> 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
<b>B</b> Jeklin Float Model 1	79	While very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness	D					400	200			55
JVC HA-D50	45	Detailed but with a characteristic mid-band all of their own and a modest amount of lower bass	D					290	56			194
JVC HA-W60	49	Remarkable lack of interference and hiss ameliorates adequate sound of this cordless design	D					165	1/8			172
JVC HA-D910	65	Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colorations	D					220	32			121
<b>R</b> JVC HA-W200RF	75	Distinct lack of hiss from these FM cordless 'phones ensures that detail and depth are easily heard	D					280	20,000			186
Koss TD/80	50	Oodles of bass but with a recessed midband; tiresome on the head with prolonged wearing	D					250	60			194
Koss R/100	100	Rather cheap looking 'phones that supply good detail but are severely lacking in midrange excitement	D					215	60			186
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
<b>B</b> Philips SBC 3396	70	Remarkably airy for closed-back designs. Fine tonal balance, punchy delivery. Amazing value 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	1/8			172
<b>R</b> Sennheiser HD 455	55	Inoffensive, if nondescript sound; modular, but can become dislodged from head	D					185	60		1801	157
Sennheiser HD 500	70	A disappointing pair that offer good stereo-imaging, but little else	D					210	32			186
Sennheiser HD 475	80	Elegant, uncluttered sound and very comfortable but lean bass saps satisfaction	D					120	60		2065	172
Sennheiser RS 400	80	FM cordless 'phones that are very wearable, but slightly woolly sounding with interference problems	D					160	N/A			186
<b>R</b> Sennheiser HD 570 Symph	90	Comfortable, light-weight 'phones with a detailed and open sound but lacks bass depth on weightier music	D					210	64			194
<b>R</b> Sennheiser HD 545	125	Fine all-rounder that takes all styles of music in its stride. Ear-clamping headband	D					255	150		2066	172
<b>B</b> 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-605LP	50	Funky looking headphones that have a very bold, but tiring sound, with coloured bass	D					145	40			186
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-V700DJ	100	Great looking fold-away 'phones with exceptional build quality. Kickin' bass	D					300	24			194
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> 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 Cyberwave FMH3000	40	The only cordless 'phone to offer genuine walkabout freedom, but sounds like a cheap FM tuner	D					210	FM			172
Vivanco IR5800	50	Consistently musical infra-red design. Doesn't reach for sonic heights so hiss can be forgiven	D				1/2	226	1/8			172
<b>R</b> Vivanco SR650	50	Unusually comfortable 'phone with excellent detail resolution but aggressive	D					175			1801	157
<b>B</b> Vivanco SR750	60	Cossetting physical design, attractive sound, though suffers overhang and lacks ultimate dynamics	D					188			1801	157
<b>R</b> Vivanco SR 950	80	Cuddly feel and sound make these an enjoyable pair of 'phones	D					252	32			194
Vivanco FM7980	80	A fair amount of whine and crackle detracts from 'phones which are otherwise very listenable	D					280	9,000			186
Vivanco FM8180	99	Well thought-out features and a better than average sound are, at times, marred by intrusive hiss	D					240	9,000			186





# Loudspeakers

As the last link in the hi-fi chain, loudspeakers are at the mercy of incoming signals. Nevertheless, distortions introduced by loudspeakers tend to be the most obvious. Inside the average loudspeaker is a simple electrical circuit (the crossover) which splits the incoming, full-frequency-range signal for the specific drive units to handle: highs to the 'tweeter', lows to the 'woofer'. For any speaker, 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). Our 'bass from' figures are based on measurements in a particular room therefore results will vary in different environments.

## 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. An 'A' indicates active operation.
- **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.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faved review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback section of our Archive page.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *HI-FI CHOICE* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY   **R** RECOMMENDED   **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# 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	(E)	COMMENTS	PRICE	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (dB/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Acoustic Energy Aegis Centre	140	Good value centre-front speaker but a tad shut in and with a slightly obvious top end (price per speaker)	46,17,20	89	5	50	●	●	●	●	198	
Acoustic Energy Aegis One	150	At a new low price, this has a very natural and transparent midband, erring a little on the dull side	19,36,5,24	87	6	40	●	●	●	●	187	
Acoustic Energy Aegis Three	350	High value floorstander has deep and even bass and a smooth neutrality thereafter	19,90,25	90	5	22	●	●	●	●	198	
Acoustic Energy AE120	500	Attractive presentation and good sonic headroom, but a heavy, uneven overall balance	18,98,28	89	4	25	●	●	●	●	1904	170
Acoustic Energy AE520	1,000	Could be more neutral, but high-class build is reflected in a high-class sound. Very elegant too	21,98,30	91	3	25	●	●	●	●	190	
ALR Jordan Note 7	2,500	A beguiling Anglo-German collaboration delivers metal-cone precision with fine dynamic range	25,107,32	92	4	25	●	●	●	●	196	
ATC SCM10	1,000	A compact speaker with good transparency but light-weight bass	18,38,25,5	80	8	65	●	●	●	●	192	
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 C2	799	Elegant two-and-a-half-way has a big, full bandwidth sound, but midband seemed a little under-developed	19,106,27	90	4	20	●	●	●	●	190	
Audiovector M2	1,399	High-class, smooth and slightly laid-back performer has driving bass. It's upgradable, too	20,102,30	89	4	22	●	●	●	●	180	
AVI NuNeutron	500	A smooth and subtle though pricey sub-miniature, albeit with the inevitable limitations of the breed	14,27,23	86	4	50	●	●	●	●	190	
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 DM302	150	Highly competent and neutral all rounder; clever Prism enclosure	19,32,22	88	4	45	●	●	●	●	1778	156
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 LCR6	349	Large gutsy stand-mount intended for all-round AV use but delivers fine performance as a stereo pair too	20,5,55,32	90	5	20	●	●	●	●	198	
B&W CDM2SE	400	Beautifully styled and finished, respectable midband. Lacks definition towards frequency extremes	22,32,25	87	6	40	●	●	●	●	183	
B&W 603 S2	550	Capable of being driven seriously loud, but the cautious balance seems less happy playing at low levels	23,5,87,29	91	4	22	●	●	●	●	193	
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 Nautilus 805	1,400	A great looking and extremely capable design with excellent timing and real communications skills	24,41,5,34,5	88	8	22	●	●	●	●	191	
B&W Nautilus 802	6,000	Outstanding example of the high-tech speaker builder's art, needs real power but gives real sound	39,111,55	91	8	34	●	●	●	●	183	
B&W Nautilus 801	8,500	The 801 is a magnificent loudspeaker in nearly every respect, but it is one that likes to play loud	52,111,69	91	8	34	●	●	●	●	186	
Bluer om MINIPOD	249	The MINIPOD can show its competitors a thing or two about freedom from boxiness and looks fab	18,34,+17	91	4	50	●	●	●	●	193	
Cabasse Farella 400	950	Exciting but very upfront-and-in-yer-face sound. High sensitivity, fine build and good dynamic drive	26,92,32	92	5	28	●	●	●	●	180	
Carlsson OA52.2	1,500	Ultra-discreet design integrates cleverly with the listening room. Impressively unboxy, but sounds a bit thin	41,54,37	90	8	20	●	●	●	●	195	
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 Keep	250	Substantial centre-front speaker based on Harlech drivers but with rather brighter voicing	48,17,27-29	88	8	45	●	●	●	●	198	
Castle Richmond	250	Pretty miniature with woven carbon fibre cone, forward balance is not ideal for surround channel applications	17,33,20	91	8	55	●	●	●	●	198	
Castle Inversion 15	425	This striking looking stand-mount is a good allrounder, commendably free from boxiness	19-22,42,25	91	4	30	●	●	●	●	193	
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 Harlech	880	Handsome big-sounding floorstander, great value and dynamic midrange	20,96,33	88	8	28	●	●	●	●	1820	160
Castle Inversion 100	1,975	Large semi-omni design with gorgeous Art Deco styling, sounds open but bass alignment is ill-tuned	26,5,111,45	91	8	20	●	●	●	●	195	
Celestion 12i	119	Not without virtue, but the relentless enthusiasm and mid-band colorations 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 A Compact	600	Provided the room isn't too large, and your tastes not too heavy, this is a charming little number	17,24,21	90	3	45	●	●	●	●	193	
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	1,500	Full scale, big sound from ultra-elegant floorstander. Smooth and slightly laid back presentation	24,93,39	89	6	22	●	●	●	●	180	
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 Hiper 1000	300	Classy looking stand mount has a sweet, easygoing sound with fine midband voicing	18,35,28	87	4	45	●	●	●	●	187	
Chario Constellation Lynx	550	Beautiful near-miniature is let down by a midband too laid back for its own good	20,36,26	87	3	40	●	●	●	●	190	
Chario Academy Millennium 2	2,100	Price includes stands. A showy speaker that lives up to its own hype	22,53,35	90	4	55	●	●	●	●	190	
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
Dali Royal Menuet MKII	400	Classy sub-miniature with a beautiful box and fine ingredients, but a little lacking in subtlety and excitement	16,26,18	87	3	50	●	●	●	●	190	
Definitive Technology CLR2002	595	Pricey, but undoubtedly one of the better centre-front speakers around, with fine timing and open voicing	55,5,17,5,31	90	4	40	●	●	●	●	198	
Definitive Technology BP2X	595	Pricey but effective bi-polar surround speaker, with unusually high sensitivity	23,37,15	94	4	120	●	●	●	●	198	
Definitive Technology BP2004	1,700	Pricey bi-polar floorstander has a fine midband, let down by its built-in powered subwoofer	19,104,31	91	5	28	●	●	●	●	198	
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 40	400	Classy engineering content creates a winning combination of neutrality, dynamic range and involvement	17,28,25	87	4	40	●	●	●	●	190	
Dynaudio LR 120	439	Slim but tall stand-mount has an evenhanded but rather laid back balance, and somehow lacks drive	16,5,57,31	89	5	25	●	●	●	●	198	
Dynaudio C 120	439	Sleek centre-front speaker has an evenhanded but rather laid back balance, and somehow lacks drive	16,5,57,31	89	5	25	●	●	●	●	198	
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 MKII	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 CL 310i Jet	800	It's pricey, and you can buy better performance for the money. Small speaker, good sound	12,3,20,8,28,2	86	4	42	●	●	●	●	191	
Eltax Liberty 3+	150	Bright, bassy, laid back and attractively evenhanded, but dynamically challenged. Big box for your dosh	20,5,38,34	86	4	25	●	●	●	●	187	
Eltax Linear Response	249	A curiously dumpy shape, but 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 ES25	1,655	Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance	24,90,35	88	6	22	●	●	●	●	1346	143
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
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 B	200	Attractive traditional-style near-miniature with classy main driver now has fine overall balance to match	19,5,30,22	88	4	45	●	●	●	●	187	
Heybrook Optima	259	A dumpy ugly duckling with a heart of gold. Deserves a better tweeter, but communicates well	22,88,29	94	4	30	●	●	●	●	193	



CONTINUED

# 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	PRICE	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (db/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER	
<b>B</b> 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 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 Octet	1,800	Good-looking but pricey 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	
Jamo BX100A	350	Offering a cracking 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 priced 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	
<b>B</b> 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 LX200	400	Very substantial stand-mount knows how to rock and roll, but can sound uncouth on more delicate material	21,41,30			92	5	40	●	●		193	
<b>F</b> 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	175,51,31			86	8	40	●	●	2127	174	
<b>F</b> 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	
<b>F</b> JBL 4312 II	1,000	Crude but startlingly effective dynamics. The original party animal knows just how to rock'n'roll	36,60,30			94	4	25	●	●		190	
<b>F</b> JBL SVA 2100	1,250	Monstrously large and brutish styling, goes very loud as well as deep. Fine focus but some boxiness	37,114,52			91	8	<20	●	●		180	
<b>B</b> 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 with an itchy scratchy treble	26.5,94,30			91	4	33	●	●		183	
JMLab Tantal 507	295	Competent all rounder, this compact stand-mount has a good heart and sweet treble, but sounds a bit small	21,38,27			93	4	40	●	●		193	
<b>B</b> 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	
JMLab 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 Electra 915	1,795	Fine headroom and bass, and classy engineering too, but also a tricky amp load which lacks delicacy	26.5,106,36			92	4	20	●	●		195	
<b>F</b> JMLab Mezzo Utopia	7,250	Looks good and sounds even better. A genuinely big speaker with fantastic coherence	35,115,47			92	4	30	●	●		186	
<b>R</b> Jordan Watts JH400	565	Piano-finish hexagon has controversial sound, with uneven balance but delightful mid	28,38,21			86	8	50	●	●		106	
<b>B</b> JPW Mini Monitor	60	Ultra-cheap miniature works well in a limited way	18,27,175			86	8	50	●	●	1781	156	
<b>B</b> JPW Gold Monitor	80	More informative than Mini Monitor – but fiercer, too	18,27,175			86	8	50	●	●	1782	156	
<b>B</b> 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 ML910	330	Loads of speaker for the money, plenty of headroom and loudness capability, but sounds dull	23,104,30			91	4	43	●	●		183	
<b>F</b> 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	
<b>F</b> 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	
<b>R</b> KEF Coda 7	129	Lovely open voice reproduction, but bass could be tauter; build tougher	18,30,23			88	6	50	●	●	1783	156	
<b>R</b> KEF Cresta 2	149	A good looking/value package but sonically disappointing, and no match for the Q15	20.5,37,24			91	4	40	●	●		195	
<b>R</b> KEF Coda 8	189	Outstandingly well-balanced, bass is deep but a little vague	20,32,5,29			86	6	28	●	●	1784	156	
<b>R</b> KEF Q15	200	Beautifully balanced and voiced stand-mount, but a potentially tricky amplifier load at high frequencies	20.5,31,27			90	2.5	30	●	●		187	
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 Q65	799	Dumpy-looking three-way has loads of bass and a laid-back midband; goes loud but lacks poise and impact	23,95,31			92	2.5	25	●	●		190	
KEF RDM Three	1,500	Definitely a speaker aimed at long-term satisfaction rather than immediate impressiveness. Nice	24,100,27			90	4	40	●	●		189	
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
<b>B</b> Keswick Audio Aria II	379	Confident and dynamic sound, if a little crude and shut in	21,42,24			89	8	20	●	●	1405	148	
<b>F</b> 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	
<b>R</b> Linn Kan	295	Great bass discrimination from size, ensuring a very informative, if slightly shut in experience	19,31,19			86	4	45	●	●		187	
<b>R</b> Linn Keilidh Passive	750	Stunning timing and coherence, and awesome bass drive	20,83,28			87	4	22	●	●	1552	138	
<b>R</b> Linn Kaber Passive	2,000	Dry, bright balance emphasises dynamics and transients, but can sound unforgiving	20,90,28			87	4	25	●	●		118	
<b>B</b> 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	
<b>E</b> Living Voice Avatar OBX-R	4,000	Discreet but extremely fine design with external x-over and an affinity to valves	21.5,104,27			94	6	45	●	●		196	
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	
<b>F</b> Magnat Vintage 720	1,200	Slightly crude in some respects but lots of heart, fine scale, decent dynamic coherence and integrity	29,115,32			88	4	20	●	●		180	
<b>F</b> 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	
<b>B</b> Mission 771	170	Beautiful stand-mount miniature has a delightfully well balanced and voiced sound, and real wood finish	17,31,22			86	7	45	●	●		187	
<b>F</b> Mission 77C	199	A good centre-front match for 77-series, the triple tweeter might be a curiosity, but voicing is very good	42,17,21			91	4	100	●	●		198	
<b>F</b> Mission 77DS	199	Neat flush-mount surround speaker has no bass but a smooth midband and nicely restrained treble	34,26,12			92	4	120	●	●		198	
<b>F</b> 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	
<b>F</b> Mission 773e	400	Beautifully designed slim floorstander could be more neutral but still delivers an all round entertaining sound	17.5,88,26			92	4	30	●	●		193	
<b>F</b> Mission 774	500	Gorgeous floorstander is an entertaining communicator, despite some balance oddities (bright treble)	18,95,31			90	4	40	●	●		183	
<b>B</b> 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	
<b>B</b> 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
<b>R</b> 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	
<b>F</b> 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	
<b>F</b> Monitor Audio 702PMC	700	A good all-round stand-mount with intimate midband focus	20,40,25			87	8	30	●	●	2128	174	
<b>F</b> 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	1,400	Beautifully finished compact floorstander with fine midband coherence, but limited bass and top end	20,94,28			89	4	25	●	●		180	
<b>R</b> 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	
<b>R</b> 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	
<b>B</b> 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	
<b>R</b> 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	
<b>B</b> Musical Technology Falcon	680	Big speaker has a big but also surprisingly smooth and civilised sound. Fine material value too	33,117,30			89	4	22	●	●		190	
<b>B</b> Naim Intro	660	Great dynamic range and info retrieval, but thin, lacks warmth	24,89,27			89	6	30	●	●	1916	164	
<b>F</b> 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	
<b>F</b> Naim SBL Passive	1,970	Lively and punchy – smoother but more upfront than before	27,89,27			88	6	25	●	●	1352	143	
<b>F</b> Neat Critique 2	445	Contemporary standmount has a clean, crisp sound with lovely natural midband voicing	22,32,24			86	6	50	●	●		183	
<b>B</b> 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	
<b>R</b> Neat Elite	1,195	A highly entertaining all rounder, has a planar tweeter that sounds sweet, if not particularly smooth	20,88,18			88.5	6	25	●	●		195	
<b>R</b> 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	



CONTINUED

# Loudspeakers

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

SENSITIVITY (db/W)  
FLOORSTANDER  
SIZE WxHxD (CM)

BASS FROM (HZ)  
FREE SPACE

CLOSE TO WALL  
FACTS/BACK NO.

ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SENSITIVITY (db/W)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	FACTS/BACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Opera Prima	495	Good-looking hardwood enclosure, plus fine mid and treble, but less satisfactory bass	19,34,31	90	4	40	●	190
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
Orelle Swing	1,200	A superb example of what an essentially small loudspeaker can do, with bags of brio and enthusiasm	18,101,28	● 87	8	45	●	195
PMC TB1S	430	Pro-audio version of TB1, cheaper because of black paint finish	20,41,30	● 87	6	40	●	2207 177
PMC TB1	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
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
Proac Studio 125	1,000	Pretty if pricey compact floorstander with a beautifully natural and neutral midband, and some bass thump	20,94,28	● 87	8	28	●	192
QLN Signature	1,000	Attractive pyramidal stand-mount with heavy, laid-back balance but remarkably unboxy sound	27,37,36	● 83	4	25	●	167
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 Jura	450	Beefy sounding, chunky floorstander sounds very 'direct coupled' to the music, if a touch 'boom'n'tizz'	22,5,92,5,26	● 90	5	25	●	193
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
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
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
Ruark Excalibur	7,000	A big handsome speaker with a big, laid-back, but open sound, rocking bass and loads of headroom	30,125,53	● 90	4	30	●	186
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 omni directional 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
Snell K5	795	Classy AV-ready stand mount is very solidly engineered. Sound is neutral but lacks excitement	22,46,30	● 87	6	25	●	190
Snell XA75ps	4,500	Active-bass floorstander with marvellous mid coherence, slightly suspect bass integration.	28,117,50	● 91	6	25	●	194
Soliloquy SM 2A3	1,095	Fine match in balance, coherence, transparency and speed. Intended for use with Cary CAD 2A3SE	35,5,19,30	● 91	8	45	●	196
Sonus Faber Concertino	599	A beautifully neutral loudspeaker in a beautiful Italian suit of clothes. Classy, if quite pricey	21,32,29	● 87	5	30	●	193
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
System Audio 1150	749	Pricey but persuasive, sonic subtleties sneak up to confound a dodgy first impression. Super-slim	16,105,26	● 90	4	30	●	190
Tangent Monitor 5	80	An uneven performer best suited to small rooms and generous volume levels	17,5,27,18	● 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 R1	200	Pretty little mini-monitor is smooth, well mannered, and polite to a fault, lacks dynamic expression	17,30,22	● 86	4	30	●	187
Tannoy Saturn S6C	200	A punchy compact stand-mount based on a serious cast-frame, pro-style dual-concentric driver.	38,21,29	● 89	6	25	●	198
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 Revolution R2	350	Bargain price real wood floorstander is beautifully voiced and very even-handed, if a tad laid back	17,94,24	● 90	4	20	●	193
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 Saturn S6LCR	400	A punchy compact stand-mount based on a serious cast-frame, pro-style dual-concentric driver.	21,38,29	● 89	6	25	●	198
Tannoy Saturn S6	500	Fine value vinyl floorstander offers plenty of genuine grunt and real dynamic tension	21,89,29	● 91	4	20	●	198
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 Nucleus 2	130	A very competent miniature. Could be smoother, but no serious flaws, and hence good basic value	20,29,22	● 88	4	45	●	187
TDL Nucleus 4	299	Handsome and very inexpensive floorstander with fine bass alignment but a pronounced lack of presence	20,5,92,31	● 92	6	22	●	193
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
Triangle Cometes	359	Communicative stand-mount has great midband dynamics, but the very bright top end might be intrusive	22,40,29	● 91	4	42	●	193
Triangle Zephyr II	599	Loads of fun. Dramatic dynamics and righteous timing will give any hi-fi system a wake-up call	22,94,29	● 91	4	25	●	190
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
Veritas H3	6,000	Loads of fun with wonderful dynamic and temporal integrity from horn-loaded Lowther drivers	30,110,47	● 104	4	50	●	191
Wilson benesch Bishop	20,000	Deep and even bass sets new standards for cleanliness and clarity; lovely open midband too	23,161,561	● 89	4	S20	●	189
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
Wdale Diamond 7.2 Anniversary	200	Lively and exuberant, but a tad untidy with it; can sound a bit cold and hard	19,29,5,24	● 88	4	40	●	187
Wharfedale Valdis 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 Valdis 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
Zingali Overture 2S	1,975	Gorgeous, pricey, imposing stand-mount has a horn tweeter of great delicacy. Impressively weighty	30,57,38	● 90	8	25	●	195
<b>SUBWOOFERS</b>								
Acoustic Energy AE108S	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			A	●	2248 179
JB&W SW1000	499	Bulky heavyweight is a high quality item, able to generate more bass output than music is likely to need	54,47,50	●	A	A20	●	198



CONTINUED

# Loudspeakers

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	PRICE	FLOORSTANDER	BASS FROM (Hz)	CLOSE TO WALL	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>B</b> 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	●	A	45		1736 154
<b>B</b> 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		A	25	●	2250 179
Mission 7AS2	399	Ugly if very effective at supplying very low bass, but filter could do with more flexibility higher up	56,30,31	●		<20	●	198
<b>B</b> REL Q50	375	(Active) Genuinely deep, clean bass from an attractively compact and cost-effective package	40,41,42		A	20	●	2251 179
Soliloquy S10	1,050	(Active) Pretty subwoofer, cosmetically matching SM 2A3 speakers, pricey and mid-bass a bit strong	51,30,5,46	●	A	25	●	196



## 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 section of our Archive page.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Stands & Supports

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	PRICE	TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)	FILLABLE	WELDED	SHELF TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS</b>									
<b>B</b> Aavik Furniture A4	350	Good sound and stylish Scandinavian looks at an affordable price	80.5	47			4	Wood	193
Alphason GR 17/17-AS	275	Great looks but sound can be bettered for the money	36	60,39			4	Glass	181
Apollo Soprano	275	Uninspiring looks and sonic performance that can be beaten at this price	68.5	45.5			4	Glass	193
Atacama Europa	240	Stylish, expandable modular design with agreeable full-bodied sound – great value	67	48.6			4	Wood	193
<b>B</b> Audiophile Furniture Base	615	Price is justified by its earth-shattering sonic abilities – a worthy upgrade	82	43			4	MDF	193
Avid Isosshelf	1,100	An enthusiasts equipment support stand free from coloration if a little fiddly to set up	87.5	48			5	MDF	193
Elemental Isotube x 4/Ref	1,199	Blockbusting size and build. Super sound quality	92	45,49		●	4	Marb	181
Elemental Audio Isotube X4	849	A lively stand that demonstrates just how much difference a good support can make	90	49		●	4	Glass	193
Fi-Rax R4	399	Lively, exuberant sound, slightly weak bass					5	Glass	1633 151
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> 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
<b>B</b> Optimum Int 2000 OPT660	349	A hefty style isn't reflected in sound, which is wholesome	82	60,52			5	Glass	181
Projekt Furniture A4	215	An elegant support stand that blends in to any home environment with a laid-back sound	56	48			4	Wood	193
<b>B</b> Quadraspire Q4	250	Easy to live with, tonally neutral	54	40,49			4	MDF	1633 151
<b>B</b> 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
Sound Organisation Z545	160	Budget price and great looks make this a great value stand	73	46		●	4	Glass	193
<b>B</b> Soundstyle X100	230	Looks lovely, sounds lively but slightly bright	64	49,28		●	4	Glass	181
Soundstyle Radius SR100	280	Stylish looks and a smooth sound	63.5	49.5		●	4	Glass	193
<b>B</b> 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
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
<b>B</b> Standesign Design 4	190	An all-in-one support at a budget price with good sonic performance	88.5	50.8		●	4	Glass	193
<b>B</b> Target B5	175	Free of colorations, fine grip and good value	81	49,36		●	5	Wood	1633 151
<b>B</b> Townshend Seismic Stand	1,245	It's big, it wobbles and it's pricey. But this is the ultimate equipment support	72	58,45			3	Wood	181
<b>B</b> Wilson benesch 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	85	Tall, slim and elegant, though sound and value are unexceptional	40-60	17,17	●				159
Alphason HDS	85	A reasonable stand with a smooth but rather bland sound balance. Good finish options	45-60	15.5,15.5	●				189
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 Olympos	75	A popular stand and a decent performer, but unremarkable by today's standards	40-60	15,12.5	●				189
Apollo AZ6	80	Fine engineering value, but sound is unexceptional and top-plate small	66	15,13	●	●			159
<b>B</b> Atacama BD21	55	Good-looking and good value, but doesn't match the SE24's sound quality	56	15,17	●	●			159
<b>B</b> Atacama R724	150	Atacama uses its market strength to deliver a superbly appointed product at a very reasonable price	60	15,17	●	●			189
<b>B</b> Atacama SE24	70	Stands out from the budget crowd because of the consistency and overall quality of its performance	61	19,57	●	●			1373 146
Black Box Speaker Stand	797	A strange and costly beast. Bass is a touch thick, but performance with synthetic music types is worthy of the price	92-112	40					189
<b>B</b> Custom Design R/S 300	70	Combining strong aesthetic and sonic appeal at a popular price point, this is a good stand all-round	40.6-60.9	15,15	●				189
<b>B</b> Elemental Isotube SZse	599	Stands of distinction, able to free the speaker's sound from its box in a way budget stands simply can't	61	23,27	●	●			189
JPW HS1	120	A purposeful stand, a touch dry-sounding but particularly strong with bass. Great for rock and dance music	61	19,21	●				189
<b>B</b> Kudos S50	100	Better sound than the budget stands, particularly in low-frequencies	60	15,21	●				159
<b>B</b> Kudos S100	270	The best all-round stand around. Probably...	63	15,21	●				159
<b>B</b> Mana Soundframes	125	For use under floorstanders and equipment racks, these make music effortless and natural. Can be stacked	5		●				1373 146
<b>B</b> Partington A-4	119	An odd-ball stand with a sound that's sheer class. More open and focused than almost anything below £150	50-100	19,22	●	●			189



CONTINUED

# Stands & Supports

## SPECIFICATIONS

TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)	FILLABLE WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
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STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)	FILLABLE WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
RMS/Stands Unique Vivus	349	Pricey carbon fibres give ultra-clean sound with exceptional voices	50	N/A				159
Russ Andrews Torlyte	599	Subtle and musical-sounding stands, though a touch more 'pizazz' is need for Recommendation at this price	61	33.5,24				189
Sound Organisation Z524	69	A coherent-sounding stand with particular strengths in the midband, though quality drops at the frequency extremes	61	16,17				189
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



## 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 the arm from bearing to cartridge mounting.
- **ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT:** Important for accurate cartridge set-up.
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**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

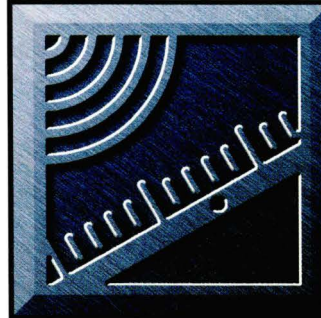
# Tonearms

## SPECIFICATIONS

PARALLEL TRACKING	PIVOTED	EFFECTIVE MASS	ADJUSTABLE LENGTH	UNI-PIVOT	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
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STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	PARALLEL TRACKING	PIVOTED	EFFECTIVE MASS	ADJUSTABLE LENGTH	UNI-PIVOT	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	●			●		79
Linn Ekos	1,500	Superb, state-of-the-art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths	Medium	●		229	●		67
Moth/RB250	109	The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural	Low	●		237	●		60
Rega RB300	174	Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high-end turntables	Low	●		237	●		60
Roksan Tabriz Basic	350	Targeted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arm in many cases – a touch bright though	Low	●		240	●		91
SME Series IV	983	Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low coloration	Low	●		233	●		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



## 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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# Tuners

## SPECIFICATIONS

WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIG. STRENGTH METER	ROT. TUNING KNOB	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
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STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIG. STRENGTH METER	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
Cambridge T500	180	Very capable tuner suited to good and less good reception conditions	FM, M, L	64			●		193
Creek T43	399	Quality UK-made tuner offering classy sound in all areas at a very fair price	FM, M, L	64		●	●		193
Denon TU-260L II	130	The return of the all-time favourite, now enhanced with RDS and sounding as fine as ever	FM, M, L	40	●				193
Denon TU-425RD	200	A fine all-rounder with advanced RDS, good RF performance and decent sound. Remote extra	FM, M	40	●			1947	166
Denon TU-1500RD	250	A well-balanced and clean sound with good bass and treble extension	FM, M	40	●				184
Magnum Dynalab FT11	499	All-analogue tuner: receives weak or tightly packed stations but loses out on noise and sonic neutrality	FM	3			●		184
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
Marantz ST-48	120	A classic budget model which manages a performance only just behind much more expensive models	FM, M	60	●				184
Musical Fidelity E50	300	Sounds involving if coloured and with a subjectively larger-than-life presentation	FM	20				1810	157
Myryad T-30	400	Attractive product that produces attractive sounds too: capable of very musical performance with a good aerial	FM	29		●	●		193
Myryad T-10	530	A very smart unit which works well and offers good rhythmic drive and vitality, albeit at a price	FM	20					184
NAD C440	200	Rather polite sound, a little vague at times, that seldom offends but never excites	FM, M	30	●				193
Naim NAT01	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
Pioneer F-504RDS Precision	300	Lots of features, plus a sound that's low on noise and high on communication, adds up to a good value package	FM, M	40	●		●		184
Roksan Caspian	595	Neat fascia with great ergonomics, but sound is not really any better than models at half the price	FM	50		●	●		184
Sony ST-SE500	140	A lot of features for the money, but sound lacks detail and has some coloration	FM, M, L	30	●		●		193



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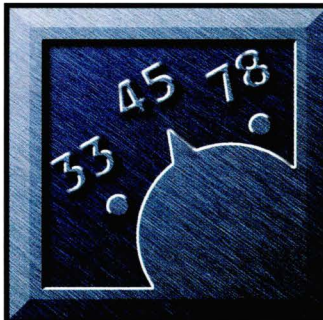
# Tuners

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	SIG. STRENGTH METER	REMOTE CONTROL	ROT. TUNING KNOB	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
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PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	SIG. STRENGTH METER	REMOTE CONTROL	ROT. TUNING KNOB	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
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
Sony STS-B920S	180	A little hiss and image compression don't detract from the clean performance of this feature-packed tuner	FM,M,L	30						184
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.
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**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Turntables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

MANUAL	AUTO	SEMI-AUTO	SUSP. SUBCHASSIS	EXTERNAL PSU	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NO.
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PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	MANUAL	AUTO	SEMI-AUTO	SUSP. SUBCHASSIS	EXTERNAL PSU	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NO.
Avid Acutus	4,995	Extremely capable design with no apparent shortcomings, don't sell your vinyl 'til you've heard it on this!							33/45	194
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
Michell Gyro SE	775	A stunningly desirable combination of looks, solidity and sound make this a tempting turntable							33/45	190
Michell Orbe 'SE'	1,725	A superb turntable, able to mix it with the best at virtually any price							33/45	192
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 Tarantella II	850	A turntable that looks unlike any other, with rare ability too. Quirky, but sound is immensely likeable							33/45	192
Pro-ject 2	300	Remarkably effective at the price, with decent timing and a generally well defined sound							33/45	1907 164
Pro-ject Perspective	750	Flexible facilities and competitive package, but performance of turntable alone is behind the best							33/45	192
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 10A	3,333	Elegant and extremely capable design with Series V/309 hybrid arm, superbly built							33/45	195
SME Model 20.2A	4,863	Beautifully built, extremely neutral damped and suspended deck with superb sound. Inc V arm							33/45/78	186
Thorens TD166 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	850	Intriguing and challenging. Musically not ideal, but its limpid quality and lack of artificiality set standards							33/45	1180 136
Wilson benesch The Circle	795	A beautiful turntable with a sumptuous sound, all at a very reasonable price – a clear Best Buy							33/45	192

## GAMUT AUDIO – the new name in hi-fi\*



GAMUT D200

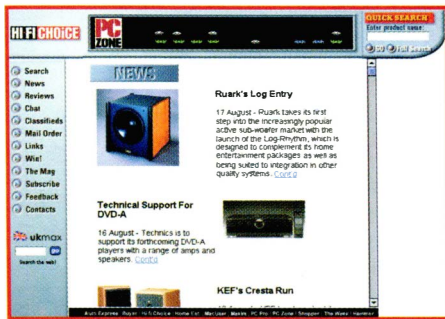
UK distributor: RT Services 01235 810455  
 Made by AmpSpeaker: www.ampspeaker.com  
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"This amplifier combines Naim-style timing with Levinson-style power and resolution. It may not look much for the money but it sounds like a bargain."  
 HI-FI CHOICE Nov 1998

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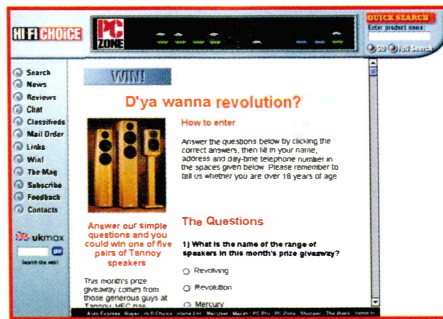
GAMUT: "the entire range of musical notes" (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary)





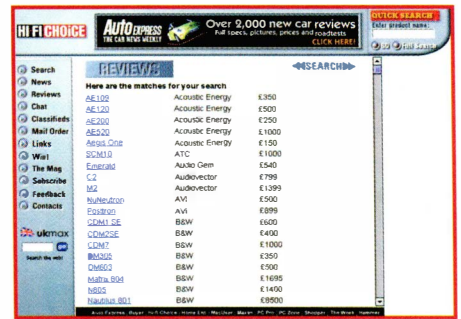
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Information on the hottest hi-fi kit you can buy



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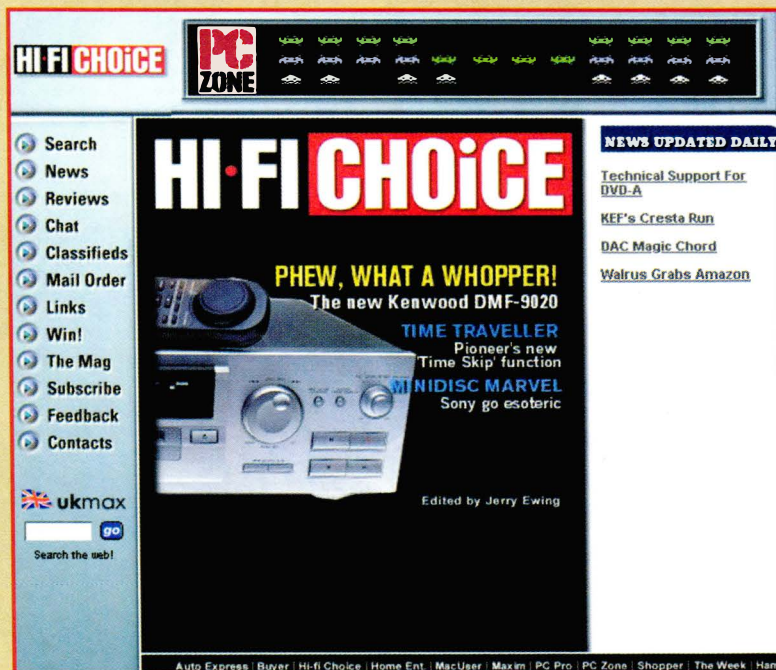
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**V AUDIO**, 36 Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1EJ. Tel (0117) 968 6005. Alon, ATC, Audiomeca, AVI, Cable Talk, Cadence Valve, Chord Amps, Electrocompaniet, Goldring, Harman Kardon, Heybrook, Inner Sound, Jamo, Leider, LFD, Lyr, Mark Levinson, Michell, Nakamichi, Opera, Oracle, Ortofon, Pink Triangle, Project, REL, Ruark, Shearman Audio, SME, Sonic Link, Stax, Townshend, Triangle, Trichord, Unison Research. Home Cinema including video projectors by Davis, Selec, Sony, plus screens by Owl, Da-Lite and Stewart. Demos by appointment only. Home trial facilities, free installation, service facilities. Access, Visa. **BADA**

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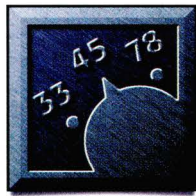
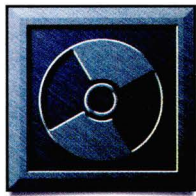
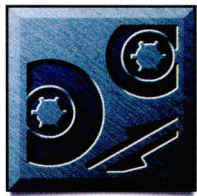
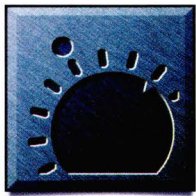
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- Mission 752 speakers, black ash (not Freedom), £333. Call Terry (020) 8482 0363.
- Mission 772 speakers, light oak, two and a half months old, as new, boxed, £140. Call (01702) 556116.
- Musical Fidelity X-A1, £350. Marantz CD63 KI S, £250. Castle Severn 2, black, £330. As new, boxed, guaranteed. Call (01282) 863091.
- Naim 42.5 preamp, Snaps PSU, £325 the lot. Two Linn 4m K4 speaker cables, £35. Call (0161) 337 0024.
- Naim NAC52 preamp, £2,825 ono. Supercap, £1,800 ono. Naim Headline/PSC headphone amp, £295 ono. Grado RS2 'phones, £375 ono. All 11 months old, boxed. Call (0118) 946 1132 (eves)/(0118) 958 5463 (day).
- Naim Nait 3, cost £608 September 1999, three year warranty, £500 ovno. Quad FM4, recently serviced, £250 ovno. Both pristine and boxed. Call (0117) 968 4123.
- Naim top-of-the-range preamp and power supply NAC52 + remote, £2,200. Supercap, £1,750. Both immaculate, any demonstration. Call (07970) 893712.
- Nakamichi DR10 cassette deck, latest model, two months old, virtually unused, will demonstrate. Call (020) 8690 4122 (eves).
- Nytech CA202 amp, £75. Quad 33 & 303, late model, £160. Record carrying cases, £2 each. Call (01708) 457691.
- Pioneer Precision A300R amp, modified by Tom Evans, £300. Trichord Genesis CD player, £120. Nordost Solar Wind speaker cable, 3m, £120. Call (01432) 266240.
- Quad 33, 303 and FM3 in teak sleeve, excellent condition, upgraded, lovely sound, £350 ono. Quad 33 plus 303 pre/power combo, vgc, £190 ono. Call (01322) 409742.

- Quad 34/405 II, leads, book, boxed, (£700) £275 ono. TDL .05 floorstanders, black, good condition, (£440) £160 ono. Call (0117) 956 5852.
- Rotel 970BX CD, £170. Rotel 820 amp, £50. Aiwa ADR460 cassette deck, £40. Call (01304) 851836.
- Ruark Talisman II speakers, boxed, very good condition. Cost £750 new, will accept £300. Call (01904) 708382 or (0403) 656458.
- Sony TAE-1000ES preamp (£700); TA-N555ES power amp (x2 100W) (£350). Ex cond, bargain at £500, can split (£325/£175). Call Leonel (0118) 941 0771 or (07957) 344541.
- Sony TC-K590 three-head cassette, £120. Heybrook HB3/2 incl. stands, black, £200. Alphason Xenon MCS arm, boxed, £175. Call (01926) 740254.
- Sendor SPI speakers on Target HJ tripod stands, £220 ono. Tandberg 2055 stereo receiver, £150 ovno. Call (01628) 524869.
- Thorens TD150/160, TD125/316 drive belts £4 each or £9 for three incl. postage. Call (01642) 594645.

## WANTED

- Midiman Super DAC 24/96 or 24-bit Calif DAC, valve phono stage or MC3 cartridge transformer, Rega RB250/300 pickup arm, 24V DC power supply. Call (01642) 594645.
- Quad FM2 valve tuner or similar Armstrong, Pye, Rogers, Radford, Dynatron, Heathkit. Price according to condition. Call (01202) 481386.
- TDL RTL3 speakers, call (01304) 851836.
- Townshend Seismic Sink table/shelf. Call (01623) 551506.



## 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 second-hand 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!



# THE HI-FI CHOICE ARCHIVE

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<p>SEPTEMBER 1999/ISSUE 193</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Loudspeaker Mega Test £250-£600</li> <li>■ Budget tuners &amp; hi-fi supports</li> <li>■ Sony SACD player exclusive</li> <li>■ Cambridge A500 first test</li> </ul>	<p>OCTOBER 1999/ISSUE 194</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ European Hi-Fi Awards 1999-2000</li> <li>■ High-end CD player Super Test</li> <li>■ Headphones Super Test</li> <li>■ TACT Millennium Mk II digital amp</li> </ul>	<p>NOVEMBER 1999/ISSUE 195</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ CD player Mega Test £300 - £1,000</li> <li>■ Loudspeakers £1,200 - £2,000</li> <li>■ MP3 - music on the Internet</li> <li>■ Nakamichi DR-10 cassette deck</li> </ul>	<p>DECEMBER 1999/ISSUE 196</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ultimate system showdown</li> <li>■ Amplifiers £200-£850</li> <li>■ Accessory round-up</li> <li>■ Living Voice Avatar OBX-R</li> </ul>	<p>BEST BUYS 1999/ISSUE 197</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full listing of the year's Best Buys, Recommended, Editor's Choice and EISA award-winning products, plus the Best of Systems and columns</li> </ul>	<p>JANUARY 2000/ISSUE 198</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Surround sound special</li> <li>■ DVD players £380-£800</li> <li>■ Multi-channel amplifiers</li> <li>■ Surround sound speaker packages</li> </ul>

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Alternatively, fax ☎ (01789) 490878. We accept AmEx, MasterCard and Visa credit, or Switch and Delta debit cards. Or write to Dennis Direct, PO Box 2505, Alcester, B50 4JU. Make cheques payable to Dennis Direct.

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1989	66-77	Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, Jul, Aug	Very limited
1990	78-89	All except Jul and Nov	Very limited
1991	90-101	All except Mar, May, Jun, Jul	Very limited
1992	102-113	All except Mar	Very limited
1993	114-125	All except Feb and Dec	Very limited
1994	126-137	Jun, Aug, Nov	Very limited
1995	138-149	All sold out	None
1996	150-161	All ex. Jan, Apr, Jul, Sep & Special	Very limited
1997	162-173	All ex. May, Nov, Dec & BB	Very limited
1998	174-185	All ex. May, Jul, Sep, Oct, Dec & BB	Limited
1999	186-	None sold out	Good

## 2. GET REVIEW REPRINTS BY FAX



*Hi-Fi Choice* reprints are available via fax, 24 hours a day. Our database, operated by Starcomm Ltd, holds a broad selection of reviews and features from mid-1995 onwards. UK readers can access this service by calling ☎ (0906) 959 2051. You only pay for the cost of the call, which is 75p per minute.

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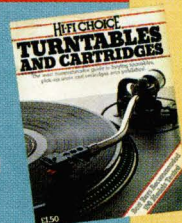
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# JIMMY HUGHES

**According to Jimmy, you're on the road to perfect harmony when your hi-fi set-up is at one with your musical taste.**

**W**hat's your taste in music? And is it shared by your hi-fi system? Hopefully it is, though sadly some listeners have their musical taste shaped by their equipment. Anything that doesn't sound good isn't listened to. It should be the other way round of course: a good system should expand your taste in music, not restrict it. But that's life...

Although it's patent nonsense to talk of an electro-mechanical-opto-acoustic reproduction apparatus having 'taste', it's nonetheless a fact that many hi-fi systems show distinct musical preferences and seem to find some material easier to reproduce than others. Alas, many of us have eclectic musical tastes. So a typical hi-fi system has to cope with a wide variety of musical styles.

It's a tall order. A system may have to recreate the power and impact of a loud rock band one moment, and the natural expressive nuances of a single human voice the next. Whether it's the delicacy of classical guitar, the rich weighty sonority of large choral and orchestral forces, the mellow warmth of massed brass, or the bite and impact of percussion, each vocal/instrumental combination has its own unique demands and requirements.

And that's only the start. We've still to consider feel and expression, and whether or not the emotional intensity of a performance is recreated - a highly contentious area, yet fundamental to the enjoyment of music. After all, what's the point of hi-fi that sounds beautifully 'correct' and natural, if it fails to involve and excite emotionally?

But, before getting too embroiled in the metaphysics of it all, what are the basic essentials a hi-fi system needs in order to reproduce a piece of music convincingly? You could probably spend a whole magazine trying to answer that question. But on a fundamental level I believe success largely boils down to coping with extremes - of loud and quiet, high and low, sharp and soft - especially when contrasting extremes

occur at one and the same time - for example, a cello playing quietly and smoothly in its lowest register against a piano played loudly in its upper register.

Many systems fail to satisfy because loud voices and instruments dominate quieter ones, masking subtle background detail. It's not essential for a hi-fi system to have the widest possible bandwidth or the broadest imaginable dynamic range,



occur at one and the same time - for example, a cello playing quietly and smoothly in its lowest register against a piano played loudly in its upper register.

Some hi-fi systems make rhythm guitars sound like un-pitched percussion; you hear the sound of the plectrum striking the strings, but there's little sense of pitch or tonality - almost as though the player wasn't actually holding down chords but simply putting fingers over strings. Being able to hear precise pitch values is vital - it's the music's flavour and texture.

Coincidentally, it also allows you to discern dynamic subtleties that give the playing its rhythmic drive, its ebb and flow.

Being able to hear subtle chord formations enriches the harmony, cloaking melody lines in vibrant colour. It makes the music more interesting and exciting, more human and communicative, more involving and real.

When you can effortlessly follow the guitar parts, tell what sort of strings are being used, while at the same time being able to hear every word the singer sings, your system's got the musical fundamentals right. Whether it sounds any good in hi-fi terms is something else again! But maybe that's not so important - get the first bit right, then move on to the second.

A hi-fi system that copes with extremes remains unfazed by the demands of the music. No matter what happens, things stay natural and believable; you don't hear the system, only the music. Note that coping with extremes does not necessarily mean

reproducing them! Clearly, a modest system won't produce floor-shaking bass or scintillating high treble. Yet it may sound far more satisfying musically than a bigger, 'better' set-up that tries to reproduce extremes but get into difficulty doing so.

Next month I'll outline a couple of interesting new products that'll help your system get a little closer to perfection. Until then, listen carefully and critically in the ways suggested. See how well your system copes with extremes. Choose music that covers every style - from simple to complex. Then ask yourself: does the music communicate? Is it a relief when it stops? Are you sorry when a track or album ends? Can you truly 'forget' your system and simply hear the music? Is the sound comfortable at every dynamic level - loud or quiet? Answers on a postcard please...

## Does your system tell you precisely what's going on?

as long as the extremes are handled competently and the important midrange stays clear and articulate.

Suppose you're listening to a track that consists of two acoustic guitars, one left, one right, plus a centrally placed voice. One guitar starts playing and after a few bars the other joins in. Then the voice begins to sing. Listen carefully: is each guitar still in its own acoustic space, and clearly audible no matter how loud the voice gets? Or does the voice dominate?

Note the precise quality of sound produced by the first guitar when it briefly plays on its own: are the strings made of steel or nylon? Is the player using a pick or

## HIGHLIGHTS OF NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE ...

### CD PLAYER MEGA TEST

Messrs Miller and Gold get to grips with 11 of the latest CD players priced between £120 and £900. If you want to know how the freshest efforts from the top brands compare this is the place to look. Contenders include: Cambridge, Denon, Sony, Marantz, Roksan, Monrio, Talk Electronics and NAD.

### WIRE WONDERS

Just as crucial as hi-fi components themselves are the



cables which connect them - after all, the signal won't get anywhere without them. This month interconnects from brands new and old fight it out in Richard Black's all revealing review.

### PRE/POWER AMPS ON TEST

Two amps are (usually) better than one, but the question is, which two? Find out when we assess five poetical pairings in the March issue.

■ On sale from Thursday 24 February.





# the new Monitor Audio Bronze Series

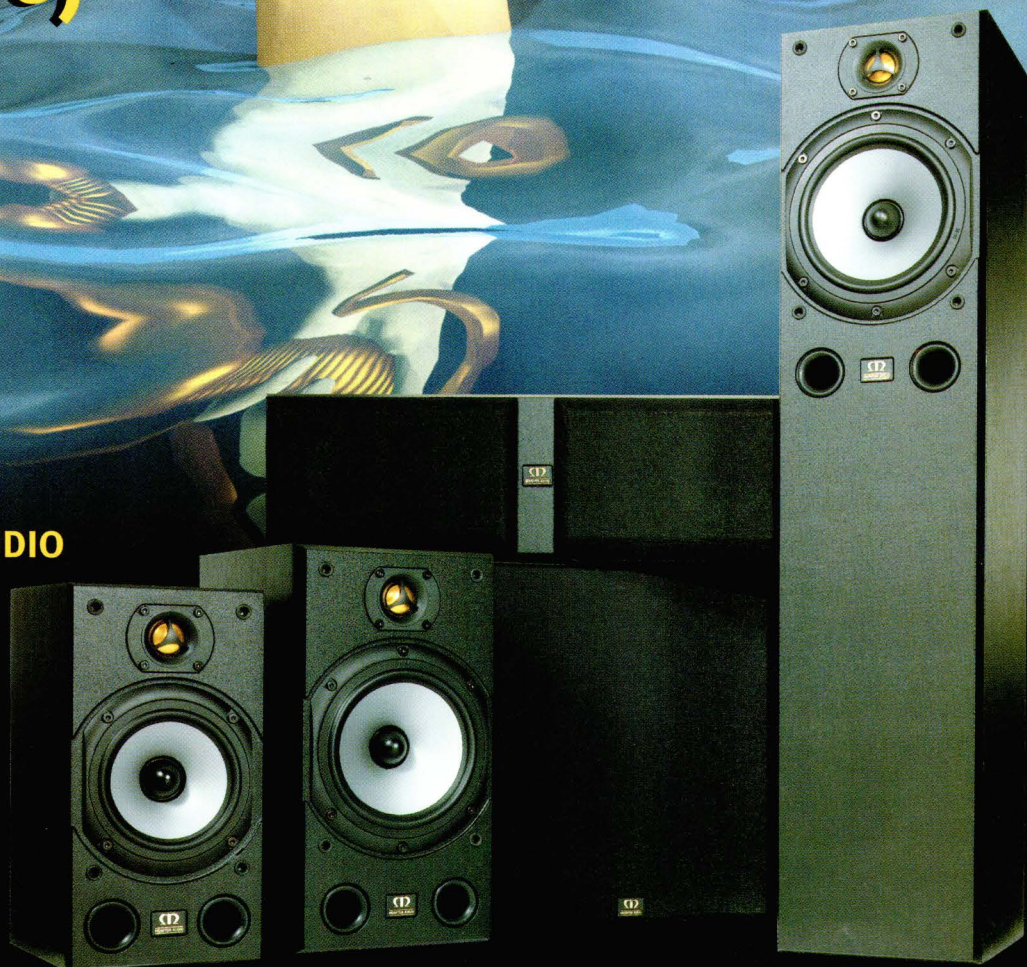
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