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THIS MONTH'S WORLD



● Eric Braithwaite takes up position at the cutting edge of CD technology with a pair of £1000+ 20-bit CD players, Denon's DCD-S10 and Meridian's 506. He's happy to report that with players like these, CD replay continues to improve.

● If you can't tune your room to match your system try tuning your system to match your room with B&W's John Bowers' Signature Digital Listening Room Optimiser. Douglas Floyd-Douglass did and appreciated the results.

● David Price reckons that Mission's new 731Pro loudspeakers could give Tannoy's Mercury m2s a hard time. Sharing the Tannoy's £140 cost, the Missions offer bi-wireability where the Tannoys are single-wire only.

● It looks like Quad are making a splash with their new 707 power amps, as Douglas Floyd-Douglass is happy to testify. And with 120W on tap, headbangers can start queuing here.

You can still stroll down a high street in this country and buy an LP which isn't a re-release or a golden oldie. With chains like Virgin's Megastores and HMV stocking top 40 albums on vinyl there's no excuse not to get a great sound at a good price from your turntable.

Starting this month with a visit to EMI's Hayes pressing plant, where 35,000 LPs are turned out every day, 365 days a year, we investigate the state of the vinyl world in these digital days.

In our forthcoming August 1997 issue David Price compares old with new to discover just how good modern LPs can sound, while in September we reveal the best places to buy your vinyl. Analogue lovers, may the bias force be with you!

Jon Marks, Editor

TEST EQUIPMENT



● Hi-Fi World has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room. No other hi-fi magazine has the benefit of such facilities.

● Hi-Fi World has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners, and uses selected freelance professionals. We review thoroughly by extensive auditioning, rather than by quick-fire group listening tests.

● Hi-Fi World's engineering team designs a wide range of products in-house. No other hi-fi magazine is so expert and dedicated.

LISTENING ROOM

(TREATED BY RPG ACOUSTIC TOOLS)



IN THE AUGUST ISSUE

Here's a selection of the quality components we hope to bring you in the next issue:

KEF RDM ONE LOUDSPEAKERS

If you haven't got space for one of KEF's highly rated Reference 'speakers, perhaps you'll like their RDM One mini-monitors. We listen to these svelte dual-concentric stand mounters to see if they fit the bill.

LINN LK240 AND MERIDIAN 505 MONOBLOCS

Linn and Meridian amplifiers battle it out as we pit Linn's LK240 monoblocs against Meridian's 505s to find which pair most deserves your attention.

PIONEER A-300R INTEGRATED

This is Pioneer's latest arrival in the market sector which the classic A-400 dominated for such a long time. But can fine tuning by electronics wizard Tom Evans (of Michell and Trichord fame) place Pioneer's latest integrated back on top of the budget integrated amplifier pile?

DAC GROUP TEST

If you're thinking about buying a DAC at up to £1000, don't part with your precious wad before you've seen the

results of our five-way review of some of the best Digital to Analogue Convertors at the price. Convertors under scrutiny come from DPA, Arcam, Audiolab, Marston Audio Research and Monarchy Audio.

MARANTZ CD-17 KI-SIGNATURE CD PLAYER

Marantz has already had great success with their £500 CD-63 mkII KI-Signature. Now they release the new CD-17 KI-Signature. We find out if Ken Ishiwata's magic touch makes the CD-17 a winner.

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CONSUMER PRESS

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QUAD 707 POWER AMPLIFIER 16

Douglas Floyd-Douglass gets acquainted with Quad's new 120W power amp, the £800 707.



VINYL

HENLEY DESIGNS HMC100 PHONO STAGE 39

David Price samples the £450 HMC100 phono stage from hi-fi newcomers Henley Designs.

DNM ACIORE MC CARTRIDGE 53

DNM's new Aciore moving coil cartridge is based on Goldring's Eroica MC. At £250 it's up against the likes of Ortofon's MC 25FL. Jon Marks rides the groove.

TUNER

AMC T7 41

AMC's T7 tuner will allow you to sample the airwaves, with the convenience of remote control, for only £130. Ketan Bharadia tunes in.



LOUDSPEAKERS

MISSION 731 PRO 31

Competition in the budget loudspeaker market is hotting up with Mission's £140 731Pros. David Price thinks the class leaders have a new rival to worry about.

POLK PSW150 SUBWOOFER 37

£500 spent on a subwoofer can add a new dimension to your system's sound. Jon Marks finds out if the PSW150 can deliver.



COMPACT DISC

MERIDIAN 506 vs DENON DCD-S10 13

Meridian's latest 506 takes on Denon's finest single-box player in this battle of the 20-bit machines. Eric Braithwaite referees.

MARANTZ CD-67SE 57

Step forward the replacement for Marantz's much loved CD-63SE CD player. The CD-67SE is already winning fans and David Price found out why.

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RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Georg P. Telemann, Oboe Suite in B-flat major

WORLD VERDICT



OUTSTANDING - Superb sound, something we'd use ourselves.



GOOD - Has plenty more. Will work in a system.



MISQUITE - Missteps in several areas. May be worth auditioning.



POOR - Slightly flawed. Not worth auditioning.

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DIGITAL DOMINATION

The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) reports that global music sales grew by 4% in 1996, reaching a massive 4 billion units (LPs, cassettes, CDs, etc) overall. CD sales were up 9%, but both cassette and LP sales dropped, by 1% and 32% respectively, so the CD is taking over, in spite of regional anomalies.

In terms of continental music consumption, Asia, Europe and North America are neck and neck at around 1 billion units apiece. Also-rans are Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, who took the remainder.

Britain was buoyant, justifying its reputation as a music loving country. Overall sales were up 7%, CD being far and away the dominant medium, selling 160 million units in 1996. That's more than any other medium at any other time. The LP peaked at 91m in 1975 and the pre-recorded cassette at 82 million in 1989 in the UK.

Germany bought a massive 182 million CDs in the same period, about the same number per head, but France was less enthusiastic about CD, taking just 106 million. Most peculiar was Italy. With their thriving hi-fi press and not a small reputation for all things cultural, Italians purchased just 28 million CDs and very few of anything else. Perhaps Italians are too busy singing to listen to anything recorded - especially music recorded elsewhere.

Finally, in Europe, the IFPI figures show big sales increases were recorded in the ex-communist states and Portugal, although in all these areas sales are barely into double figures yet. It does seem the music biz. can rely on growth coming from emergent economies and must be looking with some relish at the 250 million or so people of the Russian federation who purchased just 7 million CDs between them in 1996.

The Far East offers a more fragmented picture. Japan dominates massively. The ever-eager Japanese bought 266 million CDs in 1996, although that's still fewer per head (2.2) than the British (2.9). All the same, Japan spent no less than \$6.7billion on music, second only to the US.

Healthy rates of growth were recorded in most Far Eastern countries, with a few exceptions. Social instability might account for Pakistan and Indonesia going into slight decline, but the IFPI suggest parallel imports probably account for Singapore's anomalous 9% drop.

In China and India the humble cassette reigns; the Indians bought a massive 353 million pre-recorded tapes in 1996. Overall, Asia (including India) bought 686 million pre-recorded tapes against 350 million CDs. Only in Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore did CD sales exceed cassette sales. And you may be interested to know that one billion or so Chinese in China barely spent as much as the 3 million Chinese in Hong Kong with whom they are about to merge.

The Middle East, including Turkey, also showed little interest in the CD. But even cassette sales were paltry, amounting to 85 million units.

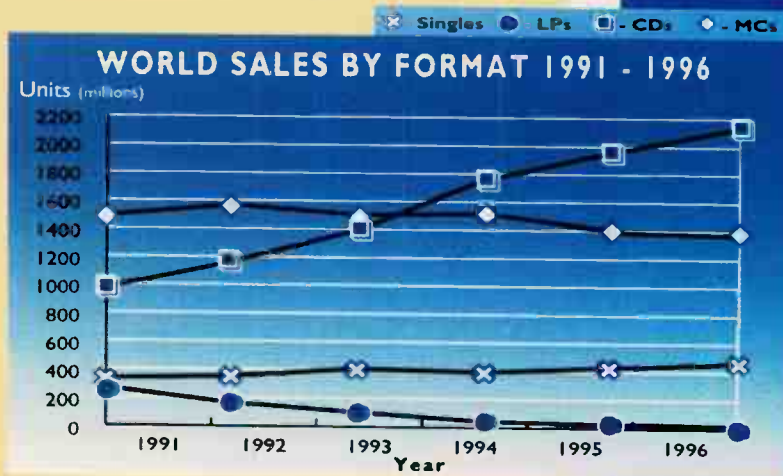
Similarly, Africa - including South Africa but not including the Mediterranean states - took just 15 million pre-recorded cassettes plus 11 million CDs.

You might be surprised to learn that world-wide, only Americans (i.e. the USA) individually spend more on music than the British. Whilst Japan and Germany exhibit around 2.2 CD sales per head against Britain's 2.9, America manages 3.2. And although Japan eclipsed Britain and Germany in amount spent, America imposed a crushing defeat on all the rest by spending no less than \$12 billion on music in 1996!

Perhaps Latin Americans, like the Italians, derive their reputation for music by performing rather than listening, because only Brazil and Mexico spent much by global standards. Brazil looks very modern in accepting only the CD (93m). Like so many other countries, it remained uninterested in either the LP (1.6m) or the cassette (4.8m).

1996 TOP 10 MUSIC MARKETS

Country	Retail Value (US\$ millions)	% of World Sales
USA	12,297.7	31%
Japan	6,762.3	17%
Germany	3,179.4	8%
UK	2,709.8	7%
France	2,318.0	6%
Brazil	1,394.5	4%
Canada	911.6	2%
Australia	815.2	2%
Netherlands	660.1	2%
Italy	637.5	2%
TOTAL	31,686.0	80%



Sports & Entertainment

WORLD VERDICT 

The Concert 8s are superbly clean, crisp and transparent. Beware their revealing nature though - they'll show up any source shortcomings.

WHAT HI-FI?

April 1997

Concert 8

★★★★★

WHAT HI-FI?

May 1997

Concert Center

★★★★★

Concert



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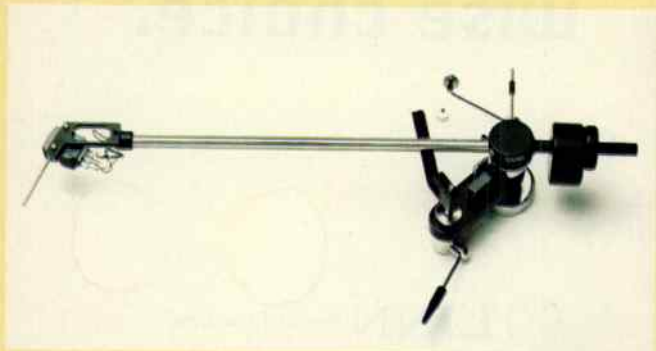
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ARMED AND READY

Engineering company GFC Hadcock has just started up production of their GH228 and GH220 tone-arms again. Hadcock decided to cease manufacture of the arms in 1985 when sales dropped from a high of 5000 arms a year to below 1000. After the subsequent 12-year absence from the market, the owner, George Hadcock, has taken the decision to recommence manufacture because of an increase in demand. The GH228 unipivot arm costs £210 and the four-bearing GH220 is yours for £220.



GFC Hadcock Audio Designs
11 Highwood Road,
Uttoxeter,
Staffs. ST14 8BQ
Tel: 01889 569166

SONIC BOOM

REL Acoustics have just announced what they claim to be their most future-proof and flexible subwoofer yet. The Q100E supersedes the existing Q100 and meets the tight specifications laid down for the home cinema digital 5.1 system. Frequency response is said to be flat from 20Hz-120Hz. Features include independent level controls for the



trade winds

home cinema Low Frequency Effects channel, as well as standard 'speaker level inputs. The REL also has a 'Slam' and 'Depth' selector. 'Slam' gives a higher output between 40Hz-120Hz at the expense of bass extension and is ideal for 'party' situations, whereas 'Depth' provides maximum extension with a flat frequency response for serious listening. The Q100E costs £500.



RETURN OF THE RTLI

TDL Electronics have apparently reintroduced their RTLI loudspeakers because of strong overseas demand. The RTLI is the smallest of TDL's four-strong Reflex Transmission Line Series and is tuned to possess the sonic signature of its bigger brothers. Updating the

RTLI involved the use of a new bass unit and improved cosmetics including a new three-quarter length shaped grille. Pricing is right in the heart of budget territory at £189.95.

TDL Electronics
PO Box 98,
High Wycombe,
Bucks. HP10 9SH
Tel: 01628 850111

NEW CANS ON THE BLOCK

Sennheiser are claiming their new £249.95 HD 600 headphones are the "best sounding" dynamic headphones made. The HD 600 is a no-compromise design whose brief called for low resonance and advanced driver technology. As a result its Duofoil drivers are specially selected for performance and subsequently pair-matched to ensure consistent sound quality.

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SILVER ANNIVERSARY, NEW BABY

To celebrate the Silver Anniversary of their LP12 turntable, Linn have introduced a stand-alone MC phono stage called the Linto.

Built into a standard Linn casing the Linto makes use of surface mount components and short signal paths in order to preserve the delicate signal from the cartridge. It can be adjusted to



cope with high or low output moving coils and is powered by the latest Brilliant switch-mode power supply. The price for the Linto is £850.

Linn Products
 Flowers Road,
 Waterford,
 Egleston,
 Glasgow G71 4BP
 Tel: 0160 888939

BELLA PUCCINI

Iver-based company UKD has become the sole British distributor for Audio Analogue's solid-state hi-fi equipment. Its range to date includes pre and power amps and a DAC but a CD player has been developed and is close to production. Each product bears the name of a famous Italian composer - Bellini, Donizetti and Vivaldi for instance. Mainstay of the range is the Puccini Special Edition amplifier. This £595 integrated is a 50W dual-mono design which features a phono section capable of handling both moving magnet and moving coil cartridges. The SE version differs from the standard Puccini by having a higher capacity power supply and double the number of output transistors. Higher grade components and wiring have also been used.

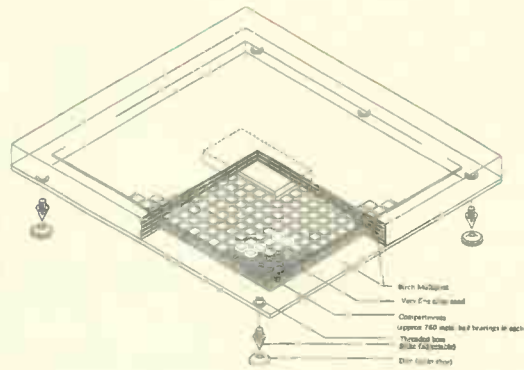


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A SHOCK ABSORBER WITH BALLS

Perfect Sound has just launched a new isolation table called the Absorber Platform which uses an interesting anti-vibration concept. In its core chamber there is a network of tiny steel ball bearings which, Perfect Sound say, rub together when

trade winds



there's any movement, effectively soaking up vibration. A second level of isolation is provided by the Platform's base which is loaded with silica sand to dampen any further movement. The complete unit weighs in at 6.5kgs and measures 440mm x 400mm x 36mm. Two finishes are available, black and natural beech, and the retail price is £129.

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ACOUSTIC ENERGY'S TRIPLE LINK

AESC-C3 isn't the secret code name given to the replacement for the Stealth bomber but Acoustic Energy's first cable product. The AESC-C3 is a tri-wire 'speaker cable which uses UPOCC ('Ultra Pure Ohno Continuous Casting') copper as its conductor material.

Ohno casting is a patented process which creates what is effectively a single copper crystal with a uniform structure.

The cable is composed of three twisted pairs of conductors, and although ideally suited for tri-wiring it can be easily configured for bi-wire or single-wire 'speakers. At a cost of £11.95/m the AESC-C3 could be an economical proposition for those with tri-wireable 'speakers.

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MULTIBIT *Marvels*



Eric Braithwaite enjoys a close encounter with a pair of cutting-edge 20-bit CD players, Meridian's 506 and Denon's DCD-S10.

Disaster. Total absorption in the Bach B minor mass, Dave Brubeck and Pete Seegar was interrupted by the terrible smell of my kettle melting. Last time, and that was a few years ago, it was the last two slices of bread in the house and I had to buy a new toaster. Thank you, Denon and Meridian.

The trouble is, you know you have a good CD player when you fidget, desperate to lean forward, tap the recording engineer on the shoulder and say, "Do you think you could just bring that double-bass up a fraction?" Or want to stand up, convinced you are a member of the audience, and walk forward to the stage and shake the

singer by the hand. That's what the Denon does. So does Meridian's 506. This is still a rare ability. So listen to one. Or both. That's all you need to know really. Now, excuse me, I have to find a proper job so I can afford to buy a new kettle.

Right, I'm back from the night shift, sweeping the streets of detritus like the

homeless and the odd drunken Tory MP. (I live in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; even the homeless are ex-ministers scribbling in their diaries by the light of the sodium lamps).

There's a theory that all CD players sound the same - rubbish - even when one like the Denon is £1300 and the Meridian is £1100. They have their similarities - they're both 20-bit players - but otherwise, it's more like Hong Kong and China now: same country, different outlooks. To say one, the Denon, is the kind of player that puts you into the best seat in a concert hall whereas the Meridian puts you into the producer's seat in the studio would give a flavour of the differences. But that's too glib, too "one's real, the other's hi-fi" to be sustainable. They cross over into each other's territory like the People's Army.

As you approach the high-end of CD players, any quibbles about tonality should be minimal and neither the Denon nor the Meridian cause an eyebrow to twitch even a millimetre here. If, on the Omnibus Wind Ensemble's recording of Frank Zappa's 'Classical' music, you are a little unsure of what precisely a contra-bass clarinet or a double-bassoon sound like in real life, you can be certain that one of the noises is one or t'other and not, possibly, a trombone with a stuck slide or a didgeridoo.

What we are listening for is a subtlety which is always tricky to define. For example, compare Dave Brubeck's *Take Five* in Sony's latest and superb 20-bit SBM remaster. Switch between the Meridian and the Denon and you could guarantee that four out of five listeners would swear on first listening the piece sounded the same on both. Yet it doesn't.

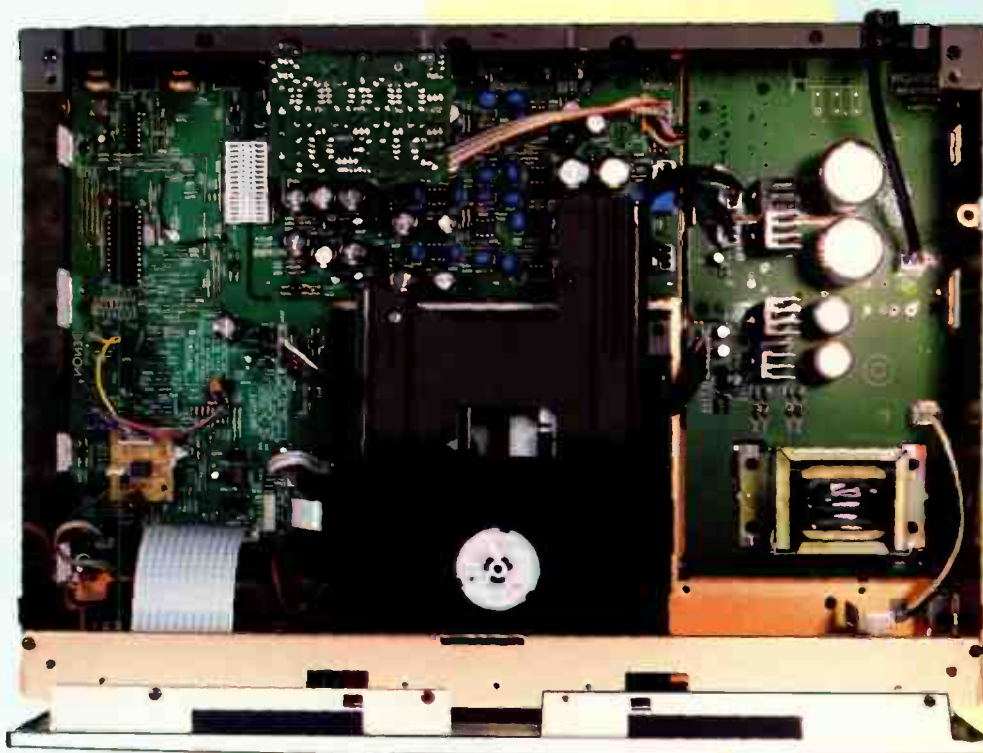
Yes, on both the double-bass's low plucked notes seem to travel along the floorboards, and kick-drum is firm. Yet

the different flavours of two DACs (quadruple Burr-Brown in differential mode in the Denon and Crystal Semiconductor's latest CS4329 in the Meridian) seep through.

As always, living up to its name, the Crystal-based player is sparkingly clear and clean in the midrange and especially the treble. Re-assuring that, since it's only a week or two since I borrowed an evaluation board of the same DAC to listen to, and was mightily impressed

Church in Stockholm is really like inside but you couldn't mistake it for being anything else. Played on the Meridian, the harpsichord continuo was brighter, the vocal sharper-edged but the acoustic drier and the depth perspective thinner. My personal preference was for the Denon for the church ambience and the Meridian for the words. Neither, subjectively, was 'more right' than the other; the emphasis was just different.

A recording of Lifschitz playing



with that aspect of it then. It gives a very sharply edged, precisely spotlight picture of every instrument, with exceptionally clear-cut attack. If you want to take a tape measure to a glittering cymbal or spot exactly where a drumstick took the shine off, this will make the job easy.

If, on the other hand, you want a slightly more subdued but extended shimmer, then it's the Denon for you. This, very likely, is the Alpha Processing filter Denon are so proud of because the mid-price DCD-1015 has an element of this signature. It produces in the DCD-S10 an impression of acoustic space which is quite remarkable.

Take Anne-Sofie von Otter's solo from *Then Svenske Messan* on *Proprius*. Heaven knows what St Gertrud's

Couperin live at the Wigmore Hall was marginally more 'live' acoustically and a little wider on the Denon than on the Meridian. Yet if you wanted to appreciate some clever (maybe clever-clever) technique, it was the Meridian that would have had you notating the score. The Denon would have spurred you into applauding the performance a second earlier.

But back to Brubeck. 'Take Five' swings along with deceptive ease but it's built upon a series of out-of-the-ordinary time signatures. Now here there was a true difference between the players. At various points, just for a few notes, a couple of syncopated drum thwacks precisely coincide with a bar of the continuous rhythm from the piano. The Denon reproduced this with stop-

watch accuracy, so much so you could sense Morello and Brubeck smiling quickly at each other as the tricky moment came off perfectly.

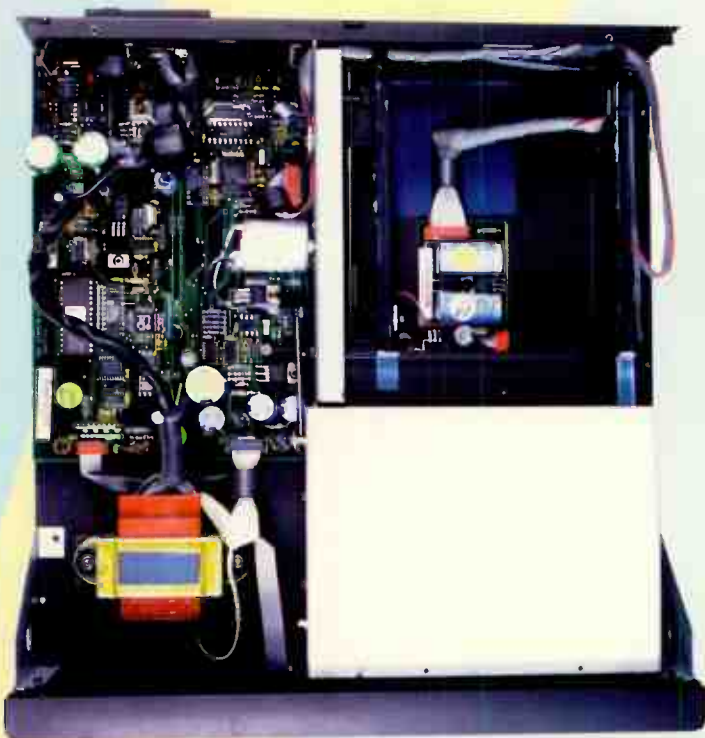
Via the Meridian the plucked double-bass and especially the sound of fingers on the frets was a little more distinct, and the snare drums sounded better separated from each other. But that momentary frisson went by more as a bit of admirable, controlled,

relaxed impression of the surrounding audience in this small club live recording, a little less crowded together.

Neither scored any particular advantage when it came down to The Fugees' version of 'No Woman No Cry' or Leftfield's 'A Final Hit'. Both had floorboard rattling bass and a knack of leaving no sample or MIDI-trick unturned and both tempted you to turn

opportunities of hearing it in the UK are likely to be more limited. Then again, Denon's DCD-S10 is the only CD player to my knowledge that offers not just a digital output but a spare digital input as well. A sensible option, which means recordings can be made digitally without any unnecessary additional A/D and D/A conversion in the chain. Inveterate fidgeters also have the option of phase inversion to play with, though the remote handset, being a standard Denon affair, doesn't include this option. Then again, the Denon does have a pair of AES/EBU balanced XLR outputs.

Which one is better in the end? Silly question. You might as well ask whether Dolly the cloned sheep will make a better Sunday joint than her mother. Oh, goddammit, that reminds me. How long has that leg of lamb been in the oven? I smell burning again.



technique than a couple of bars of risky tight-rope walking.

This is a signature of Crystal, though the way Meridian has implemented this DAC makes it tighter and cleaner from top to bottom than any before. If you would like to be certain of the type of mic used for a recording, it would be recognisable a fraction sooner using the Meridian than the Denon.

By comparison, Denon's Burr-Browns have just a little of an old-fashioned, tinged-with-'analogue' feel. Imagery Meridian-style is very precise and clearly defined, the kind that convinces you Pete Seegar's accompanying banjo is hanging from a strap down to his lap so many centimetres, precisely. On the other hand, the Denon produces a more

the volume well past eleven and compete with the Ministry of Sound or the neighbours. That's the neighbours across the other side of the street hanging out of a white car with an orange stripe. . . Oh-oh!

What will swing the choice between the two is first a matter of the quality of the ancillaries and then a matter of logistics. Both require neutral amplification and monitor-quality 'speakers. Too bright a tweeter is likely to put a fierce edge on the Meridian's treble; too waffly a bass would turn the Denon's warmer lower midrange woolly.

The Meridian is readily available through the company's dealers. In the UK, the Denon is a 'special order' brought in from Germany, so

Denon DCD-S10 £1299.99

Meridian 506 £1100

Hayden Labs
Chiltern Hill,
Chalfont St Peter,
Bucks. SL9 9UG
Tel: 01753 888447

Meridian Audio
Stonehill,
Huntingdon,
Cambs. PE18 6ED
Tel: 01480 52144

WORLD VERDICT

DENON DCD-S10 ●●●●●
 The Denon has a naturally spacious and involving sound but isn't quite as dynamic as the 506.

MERIDIAN 506 ●●●●●
 The 506 may not be quite as open or easy going as the DCD-S10 but it offers great insight into recordings.

Measured Performance
 see p103

JUMBO

Douglas Floyd-Douglass warms his ears to the sound of Quad's impressive

One of the great names in British Audio has produced a range of memorable and collectable products over a history of change, development and, more recently, acquisition by the Verity Group. I was honoured to be asked to assess whether the contemporary Quad 707 power amp is up to the 'classic' tradition that precedes it.

mine have, they last for years - a lifetime in fact.

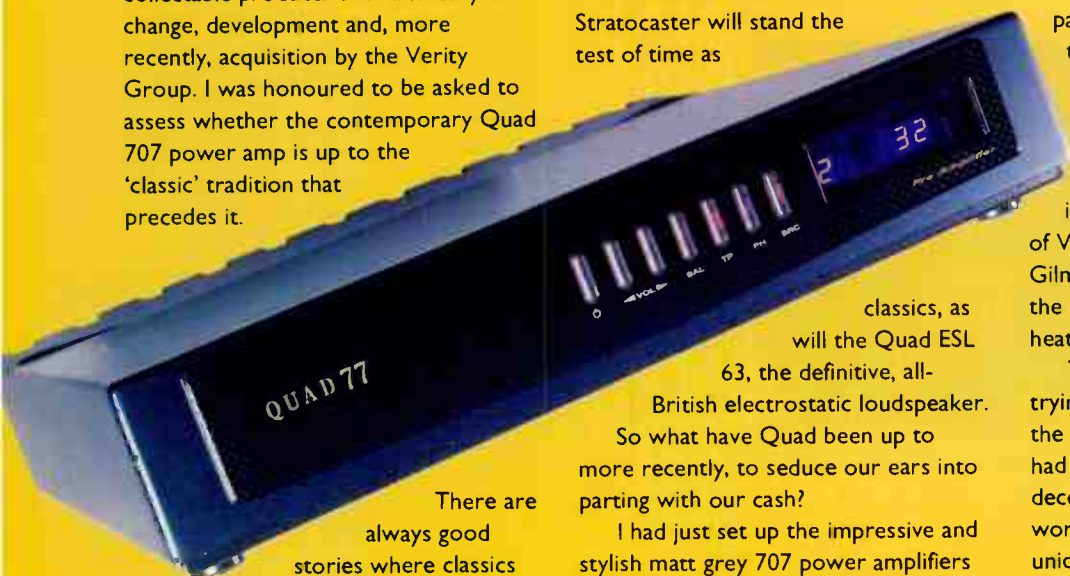
In the same musical league, the '54 LE Gibson Les Paul custom and '58 Stratocaster will stand the test of time as

77 pre falls down with its fiddly operation and rather mediocre sound quality.

You need very small hands and the patience of Methuselah to operate this belligerent box. When you operate the volume manually, you have to use a digital up/down cursor. Curses. The buttons are so close together that you can inadvertently select Balance instead of Volume. So as you crank up Dave Gilmour's 'Comfortably Numb' solo, the sound pans hard left instead of heating up your voice coils.

The 77 pre-amp is an example of trying to be too clever, too modern. In the analogue days, older Quad amps had superb quality potentiometers with decently sized rotary knobs. These worked well and gave Quad a rather unique prominence in the product ID department. Why change a good thing? Anyway, what saved the day was the monstrously good 707 power amplifier, which sounded fabulous connected to my Audiolab 8000Q.

Using Quad's patented system of



QUAD 77

There are always good stories where classics are concerned. I was once visited by an accomplished concert pianist. He humbly remarked over tea that whoever was playing in the room next door, was - to say the least - exceptionally talented. Indeed he was. It was the young Vladimir Ashkenazy performing in analogue on a superb vinyl Decca recording. A Koetsu equipped Linn LP12 front end, Class 'A'd through two Sugden monoblocs poured musical current into my ESL 63s. When I took this modest gentleman into the adjacent room, his jaw dropped to the floor. "I cannot believe it. I must have a pair," he whispered.

I have a pair of ESL 63s which I cherish. I've used them as a reference for over twelve years now. They are surely one of the most musical and neutral loudspeakers ever built. Designed with the music loving monogamist/confirmed bachelor in mind, they are much more involving, consistent and easier to listen to (and live with) than any human being. And, as

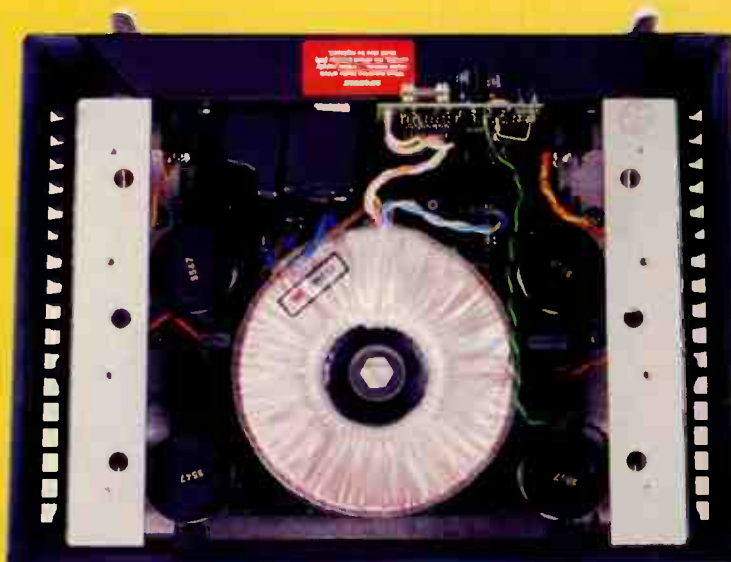
classics, as will the Quad ESL

63, the definitive, all-British electrostatic loudspeaker.

So what have Quad been up to more recently, to seduce our ears into parting with our cash?

I had just set up the impressive and stylish matt grey 707 power amplifiers (for bi-amping) and was warming them up with my Audiolab 8000Q. Rhythms abounded from Kula Shaker, as I prepared to unpack the pre-amplifier. The packaging for the pre-amp is literally twice the size of that for the power amps - I was expecting something special.

Unfortunately, the 77 pre-amp is a disappointment. In a dire attempt at minimalism, audiophiles have been left with a great power amp and a push-button gadget of a pre-amp. But we don't really care what it looks like as long as it works - sensibly - and sounds good. Here again, though, the



The heart of the matter - inside the 707's discrete casework lurks the hefty toroidal that helps the amp produce its 120W power output.

POWER

new 120W 707 power amplifier along with the matching 77 pre-amp.

'current dumping' the 707 fits two amplifiers in each channel. A high quality, low power amplifier controls the loudspeakers at all times and, when required, a second high power amplifier provides the muscle. The low power amp carries an error signal, so that when the larger power transistors (the current dumpers) get within the target area of required output current, it will fill in the remainder accurately. The overall reproduced sound quality of the 707 is solely dependent on the low power amplifier, which, by virtue of its output, can be made of the highest quality. Quad claim that crossover distortion, quiescent current adjustment, thermal tracking and transistor matching problems all disappear.

The system works rather well, the 707s delivering great scale and dynamics through the ESL 63s. The amplifiers' control was such that even the most powerful orchestral pieces, like Tchaikovsky's 1812 (Telarc) maintained composure and a most convincing sound stage. The Debussy Preludes and Chopin nocturnes were enthralling, deep and moving enough to make you sigh at the end of each piece or movement. Piano, which is one of the most difficult instruments to reproduce faithfully, really showed off the amplifiers' finesse and quality. Harmonics, timbre, depth of tone and sheer dynamics made for a presentation that was faultless. The 707/ESL 63 combination is pure music, made for the gods.

On cone/dome 'speaker systems of higher sensitivity, you get to appreciate the power and speed of the 707 monoblocs (120W into eight ohms, 220W into four ohms, 14A peak current!) Celestion's A3 floor standers made thumping companions. Marcus



Miller's 'Tales' exhibited a bass depth and power that really suited the nimble six-string performance. And New Order's 'Blue Monday' (yup, it's hip again - told you so) whacked out a furious right hook to match the digitised bass drum. While surround stretching cone excursions shifted serious air, the amps were running cool, enjoying the workout.

On Rock material, the punch, speed and control of the 707s made for exciting listening. The only criticism regards solo voice, where the amps could sound slightly cold and brittle. Admittedly I had spent most of the time on the ESL 63s which are as smooth as Murphy's stout but I did try several other designs and the results were consistent. As with all amplifiers, there is a trade-off in the pursuit of ultimate fidelity - power and quality rarely go hand in hand. The Quad 707 power amp, however, is about as close a marriage as you'll get.

One final string to the 707's bow is the Neutrik Speakon terminals provided for connection to loudspeakers. These are the highest quality available and are considered the professional industry standard.

It is clear that Quad are targeting the serious audiophile and pro user

with the 707.

In it, they have created a power amplifier that will breath new life and dynamics into the ESL 63s, the great grandfather of loudspeakers, as well as less esoteric designs. Nice one, Quad!

Quad 707

£799.95

**Quad Electroacoustics
St Peters Road,
Huntingdon,
Cams. PE18 7DB
Tel: 01480 52561**

WORLD VERDICT



The 707 embodies a rare blend of grace and power in its sleek grey casework.

**Measured Performance
see p103**

28 Branches Nationwide

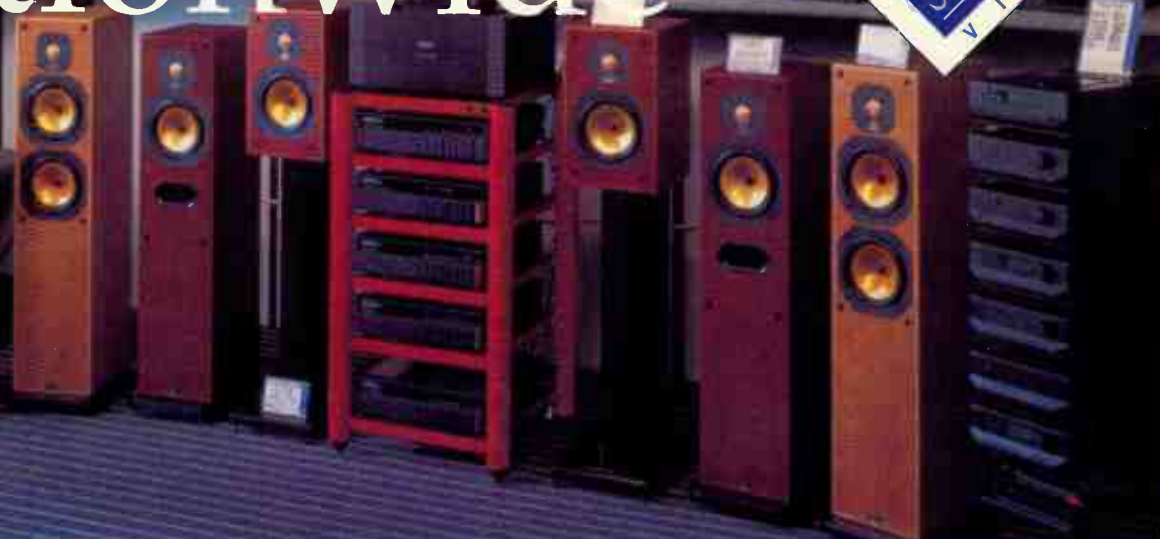


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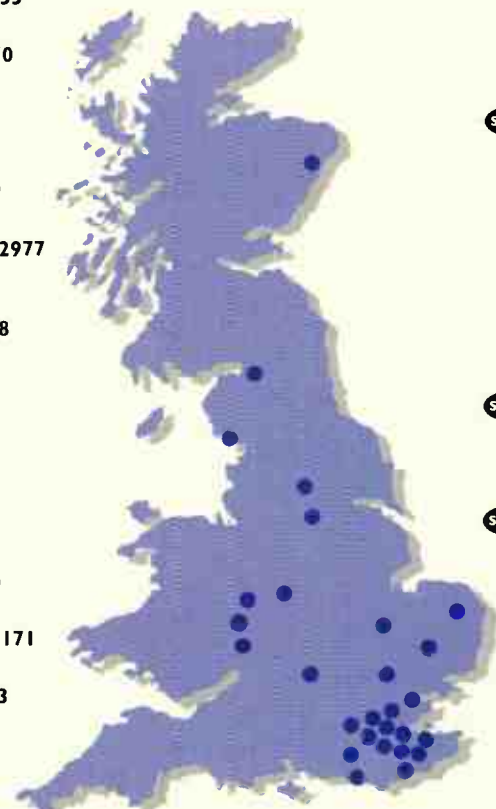
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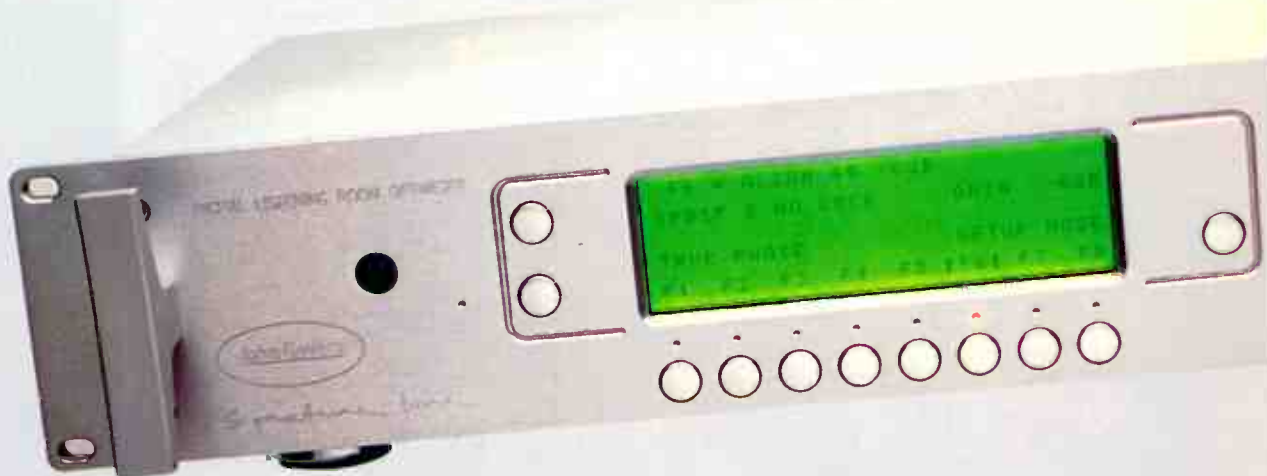
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feature

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Fed up with the sound of your system? Douglas Floyd-Douglass reckons that in the future, a 'new' room could be the answer thanks to B&W's prototype Listening Room Optimiser.



Imagine having your favourite piece of music played through the best system you have ever owned. Imagine, too, all the reflections and standing waves that influence the sound that we have always taken for granted being replaced by the environment in which the music was originally performed. Impossible? Well actually no. B&W's John Bowers Signature Digital Listening Room Optimiser can do just that.

The LRO is the result of six years research in the fields of acoustics and digital sound. It sits between transport and DAC in a hi-fi system. AES/EBU and SPDIF connections can be used as the

output and input format. All room correction and 'speaker equalisation takes place in the digital domain with 32-bit internal precision.

The LRO embodies the conclusions of B&W's investigations into the effect rooms have on perceived sound and incorporates a number of patents in the fields of acoustics and Digital Signal Processing. The result is that B&W's LRO is one of the most progressive developments in hi-fi to have appeared in the last decade. The LRO will quite probably herald a new age where audiophiles can at last hear music free from their room's sonic signature.

PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

As the LRO operates digitally on the data from a transport, there is no compromise on sound quality. Using the linear (but not elaborate or expensive) omnidirectional microphone supplied, the LRO can be programmed to measure the effect of the room on the 'speakers and vice versa. The LRO then calculates a digital filter which corrects the room and/or 'speaker irregularities.

The result is that you hear the characteristic tone of the equipment and music, unmarred and unchanged by reflections and standing waves. As Richard Dudley, B&W's Head of

Electronics says, "You hear past the room's shortcomings to the music itself."

Internal non-volatile memories allow the storage of eight room measurements, permitting optimisation for multiple listening positions, together with eight loudspeaker target responses. This configuration gives instant side-by-side comparison of different responses.

There's a number of similar products on the market (MLSA/Sigtech spring to mind) but B&W's Listening Room Optimiser is entirely self-contained, with all processing done internally. An external PC is not required to configure the system, analyse data, calculate filters or make measurements.



OPTIMISING THE ROOM

Set up takes less than ten minutes from start to finish. The procedure is as follows:

a) INITIAL CONFIGURATION.

The LRO needs loudspeaker bass response characteristics for two reasons. First, so that it can assess how much of its own bass response will make it into your room in the measurement phase. And secondly so that it knows the limitations of your 'speakers when it calculates a filter. This primary data serves as a protection device, saving the 'speakers from unrealistic or unintentionally

entered bass boosting parameters which might damage them.

b) ROOM MEASUREMENT.

A digitally generated selection of frequencies (rapidly repeated sweep tones sub-500Hz) called a 'chirp signal' is produced and the LRO measures the room response at a given microphone position. B&W recommend making four such measurements, with the microphone in a different position each time.

The accuracy of correction is greater in smaller listening areas. I imagined a cube two feet on a side around my head and shoulders and performed eight measurements all on different vertical and horizontal planes. This would be a good way of doing things for the single listener, where a fairly critical but sensibly sized sweet spot is created. I then tried the room in a variety of possible states - with all curtains closed, doors wide open and with four people in the listening position - for comparison. In all cases the LRO worked quickly and consistently.

c) TARGET SET-UP.

This is where modifications can be made to your loudspeaker's response rather than correcting for room behaviour. Options include bass response extension, crossover roll-off order and making phase response linear, if required. Parameters in this programme include crossover order and type as well as -3dB point, which should all correspond with your loudspeaker's specifications.

Now, the best bit - creating a filter.



Independent correction for room and loudspeaker (target) response can be individually memorised and recalled as required. Naturally these measurements can be combined and corrected to

provide a reference overall response.

In the Room Parameters menu, Tilt can be set-up visually and aurally. This takes account of the subjective bass reinforcement of typical small rooms, caused by resonances. All responses and adjustments are displayed on a large, back-lit LCD display. The clear graphics are well laid out and wholly self-explanatory.

SOUND QUALITY

Once I had configured the LRO in my system, I was astonished at how much more freedom there was to the sound. Bass, especially, had effortless power in a physical, real acoustic sense. Timpani and skinned percussion benefited enormously from the corrections: decay lasted longer and was much more prominent. You could clearly hear the buzz of the vellum and the brass harmonics and overtones that are usually masked or phased out by room/speaker anomalies. Drums, too, sounded airy, with the space between the tom-toms easily visualised.

Imaging extended three dimensionally, possessing much greater depth than the conventional left/right scenario. Midrange, on choral pieces in particular, was smooth and sweet while at the extreme high end, dynamics were surprisingly powerful. Cymbal sustain was clear and even solo soprano was improved, despite being in a frequency domain beyond the LRO's active programmes. This is because the LRO is so effective when it comes to setting up the low frequency spectrum that the rest of the frequency range is allowed to emerge with increased clarity and impact.

The Listening Room Optimiser never sounds like a 'typical processor' - compressed, over-equalised or clinically clean. Instead, this unit works in relation to the characteristics of the human ear relative to

perceived and actual sound. It is musical, natural and truly transparent. If this is what the next millenium holds for hi-fi, roll on 2001 ●

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Spectacular praise, you might think. But where Celestion's involved, it's almost predictable.



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CELESTION

SUPER

feature



Nick Tate looks at SME's "precision pick-up arms" old and new.

For such a small company, it's amazing that SME is famous the world over. But quality, the company's hallmark, is a universal language and the products speak for themselves.

All manufacturing, from machining and die-casting to injection moulding and anodising, is done in-house. Almost every part of every tone-arm they've ever made is still available today, down to the last screw and grommet. Any arm can be restored, upgraded to the latest specification or rebuilt from a complete wreck to 'as new' condition in a week.

Such legendary service means SME tone-arms are a uniquely safe second-hand buy - you can find early examples for peanuts and easily get the best from them. This is great news for vinyl lovers on a shoestring, so we thought we'd take a closer look at SME's classic arms and compare them with today's.

SME 3009 SERIES II

Possibly the best selling tone-arm ever, the SME3009 Series II is still in production today, almost four decades

on! Its heyday was the 1970s when an SME was the arm to fit to turntable motor units. Consequently, the 3009 II is readily and cheaply available second-hand. A combination of precision ball race and knife-edge bearings is used, keeping friction low. The arm is beautifully finished and is easily adjustable for tilt, overhang and height. It is best suited to low-ish mass cartridges, although the optional FD200 fluid damper makes the 3009 happier with heavier designs. High-ish compliance magnetic cartridges like the classic Shures of yore, as well as the excellent modern Goldring 1042, are



The 3009 Series II Improved has probably sold in greater numbers than any other arm.

the best choice. Also, buyers should look for fixed headshell versions which sound better than the detachable shell models (/SII suffix).

Unfortunately the 3009 Series II Improved is way out of fashion these days but how does it sound? Quite good is the answer. Fitted to a Michell Orbe turntable it was certainly better than expected. Maybe this was because I wasn't expecting much, but in comparison to the Series V it's best described as lively and fun.

Despite far less detail, curtailed low bass, rough treble and a misty midband, it still managed an engagingly musical performance. Never one to let the recording's nuances get in the way of the big picture, the SII just bounced along with a fluid midrange and plenty

of gusto. Rough around the edges but fun nonetheless, the 3009 SII's low second-hand price makes it a good used buy.

SME SERIES III

The III is a true oddball in the great vinyl scheme of things. When first introduced in 1978 it was hailed as a star and used by several reviewers as a reference. At that time SME were obsessed with low mass arms, claimed to ride warps better and give lower record wear. As a result, the III was a thin, delicate looking affair designed to track a select bunch of moving magnet cartridges such as Shure's VI5/IV at under a gram.

Unfortunately, big, heavy, low compliance moving coils had just caught on and the III was left out in the cold as 'battleship super arms' cleaned up.

But the III still has a lot going for it. Build quality is excellent with low friction bearings. Rather than relying on a less-than-ideal detachable headshell, separate 'carrying arms' are used, with super-strong titanium nitride arm tubes and sturdy push-fit

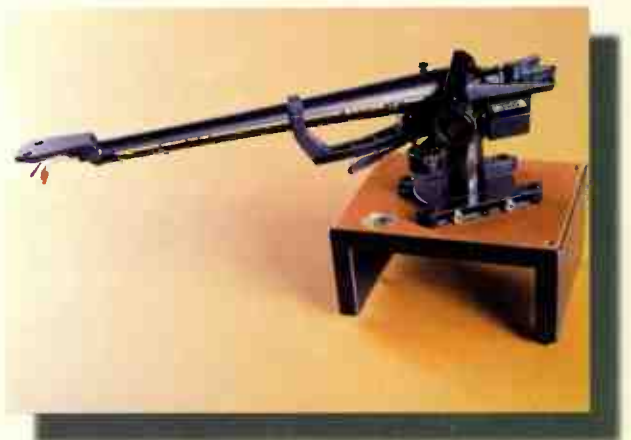
connectors. If you want to change cartridges easily, the SME III is a good option. Suitably calibrated, it'll even produce good sounds from modern moving coils, although it's hardly a match made in heaven. Better still, use a Goldring 1042 or Shure VI5/VxMR and it really sings.

On the Michell it sounded beguiling with a big, warm and lazy but very musical sound. Compared to the Series

V, the III has poor dynamics - you definitely get the impression that it's sitting on transients - but the rich, mellifluous sound that it produces makes up for this shortfall. It's actually quite detailed and controlled, with a good degree of depth and space. Treble has a soft, sweet Quad II-style valve quality and bass is much the same. All in all, a nice little arm, coloured but musically convincing nonetheless.

SME SERIES 300, IV & V

These arms arrived in the latter half of the Eighties and were a major departure from previous SMEs. Abandoning low mass for maximum rigidity, the V was a real shock when it first appeared. Using a tapered one-piece magnesium tube, there were

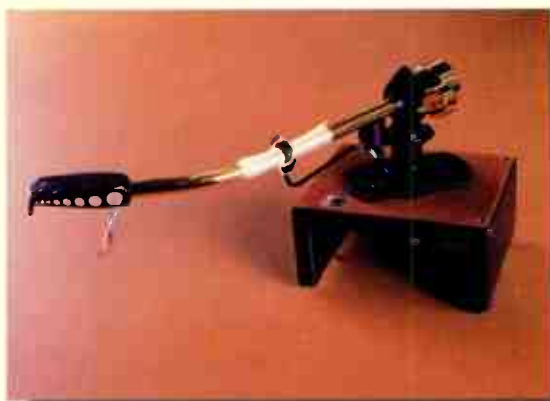


One of the best tone-arms in the world with build quality second to none - the mighty Series V.

echoes of Rega's revolutionary RB300 but SME had moved the game on.

This arm added a massy counterweight locked close to the arm pivot, rack and pinion alignment adjustment, full fluid damping, superb low friction, high strength bearings and silver wiring throughout. The silver enamelled IV followed, identical to the V except for its LC-OFC copper wiring, simpler adjustment, lack of a fluid damper and slightly lower tolerance bearings.

Not only are these arms very different to previous SMEs in design, they sound it too. Best characterised as extremely neutral and self-effacing, they bring amazing clarity to vinyl replay. Imaging and sound staging are superb,



If silver doesn't catch your eye, then the 3009 Series II is also available in gold and black.



Following in the footsteps of the Series V was the Series IV with its copper wiring and less tightly toleranced bearings.



With its 12in arm the 312 has lower tracking distortion than 9in arms, one reason we use it at Hi-Fi World.

while frequency extension is unmatched - bass is superbly tight and controlled, treble glass-clear. The only criticism is that they have a rather dry, analytical sound. Their lack of euphonic coloration can be a little stark for some tastes. Still, both arms have a reputation for being the most robust in the business - unlike some rivals it takes a lot to damage them. This, plus SME's service back-up, makes them great used buys. Just don't expect to pay Series II money as the latest SMEs have kept their value well. Here's a rough guide

for well-preserved examples:

MODEL	NEW	USED
3009 SII	£321.47	£30-£100
3012	£538.35	£60-£125
Series III/S	n/a	£70-£100
309	£656.51	£350-£400
312	£763.40	£450-£550
Series IV	£935.75	£450-£550
Series V	£1391.16	£650-£800

Carefully set up with a decent turntable and cartridge, any of these pick-up arms will prove highly rewarding. SME has been around for over half a century, almost as long as the Microgroove record itself. Here's to another half-century of success for both the company and the long playing record!

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TWEAKING

How to get the best from SME's classic arms.

3009 SERIES II

- [1] Secure the arm base to the turntable's armboard with SME's hard mounting washers - chuck those rubber grommets!
- [2] Clean all plugs and sockets with Kontak.
- [3] Later arms with gold phono sockets are best. Old arms with edge connectors can be updated at the factory.
- [4] Use SME's latest LC-OFC arm leads and headshell wires.
- [5] Detachable headshells should be SME's double-pin type, available from the factory.
- [6] Owners of Improved versions can also Super Glue the headshell permanently in place for best sound.



The Series III came onto the scene in 1978 but was soon overtaken by a new range of battleship super arms.

SERIES III

Follow all the relevant steps above, plus:

- [1] Use the later carrying arm, which has two holes at the very front of the headshell. It has improved geometry, a stiffer headshell and better wiring.
- [2] Always use the fluid damper and remember that different damping paddles are available for fine tuning if desired. Owners of the pared-down Series IIIS should fit the optional damper kit.
- [3] Ensure your counterweight has its full complement of mass-loading lead weights, available from the factory.

THE SME STORY

Scale Model Equipment Ltd was formed in 1946 to make parts for the model engineering trade. By the Fifties it was manufacturing bits for aircraft instruments and business machines. It wasn't until 1959 that SME's first "precision pick-up arm" appeared. By the agricultural standards of the day it was a revelation and soon won many admirers and awards.

SME founder and designer Alastair Robertson-Aikman subsequently refined it, producing several versions, including the 3012 12in with its superior tracking accuracy. The latest 3009 SII is still in production today.

In 1978 the Series III was introduced but its success was short-lived, and it wasn't until 1986 that SME returned to the top of the pile with the expensive Series V. The less expensive Series IV appeared a year later and the 300 Series soon followed, offering an even more affordable taste of the high life.

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feature

BI-AMP BIAS

Jon Marks mixes bi-amping with a shoestring budget to produce a £1000 two-source system of unusual ability.

You're not alone if your hi-fi quest consists of tracking down a system which offers that elusive combination of flexibility, upgradability and excellent sound quality all on a tight budget. Finding this Holy Grail isn't the easiest of tasks though, as any seasoned audiophile will know from many hours spent in dealers' demonstration rooms.

Setting out with a goal of putting together the best two-source system (vinyl and CD) for £1000, a price which must include decent stands and cabling, we decided to take a slightly different approach from the norm. Your average £1000 system will probably consist of a record deck, CD player, amp. and 'speakers at about £200-£250 each, with cables and stands coming out of the change.

Here, though, we've followed the bi-amping route as we did on p79 and p80 in last month's issue. The core of this set-up is a pair of Denon's impressive budget integrated amps, the £160 PMA-250SE. These are connected so that they handle one channel each. This minimises crosstalk between channels



and ensures great clarity and control from the matching loudspeakers, in this case Mission's baby bi-wireable 731Pros at £140.

Heading up the system is the excellent Pro-ject 1.2 turntable (£200) complete with Ortofon's 510 MM cartridge. The deck even arrives ready aligned so there's no fiddling with nuts, bolts and protractors to get it running. Amplifying the 510's tiny signal to line



level is QED's bargain £35 Discsaver MM phono stage.

Sharing the source honours alongside the Pro-ject is Kenwood's £170 DP-3080 CD player. This player surprised Dominic Todd with its poise and refinement in our June issue. Its abilities are at least partly due to Kenwood's DRIVE

system, which aims to reproduce musical subtleties more accurately by smoothing out the quantisation 'steps' that normally occur when a CD player decodes low level signals.

Loudspeaker cabling comes courtesy of that still golden oldie, 79-strand. Available from suppliers like Maplins (at 69p/m), 79-strand has been around for a while now and it's not difficult to see why it's most budding audiophiles' first port of cable

call. Interconnects consist of three 1m pairs of Sonic Link Bonus (£15/m), a cable we took a shine to back in January 1997.

And making sure the Missions sit on a firm foundation is a pair of £70 SE24 stands from Atacama. All of these components add up to a grand total of £985.

SOUND QUALITY

Starting off with the cheesily titled *Bach is Back*, a collection of Bach's organ works performed by Iain Simcock, I was pleasantly surprised by this system's spacious sound stage. With one Denon powering each channel, there's no danger of the kind of crosstalk that occurs in the power supply of an amp in a single-amp set-up and which blurs detailing and the recorded acoustic.

Where the twin Denons scored again over a single £350 amp was in the way they let through so many more of the subtle nuances that lend emotion and realism to a performance. This was

putting together a gorgeously rhythmic, crisp performance when working through the QED Discsaver. Running from a single PP9 battery means the Discsaver is working on a completely clean electrical supply unsullied by mains pollution. The benefits of this were obvious in the transparency and spaciousness of the sound stage records produced on this deck and the superbly funky rhythms coming off discs like Grace Jones' *Nightclubbing* and Dodgy's *Free Peace Sweet*.

there is room for an upgrade or two. One option is to spend a little more on interconnects. An obvious candidate here is DNM's Reson (£36/m). We recommend this cable in loudspeaker and interconnect form almost as often as we do Goldring's 1042 MM cartridge, and for good reason - at the price it outperforms everything else we've heard. Swapping the DNM for the Sonic Link opens up the sound stage, gives a smoother overall presentation and reveals more detail.

A change to more expensive loudspeakers would also bear fruit. KEF's £200 Q15 point-source stand mounters, for example, would give deeper, tauter bass, better imaging and an even more spacious acoustic. They do a great job at dealing with rhythm too. And if it was increased power and control you were after, Rotel's excellent 100W RA-970BX is an amplifier to conjure with.

There's no doubt that bi-amping adds an extra dimension to sound quality when compared to a single amp, costing the same amount of money.

Dynamics are sharper and better defined and

Orchestral music fared equally well, the Discsaver's rather dry bass helping balance a slight boominess in the Missions' bottom end while powerful treble, free from any harsh brittleness, coped with violins and percussion. Listening to vinyl through this combination of components really was a pleasure, disc after disc hitting the platter as the midnight oil burned.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE. . ?

While this group of components works extremely well considering its price,

there's a much greater sense of involvement thanks to all the usually lost nuances this system picks up. If you're on the look out for a budget system with real upgrade potential and the best sound for your pound, take a look at bi-amping before you buy ●



the case whether it was organ pipes or a drum machine emerging from the Missions' diminutive mid/bass drivers.

Dynamics also got the thumbs up. Tori Amos' *Boys For Pele* album came across with undiluted speed and punch. And in terms of sheer listenability, this system left a lot of similarly priced set-ups struggling. I found it difficult to stop myself sneaking back down to the listening room to try just one more CD. It's this kind of addictiveness that proves you can get great sound quality without resorting to hi-fi with telephone number price tags.

Spinning some vinyl with this system showed just why the LP still has such a dedicated following, the Pro-ject 1.2

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QUID PRO QUO

Nick Tate finds that Mission's new 731 Pro 'speakers give you more sound per pound.



Latest in Mission's long line of entry level mini monitors is the 731 Pro. Replacing both the 731i and the 731LE at £129 and £149 respectively, this new 731 sells for £139 and claims to improve on both.

Like all in the new 73 Series, the Pro features a version of Mission's 25mm silk dome tweeter, a smooth sounding unit that's worked wonders for the company's entire range of loudspeakers. Also appearing for the first time on Mission's entry level model is bi-wiring, the benefits of which are well known. The rest of the 731 Pro is as before - the two-way, reflex loaded, inverted driver layout, a 130mm plastiflexed paper bass unit clamped to the rear panel and well finished 315mm x 175mm x 200mm vinyl wrapped cabinets.

With a Cyrus Pre/Power amplifier and dAD3 CD player partnering them, the Pros proved impressive performers considering their budget price tag. The 731s have always been punchy little 'speakers and this latest incarnation gives more of the same with some of the rough edges smoothed off.

Take, for example, UB40's 'The Key', a spacious recording underpinned by a huge bass guitar groove. The Missions came over as very tight and fast, with unexpectedly powerful low frequencies providing they're pushed right up against a rear wall. On frame stands (I used Linn Kan II stands) they got the balance just right, able to pound out the song's bass line without it

interfering with proceedings higher up.

Imaging was excellent, as it often is with well built miniatures, the Pros dissolving completely into the spacious recorded acoustic. And unencumbered by the need to reproduce real low bass (no 'speaker this size can play low bass accurately), upper bass was super-quick, giving the music plenty of pace and attack. Dynamics were also an obvious forte, the Missions capturing the verse-end cymbal crashes with real force.

So what about the new tweeter? Well, it's smoother and more natural than the previous unit, reproducing the ride cymbals that permeate Blur's 'Parklife' with none of the artificial zing of the cheap metal domes used in some rival designs. Indeed, the drive units integrate very well, making for a seamless sound that just gets on with playing music.

Upbeat Dance music like Pianoman's 'Blurred' again saw the Missions in their element, kicking out drums and sub-bass sequencing more strongly than you'd expect from £140 'speakers.

Admittedly, their small size meant I really had to crank the power up to fill my medium size listening room but suitably energised the Pros really sang. And unlike their predecessors, they seem happy with high volumes, remaining civilised and in control right up to tinnitus-inducing levels.

The downside? They're not the most detailed 'speakers around at £140, nor are they the bassiest, sacrificing the weight of some of their larger rivals for tightness and speed. Still, given a reasonable front end and amp, the 731 Pros are one of the most exciting and musically communicative 'speakers under £200. They're great fun, making you want to play more and more of your music. And for the money, you can't say fairer than that.

Mission 731 Pro

£139

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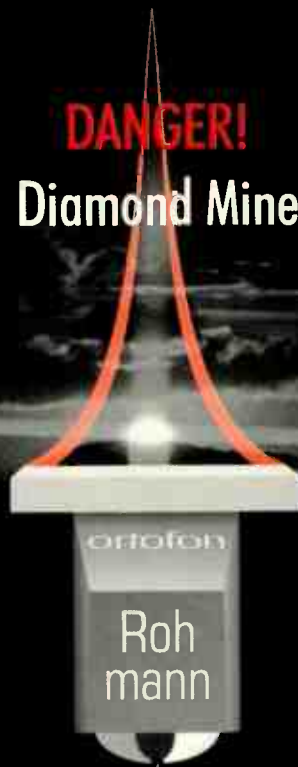
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MISSING LINKS

This month we move up a gear in our search for the best interconnects with £35-£45 cables from IXOS, Prima Links and DNM.



PRIMA LINKS' PINK LINK RED, £39.95/m.

Next to the IXOS the Pink Link looks rather ordinary with its thinner cabling and standard phono plugs. Listening to the Red I found it had a rather obvious character - the tonal balance is weighted in favour of the midrange and treble while the bass region lacks fullness and depth. Consequently the overall sound is quite thin.

To the Prima Links' credit midband and especially treble are well detailed and have impressive transient attack and speed. Once again, though, because

DNM RESON, £36/m.

I have to say I'm a little perplexed by DNM's pricing scheme. Their 'speaker cable (reviewed in the May issue) is a bargain at £6.95/m. But this interconnect, which looks just like a mini version of that 'speaker cable, costs almost £30 pounds more. OK, so termination and gold-plated phono plugs are included in the price but superficially it doesn't look like very good value.

Lucky for DNM that cable choices are made on sound quality grounds rather than looks. When it comes to sound the Reson is very good indeed. In fact, it sounds exactly like its big brother 'speaker cable. The treble is actually well extended and like the rest of the frequency range, full of detail. Even when things get complex, the cable still manages to keep a hold of all the strands making up the music. The Reson is an impressively spacious and natural sounding cable well worth tracking down.

IXOS 103 CRYSTAL, £44.95/m.

This is the most impressive looking cable of the group, from its textured sheathing to the high quality VBT locking phono plugs that terminate it. Connected up, the IXOS left a good first impression. It has a weighty sound that remains fast and agile. Tonally it's just about spot on - this is not an aggressive, forward cable.

Extended listening showed up a few cracks in the IXOS's confident front though. Whenever the music became complex and densely packed the 103 started to sound confused. In addition to this and regardless of the music played there was a hazy quality to the sound, almost as though the cable's resolution limit had been reached. Mind you, both these traits are quite subtle and only really showed up in comparison to the DNM. The IXOS 103 Crystal does a lot of things well and its flaws are relatively minor.



of this cable's tonal balance music can sound lean and even stark at times. Bearing in mind how strong the competition is, the Red really needs a more even balance if it's to be more than a palliative for bass-heavy systems.

**DNM
PO Box 383,
Brentwood,
Essex CM14 4GB
Tel: 01277 227355**

**IXOS
Unit 2,
Desborough Ind. Pk.,
High Wycombe,
Bucks. HP12 3BG
Tel: 01494 441736**

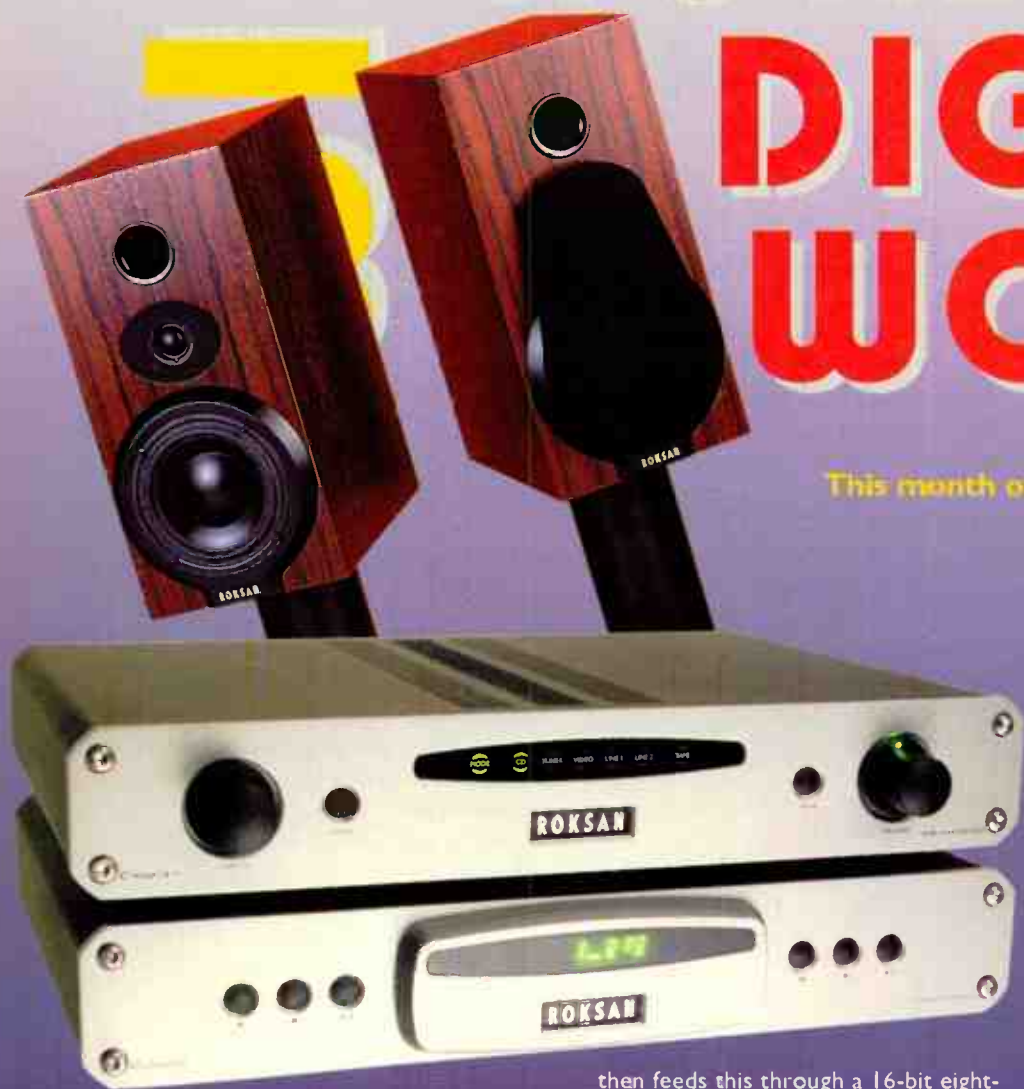
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competition

2

ROKSAN'S DIGITAL WORTH



This month our competition prize is a stylish

Roksan's first product, the legendary Xerxes turntable, was only the start of what would become a whole range of respected hi-fi equipment. Having spent twelve years building up a reputation with high-end components, Roksan have now decided to mount an all-out attack on the middle market with the Caspian range of equipment (which shares its name with a sea). Eventually a DAC, power amplifier and tuner will join the line-up but heading the range at the moment are the CD player and integrated amplifier which form the core of our competition prize.

The Caspian CD player is a slim and sleek front-loader built into the same style case as the amplifier. It uses a three-beam linear tracking laser head to read information off the disc and

then feeds this through a 16-bit eight-times oversampling convertor. The power supply features twin toroidal transformers, one dedicated solely to the D/A convertor. Separating the DAC's power supply in this manner reduces interstage interference and thus improves sound quality. The CD player sells for £895 and makes an ideal source for the Caspian amplifier we reviewed in our June 1997 issue.

The £695 amplifier is notable for its build and electronics quality, featuring as it does an Alps Blue Velvet motorised volume control and surface mount components on a single carefully designed circuit board (which helps to keep signal paths short). Flexibility is another Caspian trait with split pre and power amp sections which can be used individually. This provides an easy upgrade path through

bi-amping or the use of an external pre or power amplifier.

The Caspian amplifier was summed up by Jon Marks as, "A £700 bargain. Mixes the best of solid-state and valve worlds to produce a seductive sound". Its 70Watt output and good current capability is more than enough to drive most 'speakers but in this case the amp and CD are partnered with Roksan's newly revised ROKone loudspeakers.

The original ROKones were much liked by Nick Tate in our February 1997 issue. These £595 stand mounters were described as sounding "bright and breezy" and credited as being "thoroughly musical performers". The new 'speakers with their revised crossovers give an even smoother, better balanced sound.

If you would like a chance to win this system all you have to do is answer the following questions and complete the tie breaker. Send in the entry form on the back of a sealed envelope or postcard to reach us before July 4th to:

Roksan System Competition
Hi-Fi World magazine,
64 Castellain Road,
Maida Vale,
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Don't forget to include your name, address and telephone number if possible so we can contact the winner promptly.

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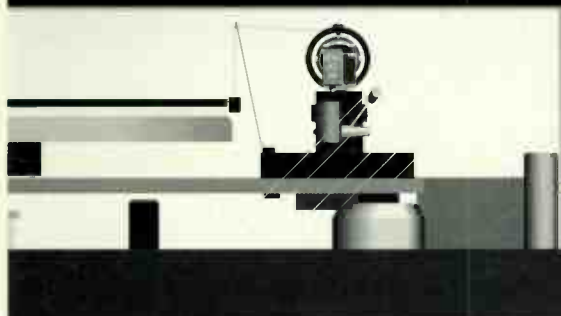
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BASS IN A BOX

Looking for more bass from your stand mounters? A subwoofer might be the answer but, Jon Marks asks, how does Polk's £500 PSW150 measure up?

Subwoofers come in two fairly distinct flavours. The first of these tastes good for about 20 seconds and then leaves you with a headache for the next hour or so. This particular type is generally found nestling in car boots and home cinema systems, where bang and crash in the upper bass are the prerequisites and truly low bass (sub-30Hz) doesn't really get a look in.

The second type, and a rare breed it is too, provides subtle bass that stretches down below 30Hz and sneaks up on you to rattle windows only when called upon to do so. So would the PSW150 turn out to be type one or two?

Attempting to set up the Polk by ear proved how difficult it can be to get the best out of a subwoofer. We connected it to Roksan's Caspian integrated amp which has two sets of pre-amp output sockets, from one of which a line level signal can be transferred to the Polk. Main 'speakers were Mission's 731Pros.

Classical music is the real acid test for a subwoofer, and faced with a range of orchestral works the Polk was sounding rather like a ghetto blaster on steroids. Tweaking the adjustment controls yielded either cellos with too much upper bass or no extra bass whatsoever. Reggae went the same way, with a kind of boofy quality to bass guitars and no real bottom end.

Measurement showed why. When the Polk was working in-phase with the Missions, the net result was no useful



extension below the Missions' limit at about 60Hz. Changing the level of the subwoofer merely put extra energy in at around 60Hz without deepening the bass.

The answer to this problem was to switch the Polk to work out-of-phase, set its bandwidth to minimum and then tune its level by ear to match the 731Pros. Like this, bass actually reached down to about 30Hz and matched the Missions' output quite accurately.

Listening to Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade a second time showed the Polk now working much more effectively. Its weight helped lend substance to orchestral pieces, which,

with the Polk disconnected, sounded thinner. The Polk underpinning the Missions brought the sound further out into the room as well. In fact, improved sound staging like this is where a good subwoofer really scores. But here, the Polk wasn't as adept as REL's Q100.

Swapping genres to the World music strains of Dabo's From The Gekko album, I brought 'Canto del Pilon' to bear. This track is punctuated by massive, electronic drum beats. Here, the PSW150 showed that it had reasonable extension.

However, the slight blurring it added to bass was at odds with the fast, light mid/bass cones of the Missions.

Polk have managed to steer clear of producing a 150W self-powered ghetto blaster in the PSW150. But no amount of fine adjustment of bandwidth and level could disguise the fact that the PSW150 doesn't have the fastest or most transparent of lower registers. In the world of subwoofers, the Polk's close, but no cigar.

Polk PSW150

£499.90

Polk Audio
Coursers Road,
St Albans,
Herts. AL4 0PG
Tel: 01727 827311

WORLD VERDICT



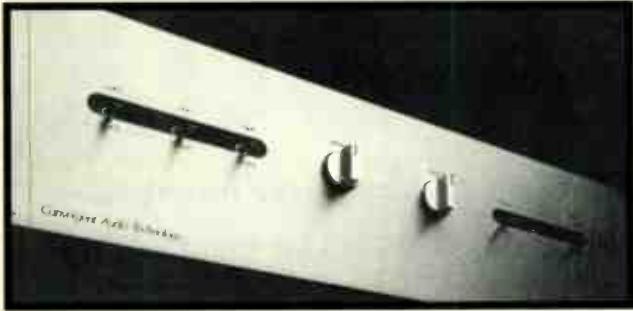
The PSW150 adds depth to a system but can sound obvious at times.

Measured Performance
see p103

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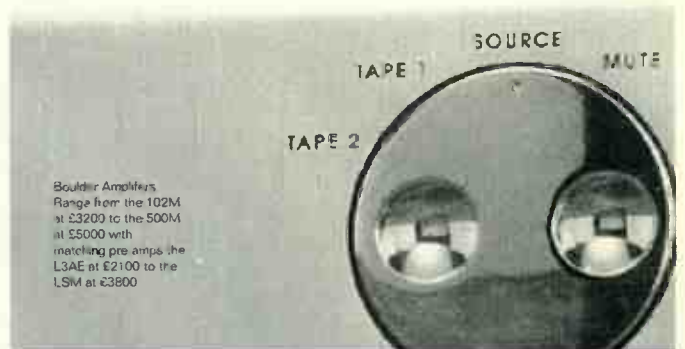
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VINYL STAGES COMEBACK

Nick Tate wonders if vinyl junkies might have something to celebrate in Henley Designs' new HMC100 phono stage.

Henley Designs, previously known as Ortofon UK, offers a range of three phono stages from the £200 HMC50 through the £450 HMC100 tested here to the £750 HMC200, a super-toleranced version for the well-heeled vinyl aficionado. All

treble is hard enough to cut glass. As the HMC100 was originally designed around Ortofon's sweeter Rohmann MC, I swapped cartridges to an Ortofon MC 15 Super 2 which proved far more synergistic.

Even with the MC 15 the Henley was far from warm and cuddly. It was actually very Naim-like - tonally dry but with loads of power, dynamics and get-up-and-go. EMI's new reissue of Kate Bush's *Kick Inside* turned out to be great fun, the HMC100 setting up a large sound stage with masses of midband detail. Although

Kate's falsetto

phono stages outside the realms of super-fi.

Still, as Paul Weller's 'Uh Huh Oh Yeah' showed, like all mortal hi-fi separates the HMC100 has a downside. Put it this way; some people think vinyl, like valves, is all about delicacy, warmth and tonal colour. If you're of this persuasion you won't like this phono stage one bit. Tonally it's dry to the point of making CD players sound sumptuous and it doesn't concern itself with air and space in the way that an EAR 834P does. It simply wasn't up to conveying the delicacy of Weller's guitar or drummer Steve White's laid-back stick work. Rather, their playing came across as a little sterile in an anaemic version of this normally warm analogue recording.

If you're not a lover of the valve sound though, the Henley Design HMC100 is worth a listen. Suitably matched to a smooth moving coil like Ortofon's Rohmann or the more affordable MC 25E (a sweet, musical coil with a falling treble response), the HMC100 would make a fine way of playing your precious vinyl.

are dual mono, IC-based designs with claimed class-leading low distortion and noise. Configuration for any cartridge is also available to order at no extra cost, although the standard set-up suits most modern MCs anyway.

The HMC100 itself is an inconspicuous little affair with nothing but a power LED to catch the eye. Around the back there's the usual gold-plated phono socketry plus a large power connector for the supplied wall plug external PSU. Although the HMC100 can handle both high and low output cartridges, changing between the two requires unscrewing the case and moving a gain switch - something best left to the dealer, say Henley.

Listening started with a Michell Orbe/SME V/Audio Technica AT-0C9 vinyl front end. Unfortunately this combination sounded too caustic for comfort thanks to the cartridge, whose

tones can sometimes grate with medium price phono stages, the Henley

was bright and clear without descending into harshness. Lower down the scale bass drum had real slam, contrasting nicely with the crisp hi-hat sound.

A tight, powerful bass guitar sound greeted me on Corduroy's 'The Joker is Wild' 12in, the HMC100 majoring on the rhythmic accents which give the song its urgency. Likewise on Inner City's 'Good Life', the Roland TB303 bass drum was grippingly powerful, with oodles of drive and wallop. Sound staging on the other hand was good but not quite up to Michell Iso or EAR 834P standards. Paris Grey's vocals projected boldly but I didn't quite get that sense of being inside the recorded acoustic that high-end vinyl can convey. Instead, the Henley concentrated on rhythm, inducing foot-tapping like few other



Henley Designs HMC100 £450

Henley Design,
Chalfont St Peter,
Bucks SL9 9UG
Tel: 01753 889949

WORLD VERDICT



Clean, powerful sound makes it a strong contender. Not the most colourful rendition and bright cartridges should be avoided.

Measured Performance
see p103

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RUN-AMC

Ketan Bharadia surfs the airwaves with AMC's T7 tuner to see if it's a budget winner.



The first thing that struck me about AMC's new T7 tuner was its similarity to NAD products. That's because Taiwan-based AMC once built NAD designs. When this relationship ended, AMC launched their own range. Value is a priority, hence a low price of £129.95. And for this princely sum you even get remote control, as well as FM and AM bands.

The AMC was connected to our reference system with a high quality aerial supplying the feed. The first thing I did was tune into London's Jazz FM. I was just in time to catch 'Killer Joe' by Jack McDuff. The AMC made a good job of conveying the sense of timing of the piece, giving it a suitably 'boppy' feel, but as I carried on listening flaws in the tuner's performance started to surface.

The saxophone on this track flowed well enough but sounded rather grey and flat, more like a cardboard cut-out than the real thing. The double-bass tended to become a lightweight grumble because it also lacked both depth and definition. This was partly as a result of the tonal balance being skewed in favour of the midband and treble.

The subsequent 'Rush, Rush, Quick, Quick' by Joe Henderson just served to confirm my initial impressions. Though once again the sound was fairly rhythmic, the sonic weaknesses were still there. In addition I noticed that when the piece became busy everything

apart from the lead instrument tended to get lost in a hazy background, which made following the music difficult.

Surfing the airwaves I stopped off at Heart FM and sampled 'Ocean Drive' by the Lighthouse Family. Here matters improved. Although the bouncy bass line lacked weight it bubbled along nicely. Vocals were a touch bright but quite well focused and had appealing texture to them. Higher up, treble had a quality that could best be described as a touch 'furry' and blurred. Despite this, the T7 remained enjoyable to listen to.

Turning to Radio 1 and the News brought me back down to earth. The newscaster's voice through the AMC came as a disappointment, with its sibilance and thick, blurred quality.

Switching next to Classic FM and then to Radio 3 I tried the T7 with Classical music. The small scale and bass-light nature of the sound tended to diminish the power of symphonies and whenever the music became demanding the AMC started to sound confused. Switching to AM brought no joy. These wavelengths sounded little better than a conventional 'ghetto blaster'.

AMC's T7 was a let down compared to the quality of the same company's

CDM7 CD player (reviewed in June 1996). For the same kind of money you'd be much better off with Denon's TU260L or Kenwood's KT-2080. Both of these open a better balanced, more transparent window on the airwaves, lacking only the AMC's remote control.

AMC T7 £129.95

AMC
115 New London Road,
Chelmsford,
Essex CM2 0QT
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WORLD VERDICT

Although the T7 has a highly tempting price, its sound quality is poor when compared to rivals.

Measured Performance
see p103

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RETURN TO THE FLAT EARTH

May I begin by commending you on a most entertaining article in your May issue regarding The Flat Response. I have to say that I found TFR and the subsequent Hi-Fi Review had a refreshing candour, which I never felt usurped the mainstream hi-fi press, instead augmenting them. I am of the belief that goodness can be found in most things and whilst TFR did have a bias towards Linn and Naim equipment it did also extol the virtues of quality products from Exposure, Onix, Inca Tech, Ruark, Ion Systems and so on.

The feature prompted me to



The Flat Response wasn't one to pull punches as far as hi-fi was concerned. If equipment didn't come from a few select manufacturers, it was probably going to get a good savaging.

enter the bowels of my garage to dig out all of my old Hi-Fi Review magazines which I have duly read the print off.

I have to inform you all at Hi-Fi World Towers that what I

was reading to all intents and purposes was Hi-Fi World. Your direction may have changed but the rebel element remains. I hope it always will.

I also enjoyed David Price's

LETTER OF THE MONTH

PRE-OWNED PRIDE

Over the past fifteen years I've invested a fair amount of my limited disposable income on hi-fi, both hardware and software. In the past, I've been seduced into the "Buy the latest kit, sonny" mentality, both by shops and, in particular, magazines. How many times have I read that the latest bit of kit is a "vast improvement" and gone out to replace perfectly adequate equipment only to get it home and have to convince my own ears, and those of my wife, that the current addition to the overdraft has made an improvement rather than a difference.

For ten years, despite injections of hard-earned cash, I never heard a "vast improvement", or really, hand on heart, a worthwhile one.

Then I started reading Hi-Fi World and learnt that second-

hand was OK, records could sound good and I could even build kit myself.

The first vast - and I mean VAST - improvement was replacing my new £400 integrated amp (very well reviewed. . .) with a second-hand ten-year-old £400 Naim 42/140 combination.

The second vast improvement was replacing my £200 'speakers (very well reviewed, etc, etc) by building a pair of Ivan Leslie's IPL M3TL transmission line 'speakers at a cost of, you've guessed it, £200. These are stunning and the pride I get from telling people I actually made them is almost as good as the sound.

To front this I have a 'clocked' Marantz CD-42, and, my pride and joy, a Gyrodec with second-hand Alphason HR100 and new Ortofon MC 20 Supreme (thanks to you).

The total cost of all this was

less than £2000. One nice way of putting your hi-fi in context is to go to a good dealer, sit down and quote Madonna - "Impress moi!" Last time I did this I sat and listened to £20000 of CD-fronted consumer durable and could find no area where it was superior to my set-up. So happy, I scuttled off to the second-hand record stall and blew £50 on 'the real thing'.

**Kate and Geoff Husband
Plelauff,
France.**

As you say, there's loads of quality equipment out there at prices perfect for budding system builders and anyone who wants the high-end on a shoestring. Generally, most of the components advertised are very reliable, although the older they get the more likely they are to have problems.

view on the fabulous Harrogate hi-fi shows in the previous issue. I found myself sharing most of his memories. Therefore I am very bitter that plans to resurrect the event are confined to trade only. It seems that the poor enthusiasts are to be denied yet another quality event, especially now the Buxton show won't be taking place. As a once Flat Earther I feel that we, The Enthusiasts, have been forsaken by the agencies which people like myself and TFR once advocated. Now that the big bucks have been made, there seems to be very little regard for the individuals that made the manufacturers' foundations so solid. Maybe I'll organise my own hi-fi

show. To quote Thomas Dolby, "That old flat earth is in your gentle hands."

Steve Petch
Deer Park,
Hartlepool.

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ELECTRONICS MADE SIMPLE



IAN SINCLAIR

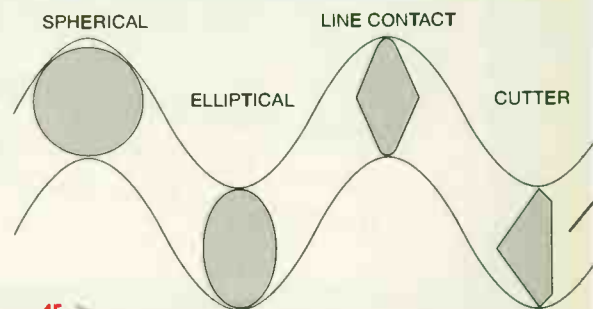
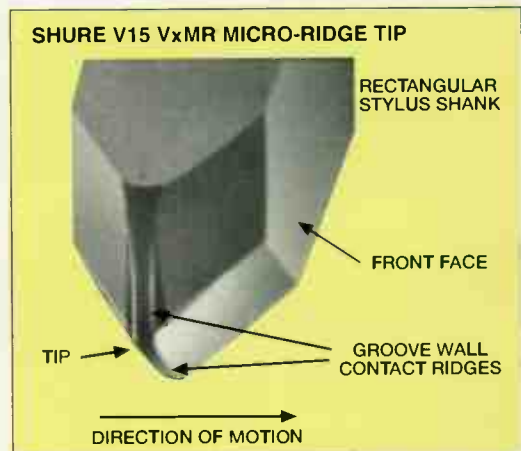
Here's some more reading for you - a copy of *Electronics Made Simple*.

MAKING CONTACT

I would greatly appreciate any comments on the subject of Line Contact styli. These have had some publicity recently and would appear to offer certain benefits:

1) They retain the advantages of elliptical points and the extended contact area will reduce stylus wear compared with spherical or elliptical specimens.

2) The extended contact area will raise the upper resonance and thus ... 45



LETTER OF THE MONTH (CONT.)

Solid-state electronics from the last 10 or 15 years tend to cause few problems. It can be a slightly different matter as far as loudspeakers go. The thing to watch out for here is damaged surrounds. Plus there's the fact that on the whole modern 'speakers under about £1000 are quite a lot better than their predecessors of a decade or so ago.

Record players can again be a good bet. Always check the main bearing for play by rocking the platter at its outside edge. If there's any more than a small (i.e., less than about 0.5mm) amount of play, it's



Just a few of the second-hand bargains worth hunting down: Denon's heavyweight DCD-3560 CD player, Epos ES14 'speakers and Alphason's Symphony turntable.

wide berth. Where older, less expensive turntables often fall down is in the arms they're fitted with, most of which seem to be about as rigid as drinking straws.

Most tape decks from before the late 1970s are well worth steering clear of because cassette was still getting into its audiophile stride then. And if it's digital you're after, the best

probably best to give the deck a

buys can be top-of-the-range models from the late 1980s and early 1990s. JM

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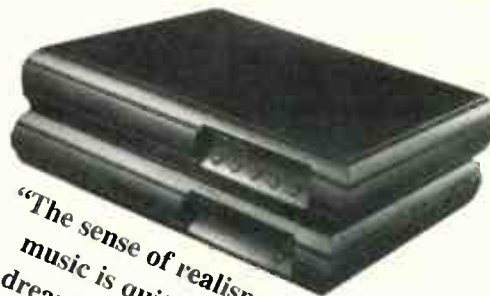


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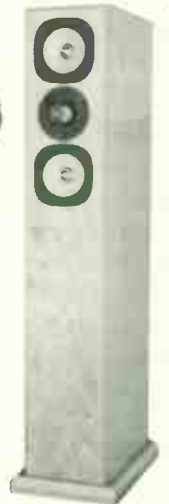
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DaCapo (base unit only, requires filter)	1,400	700
BNC/BNC Hi-Q interconnect cables for DaCapo		25
BNC Re-clock input module for DaCapo	-	49
Toslink input module for DaCapo	-	69
Cordinal CD Player (includes 18 bit filter)	1,680	840
18 bit filter	-	99
Anniversary Turntable with battery PSU	2,390	1,195
<i>Various armboards available - please enquire</i>		
Ventricle Speakers (Cherry & Yew) pair	1,170	585



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Spendor 2030 Floor Stander	599	299
Spendor 2040 Floor Stander	899	449
Spendor 2030 AV System (2010, 2020 & 2030)	1,247	599
Spendor 2040 AV System (2010, 2020 & 2040)	1,547	749

"the deliciously smooth and beautifully projected vocals, delicately performed treble and rich and fruity bass were a real treat."
Dominic Baker, Hi-Fi World



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also reduce wear and facilitate tracking.

3) Parts of the groove will be accessed which spherical and elliptical styli cannot reach and this will enable worn records to sound new again.

Although a confirmed LP lover, I must admit that the stylus is a real headache. Even under excellent conditions I find that for optimum performance, my spherical styli last no more than nine months at an average of ninety minutes per day. Could a line contact model give me improved longevity?
M. A. O'Connor
London.

Line contact styli possess all the benefits you list, for the reasons you state. The basic problem revolves around making a playback stylus accurately fit the groove made by the heated cutting stylus which produces the original.

Benjamin Bauer of CBS Labs. tells us that the ruby cutting stylus requires 35 steps in grinding on a diamond encrusted lap to achieve a very special profile. Its 'dub' (cutting) faces must be finished to two-tenths of one thousandth of an inch to ensure consistent results.

Obviously, a simple spherical tip profile is little like a cutter. The diagrams show how a spherical tip fails to read short wavelengths (high frequencies). Also, it contacts the groove wall at just one point, so it wears quickly. And it follows a different path to the cutter, producing tracing distortion.

An elliptical has a smaller contact radius but still touches at a point. A line contact stylus, like the Shure Micro-Ridge shown, contacts over a long line and can reduce pressure by distributing down-force

over a wider area. It should wear less quickly than a spherical.

In my experience, advanced line profile types do fulfil their promise of clear, better differentiated treble. Both the Goldring Fritz Geiger II shape and the Shure Micro-Ridge offer superb treble clarity.
NK



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A NEW DIRECTION

My current system is an Arcam Alpha 3 amplifier, Marantz CD-52 mk2, Denon

amplifier such as an Audiolab 8000A or Naim Nait 3 or would I get a bigger improvement by upgrading the CD player (Marantz CD-63mkII KI-Sig, NAD 514) or 'speakers (B&W DM602, Celestion Impact 23)? Although more funds will be available in the future, which would be the most effective upgrade right now?

My room is 10.5ft x 10ft x 8.5ft and my musical tastes are extremely varied, ranging from Blues and World to Classical.

B. A. Morgan
Gwynedd,
Wales.

You have a very well balanced system and to be honest any significant upgrade to either the CD, amplifier or 'speakers will have a tendency to unbalance it. But if this is going to be the first in an on-going series of upgrades, I feel a new CD player is in order. At around £500 the obvious choice really is the

Marantz CD-63mkII KI-Signature but also try the Trichord Genesis and Mission dAD3 if your budget will stretch that far. The following upgrade should really be the amplifier. The Roksan Caspian, Sonneteer Campion and Rose Scion come to mind. Leave the 'speakers to last. With the above CD players and amplifiers you might find yourself wanting to hang on to the Missions. KB

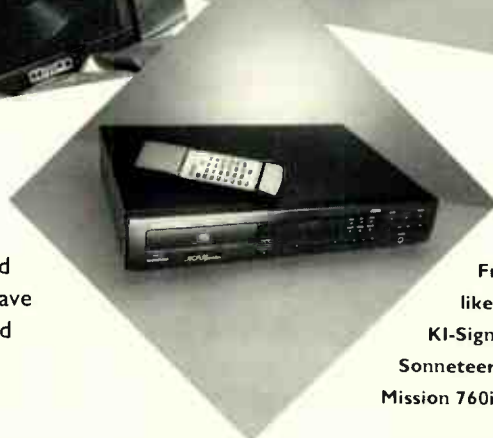
Chord Co. Tel: 01722 331674



Partner your new CD player and amp to be with a set of the Chord Co's Siren interconnects.



DRS-610 cassette deck and Mission 760i 'speakers. I have a budget of about £500 and I'm not sure where my money should be spent. Should I go for a better



Fronted by a CD upgrade like Marantz's CD-63mkII KI-Signature and powered by Sonneteer's Campion amp your Mission 760i 'speakers would really sing.

If you do not want your e-mail address published, please let us know

edit@hi-fiworld.co.uk

www.hi-fiworld.co.uk



WALL OF SOUND

I am in the process of having a semi-detached house built and would like to take the opportunity to build some sound proofing into my new sitting room. The room will be adjacent to my neighbour's lounge so I am hoping some form of sound proofing will enable me to

MATERIAL	THICKNESS	ABSORPTION (%)			
		125	250	500	1k
Brickwork	4in.	5	4	2	4
Coke breeze blocks	3in.	20	45	60	40
Plaster	1in.	5	10	15	15
Polyurethane foam	2in.	25	50	85	95
Rockwool	2in.	35	75	85	70

The absorption of structural materials with frequency. At bass frequencies brickwork relies on weight for effect.

listen to music at reasonable levels without disturbing them too much. Is it possible to do this at a low cost and without compromising the sound of my system? Will the whole room need to be sound proofed or just the adjoining wall?

My system comprises Linn LP12/Lingo/Ekos/K9, Audiolab amplification and Linn 'speakers. Having heard the Linn with some fabulous sounding but expensive MCs, I was wondering if comparable results could be had from less costly MMs or lower priced MCs? Your advice would be much appreciated.

Francis Plunkett
francis_plunkett@ie.ibm.com

You have a great opportunity to design in low sound transmission characteristics. The shared 'party' wall should be double-skinned, like an

external wall, with an air gap as wide as possible to minimise sound transmission. This might take 6-8in or so off the room's length or width but hopefully this will be acceptable. Any shared chimney breast will have to remain of course.

To go further, you could use either a double layer of cheap flettons for your side of the wall or a double

thickness of breeze blocks (preferable). Basically, although the higher weight of brickwork better resists low frequency transmission, breeze blocks absorb sound better than bricks, and

discontinuous insulation is best of all.

A wall of 4.5in brick weighs about 55lb/sq ft and gives a sound reduction factor of 45dB. If the thickness is doubled, the factor rises 5dB to 50dB, and so on. However, discontinuous insulation can provide up to 80dB of absorption. In your case, the sound energy would have to pass through, at minimum, breeze block /air/brick to reach your neighbour, each layer absorbing different frequencies. You will need a good concrete foundation which will carry the load and not transmit sound itself.

The air cavity should be wider (4-6in) than that commonly used for heat/moisture isolation in outside walls and sound insulating Rock Wool can be put into the gap. Also, standard steel ties should be avoided if possible;

special butterfly ties are available. Watch out for flanking paths, which might circumvent all the good work by passing the sound around the wall.

The Goldring 1042 MM cartridge is the closest you'll get to super-high quality at a reasonable price. Ortofon's MC 25FL is a good 'budget' MC but my advice is to avoid cheap MCs. NK

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TO DAC OR NOT TO DAC

I have an audio dilemma. I thought I was happy but...

My system as it stands sounds very clear and dynamic and has given me many hours of aural pleasure. It consists of a Marantz CD-52 mkII SE, a Triangle TE60 integrated amplifier and a pair of Genexxa LX5 Pro loudspeakers, ably

underpinned by a REL Q-Bass subwoofer. The components are connected with Tandy patch chords and QED Qudos loudspeaker cable.

The problem is a friend has offered to sell me his eight-year-old Marantz CD-94 compact disc player at a very fair price. Having had said player on trial for a few weeks I must admit it betters my own player sonically in many areas, sounding more coherent and natural. I am very tempted to buy it.

Would this be a wise purchase or would I benefit more by spending my money on a separate DAC, or even by trading in my own player for a better new model? Whichever option I choose I would not wish to spend more than £500.

I look forward to your valued opinion.

Fergus Wright (E-mail address withheld by request).

I'd go for the CD-94. While the mkII is better than the mkI, the latter still has an impressive bass coupled to great involvement. While the CD-52 mkII SE is a fine budget player, its transport is nowhere near as good as the CD-94's and simply tacking on an outboard DAC wouldn't be your best bet for £500.

There was a phase that fans of the Marantz went



Whether it comes in mkI or mkII guise, Marantz's CD-94 is an impressive CD player.

through about six or seven years ago where a lead plate was bolted to the CD-94's base. It's not the most subtle of modifications but then it had an equally unsubtle effect on sound quality. Bass went deeper and the player sounded more solid and controlled across the spectrum. JM

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MERCY MISSION

Help! I've purchased a second-hand pair of Mission 753 'speakers from my brother-in-law but these are minus the grilles. My 14-month-old son decided that the centre of each cone should be pushed in, so off he went. Is there any way of popping out the dust caps, and with them being pushed in, will this have any affect on the sound?

The rest of my set-up is as follows: Michell Gyrodec and Gyro PSU, RB300 arm and Goldring Elite MC cartridge, 12-year-old Audiolab



For the damaged dust caps on your Mission 753s, the best cure is a new drive unit.

8000A, an old Pioneer CD player (rarely used) and an Aiwa F640 tape deck. Interconnects are Tandy Gold patch and 'speaker cables Heybrook Heywire.

Many thanks and keep up the good work.

Andy Manning
andym@bemac.com

From the number of letters we get involving children 'remodelling' hi-fi it looks almost as if there's some kind of conspiracy going on to stop the use of quality equipment.

You can pop out the dust caps given a bit of care and effort. One way is to push a pin gently through the dust cap and carefully pull the cap back out with it. Unfortunately, there's many a slip 'twixt pin and cap and ripping the dust cap wouldn't be difficult.

If this approach is successful, you can then coat the cap in a hard-drying adhesive, like Resin W wood glue, to give it some strength. However, because of the creases in the cone, it will have lost a lot of its rigidity and its performance in the upper registers will change for the worse.

The only real way to solve the problem is to replace the drivers. (The dust caps alone cannot be replaced). This will cost you £9.00 plus VAT and

£6.00 carriage for each drive unit but is guaranteed to get the 753s working at their best. JM

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The next link in your system - a pair of Siren interconnects from the Chord Co.



UPGRADE FEVER

Thanks for a great magazine. It certainly cheers me up when I get home to find it on the doorstep once a month! Having spent some two years saving up, I have now managed to sell my flat and move into a house, with a separate listening room/sewing room (depending upon who is speaking!) The room is roughly 14ft x 16ft, with two wall mounted Tripos stems located to one side of the now bricked-up fireplace.

My system currently consists of a Linn Intek amplifier, Michell Gyrodec



Two candidates for a system re-vamp are Lyra's excellent Lydian cartridge and a pair of Jamo's Concert 8 loudspeakers

with the Gyropower power supply, RB300 arm, Denon DL304 MC cartridge, Michell Iso pre-amp, Arcam 170.3 transport and BB5 convertor and B&W DM110i 'speakers.

I am looking to upgrade the amplifier. Having listened to a Naim pre/power set-up when buying the Gyrodec, I was amazed at the improvement there. Would I be better off going for a Michell Argo and Alectos though? Do they sound as good as they look? And what about the Audiolab 8000 series as well? I listen mainly to loud Rock and Classical music.

Should I also upgrade the cartridge and arm? Would I notice a serious improvement with an SME IV or V or possibly an Ortofon MC2000?

Finally, what about the B&Ws? The Epos ES25s seem to be well reviewed. Are there any others I should consider?

Price range is fairly flexible - if I find something I really like, I'll just save up a bit more!

Alex Furneaux
alex.furneaux@elcom.co.uk

The Michell Argo and Alecto monoblocs are definitely worth a listen if a smooth, spacious and powerful sound is what you're after. And as you're already using an Iso these would be my first choice. If funds allow, seriously consider adding a Hera



Living Voice Auditorium.

"I had expected these speakers to be hot on tone and dynamics...I wasn't disappointed. Vocals were superb, instrumental timbre was beautifully resolved and any life that could be found in the music was there to walk into. What I hadn't expected was the nimbleness. The fine sense of timing especially in the bass where so many speakers fall down was quite a surprise...you don't often get bass of this quality from a speaker of this driveability and price. In fact I've not encountered this combination; usually this degree of bass resolution costs more money or less sensitivity. Consummate performance at an affordable price."

Hi Fi Choice March 97.

Size 1.0m. x 28cm. x 22cm. Sensitivity 93 dB/w. Amplifiers from 12 watts. £1300. Ring for UK dealer list.

Living Voice Airscout/RW24 Bass Bin.

"...don't expect to find a better speaker system".

Hi Fi Choice Feb 97.

Sensitivity 108 dB/w.

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Airscout £14,750. RW24 Bass Bin £9,500.

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Monarchy Audio M18 DAC. Excellent. New.	£800	£500
Monarchy Audio DIP.	£250	£200
Acoustic Energy AE109.	£330	£220
Impulse H2.5 6, 7		£ Ask
Heybrook Quartet.	£800	£400
Audio Note Quest monos. 3008.	£2750	£1800 pr
Audio Note M2. Line pre-amplifier.	£1000	£675
Audio Note ANSPX s/c, ANV i/c, ANVX i/c, ANVX s/c	£ Ask	£600
Castle Chester Yew	£600	£600
Wilson System V. Black. As new.	£15,000	£10,000
Audio Innovations L2 preamp	£700	£450
RARE AND HARD TO FIND	LIST	SALE
Vitavox AK157 15" Alnico bass unit x2	£800	£450
Vitavox 52 Alnico pressure driver x2	£1800	£900
Vitavox RH 330 4 cell midrange horn x2	£960	£500
Gauss 1702 H.F. units (serious) x2	£880	£400
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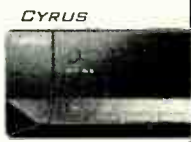
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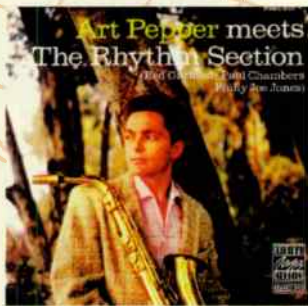
power supply for both the Iso and Argo as this makes these already fine products sound even better. The Audiolabs are another possibility, but I find their presentation a touch too grey and analytical.

Another amplifier pairing to consider is Meridian's 502/557 combination which impressed Jon Marks so much in our December 1996 issue. This combines a natural, rhythmic presentation with plenty of power and control.

Changing the RB300 to either of the SMEs will bring about a very noticeable improvement in sound quality as would the inclusion of a cartridge like the MC2000 or Lyra Lydian.

A 'speaker alternative worth considering alongside the Epos 25s would be Jamo's Concert 8s which we've all been mightily impressed with. The only problem here is that the Jamos need proper stand mounting about 12in-18in off a rear wall; they wouldn't work too well on the Tripods brackets. KB

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KLS9 AGAINST A WALL

My current system comprises Linn LP12 turntable, Ittok arm, Audio Technica AT-07 (moving coil) cartridge,

Cirkus upgrade kit and Quad 33/303 amplifier. Room size is 17ft x 13ft. The present 'speakers are kit KEF-103ABs



With its ports stuffed with long haired wool, KLS9 should work properly hard up against a wall.

built in 1978. This 'speaker performed well when it was placed 2ft away from any boundaries, but is now situated very close to a rear wall and consequently the bass sounds boomy.

My funds are limited. I am therefore interested in building a 'speaker kit, namely your latest KLS9. For domestic reasons they will need to be placed close to a rear wall. Could you give me your opinion of KLS9's performance in this situation. I like a clear and detailed top and midrange with a powerful but not 'boomy' bass. Music preferences are Blues, Rock and Chamber music.

Boris Neen
b.neen@bradford.ac.uk

KLS9 was not designed to go against a wall but because bass output can be damped and reduced significantly by putting long haired wool in the ports it can be tuned to work in this position. And as for KLS9's quality, you might be interested in the

letter below. NK

Newnes Tel: 01865 310366



Help your budding DIY career along with a copy of Electronics Made Simple.



AGGRIEVED ABOUT KLS9

I've never considered a DIY project before, regarding hi-fi as expensive and esoteric. Your DIY Supplement No28 convinced me otherwise. Since finishing the kitchen I've wanted to build something and I reasoned that, if the KLS9s sounded awful, I could always give them to my brother in law! Instead I'm amazed at the sound quality.

Everything is bigger and more detailed and the imaging, as promised, is superb. Treble is smooth and midband excellent, particularly with woodwind and piano. Bass is deep but still fast and not woolly.

Now to a couple of gripes. I'm a little aggrieved that KLS9 sounds so good at the price. How is this? Surely if good equipment was cheaper then more would be sold?

You stated that KLS9 was "a large but not monstrous" loudspeaker. This it is, but large is a subjective term. My wife watched me building them with mounting dismay, even going as far as to say, "You're not putting those in the lounge". I had to sit her down for an extended audition before she admitted that the sound quality was perhaps worth sacrificing a chunk of floor space to. She's still not overjoyed but at least

my brother in law won't be getting his bell wire round their terminals just yet!

Thanks for introducing me to a new experience.

Mike Howard
100422.1257
@compuserve.com

Thank you for your views on KLS9, It's always good to know that other people like the sound of a 'speaker. The pricing of commercial 'speakers suffers in particular from the cost of cabinet making, and the high carriage and packing charges that come from shipping bulky goods. We once offered an MDF flatpack (for KLS1) but never again! When a kit was packed into a box, if it was thrown - a preferred method of handling by the carriage services - the panels broke out of the packing, decapitating the drive units on the way.

You also have to bear in mind dealer margin and VAT. You pay £35 to HM Customs & Excise on a £200 product but £175 on a £1000 product. It is from our hands-on experience that we know the big manufacturers (Mission, Tannoy, etc) really do have costs pared to the bone, especially on budget models. Kits avoid all these costs, so price comparisons are a little unfair. NK

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VALVE BOOKS

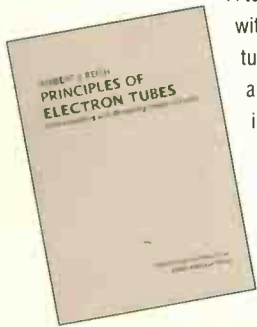
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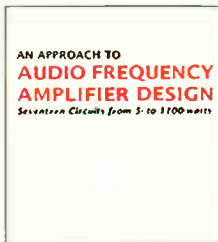
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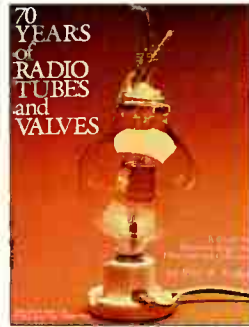
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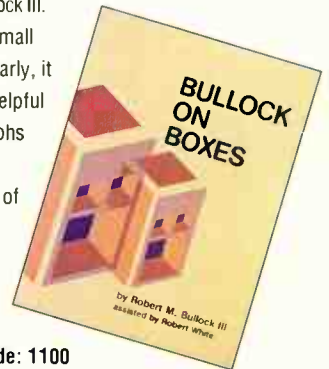
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Outlines the evolution of radio receiving tubes and the part they played in the domestic radio receiver. A reference for those interested in the history and development, and collectors alike.
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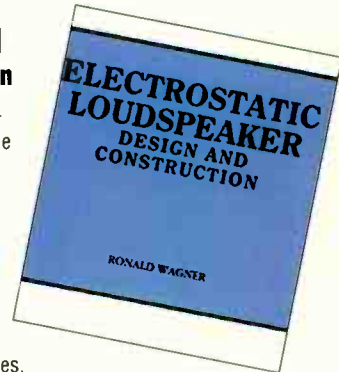
Electronic Universal Vade-Mecum - Piotr Mikolajczyk & Bohdan Paszkowski.

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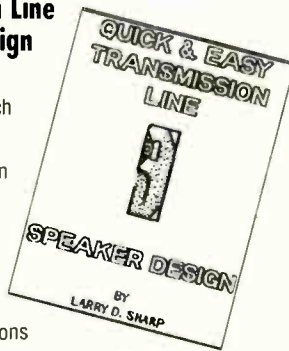
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- Ronald Wagner.
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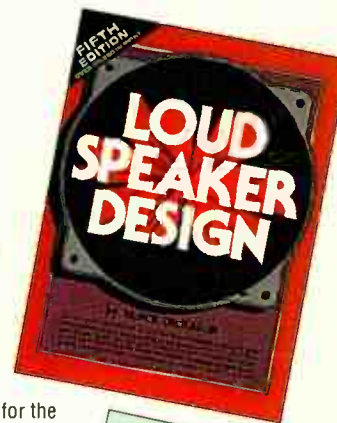
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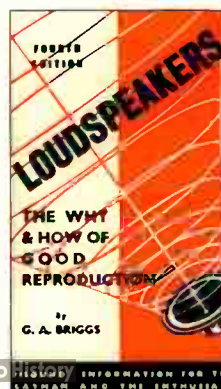
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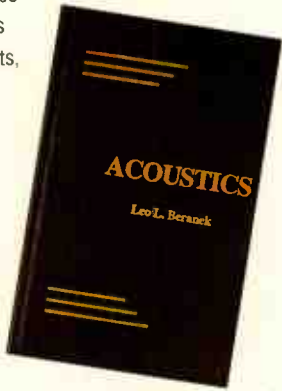
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DIAMOND PERFORMER

Fully paid-up member of the Vinyl Lovers club Jon Marks goes for a spin with DNM's £255 Aciore MC cartridge.

The Aciore moving coil (MC) cartridge from DNM is based on Goldring's Eroica. The standard Eroica uses a Geiger II stylus (like the 1042MM), replaced by a Geiger S in the Aciore. The profile of the S more closely approximates the shape of the stylus used in a cutting lathe. There's also an upgraded coil assembly and cantilever, as well as higher tolerancing on the other parts that go into the Aciore.

The DNM was bolted first into the headshell of an SME Series V tone-arm mounted on a modified Technics SP-10 MkIIIP direct drive turntable and then used on our in-house Garrard 401/SME 312 combo.

Letting the stylus slip gently into the lead-in groove of Rosie Vela's seductive if rather processed Zazu album, I quickly found the Aciore has quite a punchy, up-beat sound. Throughout this album, drum machine bass lines strode along purposefully with a dynamism that made CD sound flat and unexciting by comparison. Cymbal crashes provided incontrovertible proof of the Aciore's speed and clean top end, the ringing of every individual rivet clearly delineated.

Moving on to a Decca pressing of Mussorgsky/Ravel's Pictures at an Exhibition, I found the same focus and speed that had been obvious with Zazu. Here, it helped give crescendos real verve and impact, cellos in particular sounding impressively substantial. There was also an attractive impression of space around individual instruments which were themselves solidly located

within the side-to-side and back-to-front spread of the orchestra. Helping instruments preserve their own identities rather than blurring together was a broad tonal spread. There was



some hardness in the upper treble though, which could give a slightly steely edge to percussion.

A Deutsche Grammophon pressing of Beethoven's Symphony No3 Eroica with Herbert von Karajan at the tiller of the Berlin Philharmonic orchestra obviously suited the Aciore right down to the ground, the cartridge relishing the vitality of the opening movement. Here the DNM contrasted strongly with the Goldring XL VX reviewed in the previous issue, which dealt much less energetically with this piece.

A spell of high power skank with Bob Marley and the Wailers from their Confrontation album found me lowering arm height a fraction to help compensate for a slight brightness in the upper midrange. But the Aciore had no

problem putting tight, controlled bass into the Reggae rhythms of this LP to come up with a refreshingly listenable rendition. John Lee Hooker's Blues came through the DNM loud and clear too, carried on storming bass lines and an ability to capture the emotion in the music. Running through a DPA 50S phono stage and fitted to the Garrard 401, the Aciore was assembling the kind of performance that comes close to equalling an evening of live music.

Without a doubt, DNM's Aciore is one of the most engaging and dynamic cartridges I've come across in quite a while. And considering the fact that any cartridge, not just an MC, can be traded in on the DNM, reducing its standard price of £255 to £175, it looks like a bit of a bargain ●

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WORLD VERDICT

Dynamism and subtlety mix in the Aciore to produce very enjoyable results.

Measured Performance
see p103

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Through the late Eighties and early Nineties I watched the LP slowly vanish from the racks of London's Oxford Street music superstores. Finally, it ended up in small sections that seemed to be a repository for odds and ends; some golden oldies like Deep Purple, a few modern releases as desultory acknowledgements to the medium and, of course, lots of unknown dross. Meanwhile, down in the glossy entrance halls, punters including myself streamed past shelves bursting with the latest CDs. Obviously, this was where the commercial action lay.

What was happening on the ground seemed to reflect the story told by sales statistics issued by the British Phonograph Institute (BPI). From a peak of 91million units sold in 1975, LP sales had fallen to just 4.5million in 1994. These, I thought, were LP's final days, since until recently the reactionary music biz., stuck on the digital tramline, has been dead against vinyl.

Then someone said, "Take a look at Virgin. They've got a lot of new LPs". Sure enough, in the entrance hall, bravely peering out from a sea of CDs were more than just a few LP covers, looking bright and eye catching. That's because they were LP versions of today's bands, with jazzy modern graphics. I grabbed a handful and trotted off.

What a surprise to find that with some LPs, like *Free Peace Sweet* by Dodgy, recording quality was superb. In fact, it was arguably better than it had ever been. Friends in the music biz. told me that EMI's historic pressing plant at Hayes, Middlesex, was in fact flat out pressing LPs. Sensing a story, we got on the telephone.

The Hayes site is impressive. Built at a time when Britain's gross

national product was bigger than any other country in the world except the emerging United States, and when EMI sold 78s then LPs around the world, it even had its own railway. Nowadays the huge white blocks lie mostly empty. But the news is good. After

Mysteries from Noel Keyword

of demand they were producing heavier LPs too. So sound quality remains an issue, just as I had expected from my own experiences with modern pressings.

What of the future? The Hayes operation remains safe whilst it continues to make a profit. But in the

"What a surprise to find that with some LPs, like Free Peace Sweet by Dodgy, recording quality was superb. In fact, it was arguably better than it had ever been."

merging with Thorn Lighting, EMI these days is doing so well it is trying to de-merge. It bought Virgin from Richard Branson to add to its portfolio of HMV record stores.

But how about the people at Hayes? They were sanguine about their future. Warned four or five years ago that LP pressing at EMI was likely to cease altogether, they know the score. The bottom line, however, is that their operation continues to make a profit. As a result, because of demand it is in the process of expansion, no less. What took me aback though was their continued commitment to improving quality.

While Bob Bailey at Hayes prefers to turn out relatively thin, 'non-audiophile' LPs (they are less likely to warp in production) he did acknowledge that because

background LP sales, according to the BPI, continue to slide. They sunk to an all-time low of just 2.4million units in 1996.

Globally, the LP has just about died out, but there are a few notable exceptions. In Europe, only the British buy LPs in any quantity (2.4m). Germany comes second with 0.4m.

In the world's most populous nations, namely China, India and Indonesia, the LP is virtually unknown. In Asia however, Japan is an avid consumer, purchasing 7.6m LPs during 1996.

Vinyl freaks will be disappointed with the USA, which has been quick to turn its back on the LP, buying only 2.9m in 1996. South of the equator things hot up though - Colombia bought 2.1m and Brazil 1.6m.



GIOVANNI DADOMO Sometime in the Eighties I believe, I remember reading a wonderfully entertaining yet succinct music review in NME. Beautifully descriptive, it made me chuckle. I also felt I understood what the music was about, unusual for the NME. The writer was Giovanni Dadomo. I stayed with the NME until he disappeared. Much later World contributor Eric Braithwaite told me he knew a Rock music reviewer keen to write for us. His name was Giovanni Dadomo. I could hardly believe our good fortune.

I'm sitting outdoors in a street cafe in Kuala Lumpur, far, far away from Britain, having an animated conversation with Kuldeep Singh, hi-fi reviewer for the Malaysian Star newspaper. "Noel", he said pointedly, "the best writer you've got - and he's brilliant - is Gio".

Gio loved to hear just the smallest bit of praise and appreciation of his work, for he put everything into it. I'm sure that many others like myself in Britain and Kuldeep in Malaysia appreciated his writing just as much. Sadly, Gio was suddenly taken ill recently and died in hospital, aged 48.

Our thanks go to Paul Greenfield of Classique Sounds for the loan of the Rogers Junior valve monoblocs reviewed last month.

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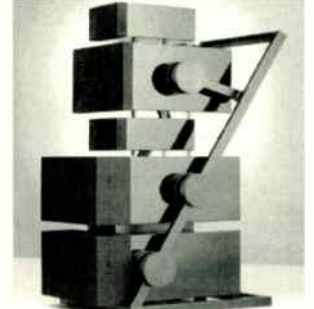


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GENERATION

Nick Tate auditions the latest incarnation of Marantz's budget CD supermodel, the CD-67SE.



Occasionally a hi-fi manufacturer hits the jackpot with a product offering just the right mix of price and performance. Everyone's happy until replacement time comes round, when 'fave rave' manufacturers usually throw it all away, unable to improve upon what went before. There's one company that keeps the magic going from one generation to the next, right up to their new CD-67SE CD player - Marantz.

Based on 1994's CD-63SE, it features the same Philips CDM12 transport, Bitstream DAC and filter. Changes consist of the transport servo and driver IC (for faster track access time), a new CD7 digital decoder chip (instead of the CD-63SE's CD6), the transformer windings (using purer wire) and the HDAM (Hyper Dynamic Amplifier Modules) output

amps, their shielding upgraded from chrome to copper plating.

So rather than revolutionary high-tech trickery, it's steady as she goes. Features are minimal, the only concession to convenience being the remote operated digital volume control.

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Listening to the CD-67SE I found it comes across as a very refined player, demonstrating the kind of poise you simply don't expect at the price. All the Japanese competition sound forward and rather mechanical next to its sweet, even balance. Give it a song and the Marantz gets to its heart in a natural, effortless way. And despite its ease and fluidity, the '67SE remains extremely detailed and controlled, bettering all its rivals in this respect.



the song's complex layers of sound while kicking out huge tracts of bass. Where lesser machines lose the plot completely, this player sounded utterly composed and in control, conveying the song's dynamic contrasts better than any previous budget Marantz I've heard. Sound staging was another forte, with tight image location between the 'speakers, and excellent low level detail.

Herbie Hancock's 'I Have a Dream'

Barry Wordsworth conducting an RPO performance of Ravel's Bolero found the Marantz an accomplished all-rounder. Rather than majoring on rhythms and dynamics like the Arcam Alpha 7 CD player, the Marantz's strengths were detail, subtlety and control. It dug deep into the recorded acoustic and conveyed the orchestra and hall with uncanny accuracy. Still, compared to the Arcam the '67SE could sometimes seem rather analytical. Rather than fizzing with energy and enthusiasm, it preferred to keep its feet on the ground and get on with the job of playing music as neutrally as possible, an approach that many, especially Classical music buffs, will appreciate.

The CD-67SE is the rightful heir to Marantz's budget CD player crown. Combining its predecessor's smooth musicality with extra focus and grip, this new player is back at the top of its class and can even hold its own in far more expensive company. Hate to say it, but Marantz have done it again.

Marantz CD-67SE £349.99

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WORLD VERDICT ○○○○○

Evolutionary improvements make the CD-67SE the best in its class and a very refined listen for the money.

Measured Performance
see p103

Take Galliano's 'Stoned Again', which is normally not much fun on a budget player, sounding thin and one-dimensional. Through the Marantz vocals were beautifully smooth, bass impressively deep and natural and hi-hats rich and velvety. Compared to a £600 Cyrus dAD3 the CD-67SE was actually brighter and more punchy with stronger, deeper bass. Only the Cyrus's superior depth perspective showed where the Marantz was falling short.

Moving to Bassheads' 'Is There Anybody Out There?', this player worked its magic again, holding together

was also a treat. Again, the rather metallic, artificial character of most budget players doesn't do much for this sweet analogue recording, but the CD-67SE was different. Its rich tonality, powerful bass and silken treble were just the job. Whereas this recording's brass section can often strip wallpaper at fifty paces, it was clean and throaty through the Marantz. Comparison with the more expensive Cyrus showed it was getting most things right, the only obvious difference being a slight flattening of the sound stage and a hint of metallic edge to cymbals.

windings, Black Gate digital supply capacitors, upgraded analogue output circuitry.

CD-63

Philips CDM12 linear tracking transport, NPC Bitstream DAC, upgraded servos and filters, high slew rate HDAM analogue output stage, metal chassis.

CD-63SE

As above plus new internal bracing, upgraded OFC wound transformer,

new base plate, copper HDAMs, extra case ventilation.

CD-67

435mm case, CD7 decoder, new servo and driver IC, improved digital servo, improved transformer material and wiring.

CD-67SE

As above plus improved chassis, copper HDAMs, stronger bracing, higher quality transformer core.

Marantz Mods

Five years of tweaking that made the CD-67SE.

CD-52

Philips CDM4 swing arm transport, Philips SAA7350 Bitstream DAC, plastic helix chassis, standard op-amp analogue output stage.

CD-52SE

As above plus OFC transformer

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Following in the path of the original and extremely well received Assemblage DAC-1, the DAC-2 appears to be another big hit with customers and reviewers alike. The DAC-2 builds on the strengths of the original DAC-1, with its dual Burr-Brown PCM 1702 20 bit DACs, Crystal CS8412 input receiver, toroidal power transformer and Analog Devices based output stage, but adds HDCD capability with the PMD-100 digital filter chip, an extra co-ax digital input on a BNC jack, a phase invert switch, three more power supply regulation stages with greatly increased power supply capacitance, and improved parts quality in the analog output stage. The best news is that all these improvements come with a very small price, the DAC-2 digital processor kit is \$499.00 U.S.! Of course, the DAC-2 also comes with our 30 day satisfaction guarantee, two year limited warranty, AND our assembly guarantee (If you can't get it to work, we will!).

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Mitsuru Yoshioka, MJ Magazine (Japan) Dec. 1996

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"The DAC-2 is the best D/A I've ever had in my system, revealing musical details on familiar recordings that I was previously unaware of."

Muse Kastanovich, Stereophile, Vol. 20 No. 1, January 1997

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Robert Harley, Stereophile, Vol. 20 No. 1, January 1997

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What riled me about the launch of CD was how Fleet Street happily printed everything Philips told them about the new format, without a single question or quote mark. It was digital, so it was perfect - Philips said so, so the media said so. Next, every Sunday Supplement you could shake a bag of muesli at was proclaiming vinyl's imminent demise. CD was perfect, so what was the point of LPs now?

Nowadays CD is old news - an entire generation's grown up with it as their standard music carrier. MiniDisc's still a fairly well kept secret as far as the buying public is concerned and DVD audio isn't quite ready yet. So what can Colour Sup. scribes do for a quick story these days? Resurrect vinyl of course!

This spring the broadsheets carried some fascinating featurettes like The Observer's "Classic vinyl turns tables on CD" on Sunday 9th March. Whatever happened to all the "Ten Ways to Dispose of Your Old Record Collections" headlines? I was getting confused. Wasn't CD supposed to be the best thing since Sam Fox and shoulder pads?

The plot goes like this. Record giant EMI decides to reissue some 'classic' albums on vinyl as part of its centenary celebrations. Vinyl is chosen because it's still a great promotional tool - many new albums are initially available on LP so record shops can make eye-catching displays at the front of the sales area. But 'spin' is applied judiciously and PR men are suddenly waxing lyrical on black plastic's wonderful qualities.

Faster than you can say 'press release', Observer scribe Martin Wroe has taken up the story: "Forget the Mini-Disc, the Digital Compact Cassette, the CD, even the cassette. The music industry is turning to a new format - vinyl". But haven't journo's been

audiophilia

David Price



telling us vinyl's dead for the last fifteen years? He continues, "the industry believes there is a demand for the reissue of albums originally only released on vinyl". Well I never. There's me throwing out

licence' - the music industry isn't turning back to vinyl. In this instance it's EMI with a few classic reissues. And the reissues aren't necessarily better than the originals because they're either digitally

release on a Sunday Sup. newsdesk. Like Philips' fabled CD launch of fifteen years ago, it's a case of hype overtaking good journalism, of the deaf leading the blind.

The irony is that there is a vinyl revival of sorts but not just because EMI says so. Believe The Observer article and you'd think the only ones buying vinyl are those who originally bought it first time round, the Smashy and Nicey, Emerson, Lake and Palmer brigade. But this couldn't be more wrong. Hundreds of new Techno, Rock, Indie and Jazz titles come out on vinyl every month - as vinyl specialist Diverse Vinyl's new release list proves. And it's also sad that the feature forgets

the small matter of the vast, international vinyl-based Dance music scene that's kept ye olde plastic disc alive for the past ten years. Hmmm. . .

So, thanks to The Observer for taking the time to publicise vinyl, even if you did get it slightly wrong. But it does make you wonder when the national daily press still seems to print exactly what big music multinationals want them to: Philips, 1983; 'CD's here, so buy our CDs'; EMI, 1997; 'Vinyl's coming back so buy our vinyl'. In an increasingly complex world, I guess it's reassuring to know some things never change.

"Whatever happened to all the "Ten Ways to Dispose of Your Old Record Collections" headlines? I was getting confused. Wasn't CD supposed to be the best thing since Sam Fox and shoulder pads?"

my old record collection because you said it was worthless and now you're telling me there's a demand!

And it gets better: "Oddly, the records, though not re-recorded, sound better than originally because each is 'direct metal mastered'". Well, I better go straight down to the record shop and buy them all then! And get this: "Some people think vinyl sounds fuller than other formats", says MusicWeek's Martin Talbot. No! You're having a laugh!

Alright, alright, let's pause for a moment to let reality intrude. Yes, Martin is using a little 'journalistic

remastered, or - trainspotters take note - mastered on EMI Abbey Road's Neumann lathes which have used digital delay lines since about 1985. And the fact that they're all Direct Metal Mastered isn't so much a guarantee of excellence as a veritable hornets' nest of controversy. Contrary to what EMI press people would have you believe, DMM doesn't automatically sound better. Many think otherwise, while vinyl specialists like Mobile Fidelity won't touch it with a barge pole.

So this story, I'm sorry to say, is beginning to look about as weighty as a press

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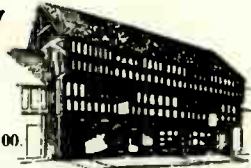
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DRAWING A BLANK

Jon Marks, a man well acquainted with the cassette, discovers that blank disc quality is an issue with MD too.

MiniDisc is a digital format which should, in theory, record identical sets of numbers onto blank discs from different manufacturers. As we've found when listening to various MD recorders though, this isn't the case in practice - recordable MiniDiscs have their own characteristic sounds. . .

TDK MD-XG 74, £7.03

The TDK produces clean, tidy recordings with nice extension at either end of the spectrum. Treble is precise, as is the midrange, and bass packs a hefty wallop. Counting against these pluses is the fact that the TDK's



overall presentation is rather mechanical - recordings seem to lose their vitality, sounding rather processed, and sound staging lacks the depth to match fine width.

MAXELL MD 60, £5.99

The MD 60 is similar in overall character to the TDK. Where it pulls ahead is in its superior tonal resolution. Violins, for example, which could sound hard and glassy at times on the TDK,



had greater sweetness and resonance. The Maxell also had a greater sense of involvement because it managed to capture more of the dynamic subtlety in the music.

MAXELL GOLD MD 74, £7.99

Immediately obvious is the fact that this Gold MD is quite a lot better than either of the two aforementioned discs. It has a superbly natural, detailed sound that gives recordings a seductively engaging quality. Tonal colour was very good indeed and there was a welcome lack of hardness in the upper



registers. The sound stage took on extra depth as well. There's no doubt this blank MD allows a good MiniDisc machine to make recordings that would put the wind up many a Nakamichi.

MAXELL MD-PRO 74, £14.99

Cast in much the same mould as the Maxell Gold, the Pro disc offered a similarly sumptuous tonal range and spacious acoustic. Where it went beyond the Gold was in its transparency, which revealed the full orchestral perspective on Classical recordings. Instrumental textures were also better, with violins and cellos



sounding superbly natural. Mind you, with a price tag of £15, the Pro disc should sound good!

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meet your maker

Vintage Virtues

by Haden Boardman



Leak launched the Sandwich loudspeaker back in 1962, not that you'd be in any doubt as to its vintage from the styling. Later cabinets were finished in Formica



Unlike most loudspeakers of its day, the Leak's mid/bass unit was mounted on the front of the baffle with the tweeter attached to the grille.

rather than the real teak or walnut veneers of the early models. I suppose this was considered very tasteful and modern at the time, though the 'speaker still looks smart today.

The build quality is exemplary. When most 'speaker makers were still using the traditional construction method of a detachable cabinet back panel with the drivers bolted to the rear of the front baffle, Leak were very much ahead of the

field by bolting the bass unit into the cabinet front and the tweeter into the grille. The bass unit was also clamped at its rear to the enclosure's back wall, enhancing the cabinet's rigidity as well as providing a better cabinet seal. And the enclosure was carefully proportioned to avoid resonances and boom, with dimensions in a 5:3:2 ratio. Cabinet weight is a fairly substantial 50lbs.

The name 'Sandwich' refers to the cone construction method, which



The Sandwich's cones are made of two thin sheets of aluminium glued to an expanded polystyrene inner.

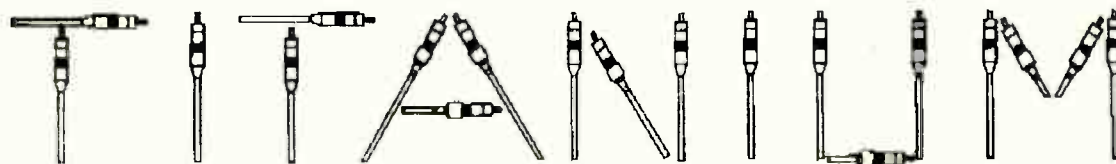
was pioneered by a very clever engineer called Donald Barlow, who started at Leak in 1959. He had previously worked as a research engineer in the aluminium industry, where he presumably came up with the Sandwich concept.

Mr Barlow wanted greater rigidity than traditional paper or metal cones could offer. So he used a sandwich of two thin aluminium outer skins (0.001in thick for the bass units and 0.00035in for the tweeter) glued on to a filling of expanded polystyrene (nearly half an inch thick in the woofers). As a result, the 12in bass cones weigh just under 35grams and are some two hundred times more rigid than paper equivalents. This allowed Harold Leak to demonstrate



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Harold J. Leak demonstrates immense stiffness of piston action 'Sandwich' diaphragm which supports his weight below plate glass square

their strength by actually standing on one, with the cone in perfect health.

Both units have substantial Alnico ring magnets, large pole plates, cast chassis, over-hung voice coils and modern-style half-roll surrounds. Crossover occurs at 900Hz, using a half-section

The sound quality of these units is pretty good, with some coloration in the upper midrange due to a tweeter anomaly at 5kHz. Bass is punchy and clean and, for a 'speaker of this era, very fast. It's fairly flat down to 60Hz where it starts rolling off at around 12dB per octave. The sandwich cone construction has paid dividends here, with low levels of distortion and audible coloration.

The top-end is provided by that almost extinct type of tweeter, the cone. Cones don't spray treble all over the place like modern dome tweeters and because of this you have to sit very much on the Leak's axis for maximum treble extension. The tweeter does, however, deliver a

very clear treble and a well placed stereo image. It's main disadvantage is an upper limit of about 15kHz.

The Sandwich is very relaxed and laid-back compared to more modern designs, many of which tend to exaggerate bass at around 100Hz and treble at around 10kHz. As such, on first auditioning, the Leak can sound a little flat. But give it some time and its qualities will come shining through. Stands about 80cm-1m high are about right with the 'speaker positioned fairly close to a rear wall (but do avoid putting them in corners, especially on wooden floors).

The real good news is the price which the Sandwiches can be bought for. It is almost unheard of for an immaculate set to command anything above £100, odd veneered pairs less and singles almost nothing.

Why? Harold Leak sold the company to the Rank Organisation, who merged operations with Wharfedale at Idle, near Bradford. In the 1970s, hundreds of similar loudspeakers were 'cloned' from the Sandwich. These have nothing to do with the superb engineering in the 1960s' units. The company that brought you amplifiers with 0.1% distortion, Troughline tuners and Sandwich 'speakers ended up badge-engineering equipment made in the



Using a similar Sandwich-style flat diaphragm was Sony's APM 141ES from 1993.

Far East. Basically any other Leak loudspeaker and especially those with a Rank badge on the back can be regarded as inferior, in my view. Rank ended up pulling the plug on Leak in April 1982.

No spares are available for Leak loudspeakers. If a unit blows, then you've had it. Try carefully before you buy - the drivers are reasonably tough but not indestructible.

The most annoying thing about the Sandwich is the input terminal, which is a rather bizarre twin-pin plug. As it's normally missing, I usually lightly sand the pins on the back of the cabinet and solder 'speaker cable directly on to them - this avoids another 'dry' connection.

In more recent times, there has been a few more developments on the sandwich theme. Both Technics and Sony have produced reasonably successful flat diaphragm loudspeakers using an aluminium honeycomb centre with thin aluminium covers (APM 22ES or SB-F2 anyone?) Just for the record, Barlow also looked at using either an aluminium or paper honeycomb but ruled the idea out as a cone is much stiffer than a flat diaphragm.

I do find it a bit of a mystery as to why Leak's Sandwiches have a 'no good' reputation. They are reasonably efficient (by modern standards), not too large, easy to find and, correctly used, offer fine sound quality. Both the Point One amplifier and the Troughline tuner have been covered here before. The Sandwich is the final link in the Leak chain and the most underrated in my view.



Both woofer and tweeter (shown here) use substantial high efficiency Alnico magnets.

(12dB octave) circuit.

The whole system is not massively efficient - somewhere around 92dB watt - and will only really handle about 12W of power. In an average British front room that is still enough to produce levels on the wrong side of 100dB, which, frankly, is loud. Overall impedance is an easy 15Ω, dipping to around 11Ω at 5kHz. This is ideal for most valve amplifiers and means the unit is fairly safe with transistor equipment as long as good judgement over volume levels is used.

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Harmonic distortion	0.009% (1kHz)
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Output:	2.0V rms
analog	0.5p-p/75 ohm (Coaxial)
digital	8-times oversampling
D/A converter	4 pole CHV filter
Analog filter	2D parallel objective lens drive, 3 beam laser pick-up
Pick-up type	GaAlAs semiconductor laser
Laser type	760-805 nm
Wavelength	10 watts
Power consumption	440 x 95 x 340mm (WxHxD)
Dimensions	Height includes feet
Weight	5.1 kgs
Standard accessories	Remote control unit, Batteries (2 x SUM-4, "AAA", R03")

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E10 INTERGRATED AMPLIFIER

Power output	2 x 40 watts 8 Ω
	75 watts per channel 4 Ω
THD	Typically < 0.005% at 1kHz
Frequency response	10Hz-20kHz +1dB
Damping factor	290
Inputs	MM and 5 Line
Input sensitivity	MM 3.5m V 47 K Ω
	Line 300m V 47 K Ω
	MM 70dB 'A' weighted
S/N ratio	Line 103dB 'A' weighted
Power consumption	150 watts
Dimensions	440 x 95 x 340 mm (W x D x H)
	Height includes feet
Weight	9kgs

"On test the E10 produced **an excellent set of results**"

"The E10 is a **fine example** with a rich sound, full of detail and with a smoothness about the treble which is not too often accomplished..."

"...right up to its overload point it **gave immense musical pleasure**..."

"All the above adds up to **remarkably good value for money** from a well conceived and stylish design..."

Gramophone

"...the E10 is special. It has a big spacious sound, with more than usually explicit lateral and depth imaging, which makes it easy to follow instrumental or vocal strands." "...eminently well qualified...especially if you value a fluid expressive quality above glitz, obviousness and grain, which remain common currency at this price." "The rest of the amp **makes few concessions to its price**, and overall this is a thoroughly well turned out design..."

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E 50 Tuner

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Alternate channel selectivity	55dB±400 kHz
Image rejection	60dB approx
IF frequency	10.7 MHz
IF rejection	80dB
Antenna impedance	75 Ohms
THD	0.5% @ 75 kHz deviation
Stereo separation	>45dB
S/N ratio	mono - 78dB
	stereo - 70dB
Output	1.4 Volts/1K output impedance
Power consumption	10 watts
Dimensions	440 x 95 x 340mm (W x H x D)
	Height includes feet
Weight	5 kgs

"The performance of this tuner makes it a good match for the E10 amplifier and well worth consideration in its own right."

Gramophone

"Fed with a signal from a decent roof-top areal the E50 did everything a tuner should....**this thing is terrific with voices**."

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"...the E50 is a killer."

Hi-Fi News & Record Review

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from
Dominic Todd,
 our man in
 retailing



independent retailers often have the advantage of selling specialist equipment larger retailers can't get hold of, either because of exclusivity or limited production levels. This gives them something of a niche market which, by definition, is fixed. Also, the larger manufacturers still frequently offer the smaller independents 'attractive deals' at special rates. The retailer's buying price is often dictated more by loyalty and prompt payment than by the volume actually sold. So independent dealers aren't as hard done by as some would have you believe.

In spite of appearances on Tottenham Court Road and the like, it's interesting to note that most (if not all) retailers would prefer to sell something at RRP. Basic common business sense dictates that anyone who went into the hi-fi separates market wildly cutting prices simply wouldn't last the distance. Yes, there are end-of-line discounts, sales and promotions, but full scale price wars on current products are far rarer than you might think.

Whether this a good thing or not is again debatable. On the one hand, the consumer is having to pay a little bit more in the short term. But on the other, it means that in the longer term, come upgrade time, there is still a variety of shops to choose from.

It may sound as though I'm sitting on the fence here, but I think it's an issue that can't be clearly decided one way or the other. There needs to be a grey area, or a balance, if you like. And, at the moment, I think we've got the balance about right to protect our industry and still give the consumer a fair deal. If you're a bargain hunter like me, this may be a bit of a disappointment but don't forget, there's always second-hand!

provides protection for their brand image and controls output levels so that consumers aren't left waiting for months for a particular product. And smaller independent retailers need to make a profit to cover their services.

Hi-fi separates are

All this put me in mind of the recent media accusations of price fixing within the electrical retail trade. Although hi-fi separates only account for a small segment of this and require more specialist services of a retailer, the point is still relevant.

The debate focuses

"There's no need for a retailer to go that bit further if they feel the competition down the road isn't going to offer the unit at a lower price."

around the infamous Recommended Retail Price (RRP) and the way it is adhered to by both large and small retailers alike. The price is set by manufacturers who are usually keen not to see their product devalued by price wars. Yet despite the fact that it's now illegal for manufacturers to demand that the RRP is religiously adhered to, supplies of products to dealers refusing to toe the line can be limited. Consumer groups feel this isn't in customers' best interests, resulting in artificially high prices. Needless to say, much of the industry is split over the issue.

Many feel that the RRP system ensures the survival of both the smaller manufacturers and distributors and retailers. For the manufacturer, it

unique in the electrical trade in that time needs to be spent with the customer in order to make the right choice. Hence demonstration rooms, consultations and perhaps even home visits and after-sales care are essential.

Against this is the argument that the RRP causes not just a lack of competition but a drop in service standards. Fixed prices may be reassuring for some retailers but without competition, retailers can become complacent. There's no need for a retailer to go that bit further if they feel the competition down the road isn't going to offer the unit at a lower price.

I can understand both sides of the argument. However, there are a few additional points to bear in mind.

The first is that the

I remember shopping for a radio/cassette alarm clock, Christmas money in hand, in January 1986. My parents were keen for me to get a bargain, so we decided to confront Tottenham Court Road. It looked just the sort of place I'd get a bargain - loads of electronics shops close together would mean plenty of choice and highly competitive prices.

Three hours later, with fractious parents in tow, I came away with a Philips unit that I'd managed to secure with a £5 (or about 10%) discount. I suppose it was fun for a while but it was exhausting as well and left me thinking, "What's the point?" The choice was certainly there, but where were the real bargains? I'd probably have got just the same deal at my local Dixons or Argos.

March 1996 and here I am in Tottenham Court Road again. And do you know what? Nothing has really changed. This time it's high-end hi-fi separates I'm interested in, yet the promise of bargains is as illusive as ever. Sure, the choice is here as well as some of London's more prestigious hi-fi shops. There's a few end-of-line discounts and there also seems to be half the UK allocation of Technics L1210 Limited Edition turntables on show, but no real bargains.

feature

VIVA VINYL

Jon Marks and Noel Keywood visit EMI's famous Hayes factory to find out what's happening with the LP. Is it recovering, or is news of its death just premature?

The year was 1983 and the words on everybody's lips were, "Perfect sound forever." Philips had just unleashed CD onto an analogue world where vinyl had ruled the roost



Just outside the press shop sits the high pressure steam boiler that feeds the 'stampers'.

without competition since the demise of the 78 in the 1950s. Ten years later, LP's share of the market had dropped to a paltry 5% and vinyl pressing plants were about as common as vampires at a glazing convention.

By 1992 the black disc had managed a Houdini-esque vanishing act in high streets across the land as retailers took the opportunity to stuff their shelves with the petite and profitable CD. With the LP apparently teetering on the edge of the abyss of hi-fi extinction, EMI, the last large scale vinyl producer in the



Bob Bailey in the plating shop with a Copper blank as used in Direct Metal Mastering.



Quality control. A 'mother' is played by a Stanton 500AL cartridge in an SME3009 arm.

UK, gave the format six months to live and got ready to mothball the presses at their Uxbridge Road plant.

Then Dance music arrived on the scene. As the sole agent capable of handling the rising demand for 12in singles, EMI's pressing plant suddenly found a new lease of life, the mothballs were boxed up and rumours of vinyl's death started to look distinctly exaggerated. And with no sign of a market relapse, the presses were moved into the spacious Blyth Road site in Hayes in August 1996.

There's been a plant on the site at Blyth Road, Hayes, Middx, since 1907 when Dame Nellie Melba laid the corner stone. To commemorate this centenary, EMI have re-released twenty of their best-selling titles including LPs

by Iron Maiden and Kate Bush. So just what is going on with the LP today? How do EMI produce it and view its future? We found out with Bob Bailey, production manager at Blyth Road. . .

The production process starts with a Lacquer (sometimes given the misnomer "acetate"). These were introduced in the late 1940s and consist of a plasticised nitrocellulose lacquer coated onto an optically flat aluminium disc. Music signals are cut into the Lacquer (supplied by Teldec) with the heated stylus of a cutting lathe, usually at either EMI's own Abbey Road studio or at The Town House. The Lacquer is then sent to the pressing plant where it is cleaned both manually and by machine. Any contamination here will simply be transferred to subsequent stages and show up in the final LP as unwanted noise.

Once clean, the Lacquer is sprayed with silver nitrate which is 'developed' in the Matrix (chemical process) Department in a way similar to black and white photography. This leaves the Lacquer coated with a very thin layer of conductive pure silver which is then electroplated for four hours in a bath of Nickel Sulphamate.

The plated Lacquer, now covered with hard-wearing Nickel, is taken out of the bath, rinsed and dried. To complete the next stage in the process, the plated disc is split into two halves by hand and the Nickel outer shells are



EMI's sole 78rpm press dates from the late forties but has been carefully renovated and is in perfect working condition.

separated from the Lacquer. The silver, which adheres to the Nickel, is then cleaned off, leaving two 'negative' Masters, one for each side of the Lacquer.

Each Master is coated with a conductive colloidal separating film before returning to the plating baths where a positive, the Mother, is grown from the negative Master. De-horning (gently polishing off excess vinyl 'banked up' at the tops of the grooves by the cutting lathe's stylus) takes place at this point. The Mother is then played to ensure there are no problems like scratches or excessive background noise and covered in a protective film ready for plating.

After plating the Mother is split and the two outer halves, the Stampers, are separated as before and again covered in a protective plastic film. Finally, the



At left, a stamper, behind the safety screen.



A line of Garrard 401s, used for quality control.



The main stamper shop. At right what looks like a vacuum sweeper hose sucks up vinyl pellets from a drum. The pellets are heated and compressed into a malleable ball ready for the press.

Stampers are centred to an accuracy of 2.5um before being mounted on the face plate of the record press.

The whole process might seem a bit long-winded - it is, after all, possible to

form Stampers directly from the Lacquer. Unfortunately, this can only be done twice, and seeing as each Stamper is only good for about 2000 albums, production runs would be restricted to

about 4000 albums. To avoid making every run a limited edition, up to ten Mothers are grown from the Master, with each Mother yielding up to ten Stampers if need be.

Production at Blyth Road runs 365 days a year, 16 hours a day. And with 19 Model 1400 presses going, that adds up to a not inconsiderable 35,000 records per day (and a whopping five tonnes of vinyl granules). Inside the press, the vinyl doesn't have an easy time of it, squashed as it is between the two Stampers at a pressure of 100tonnes and steam-heated to make it malleable.

But the team in Hayes aren't content to rest on their laurels. One of the most important parts of a continuous improvement drive is overhauling all the presses and replacing critical components with higher specification counterparts.

Demand at EMI has remained steady over the last five years and now shows signs of growing, with more Lacquers arriving at Blyth Road now than in vinyl's heyday. While almost 95% of these are Dance 12in singles, both Bob Bailey and Chris Pooley (Head of Quality Assurance) see a bright future for heavyweight audiophile pressings. Even 78s are being catered for in special

limited edition repressings from original Masters. And there are moves afoot to raise the number of records produced daily to 50,000 with extra presses found recently in an old pressing plant in Greece. So is vinyl finally dead? Not on your Nellie Melba! (see also Noel's Kaleidoscope column, p55)

HOW AN LP IS MADE

1) A recording is cut onto a 'lacquer' using a cutting lathe with a heated ruby stylus. This takes place at the recording studio.

2) The lacquer is sent to the pressing plant where it is first lightly silver plated, then nickel plated to form a negative-image 'master'. This is too delicate to be used as a stamper.

3) An intermediate positive-image 'mother' is made by nickel plating onto the 'master'. Horns are burnished off at this stage. The positive can be played to check sound quality.

4) Stampers go into the actual presses and last for roughly 2000 moulding cycles. They are made by nickel plating onto the 'mother'. Their surface is chrome plated to prolong life.

5) The final disc is pressed by placing a lump ('biscuit') of hot (170degrees C) softened vinyl in the centre of the stamper. It flows out under heat and pressure to form a positive-image vinyl disc.



NEXT MONTH, DAVID PRICE TAKES A LOOK AT VINYL'S SURVIVAL AND THE QUALITY OF MODERN LPs.

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MUSIC REVIEWS

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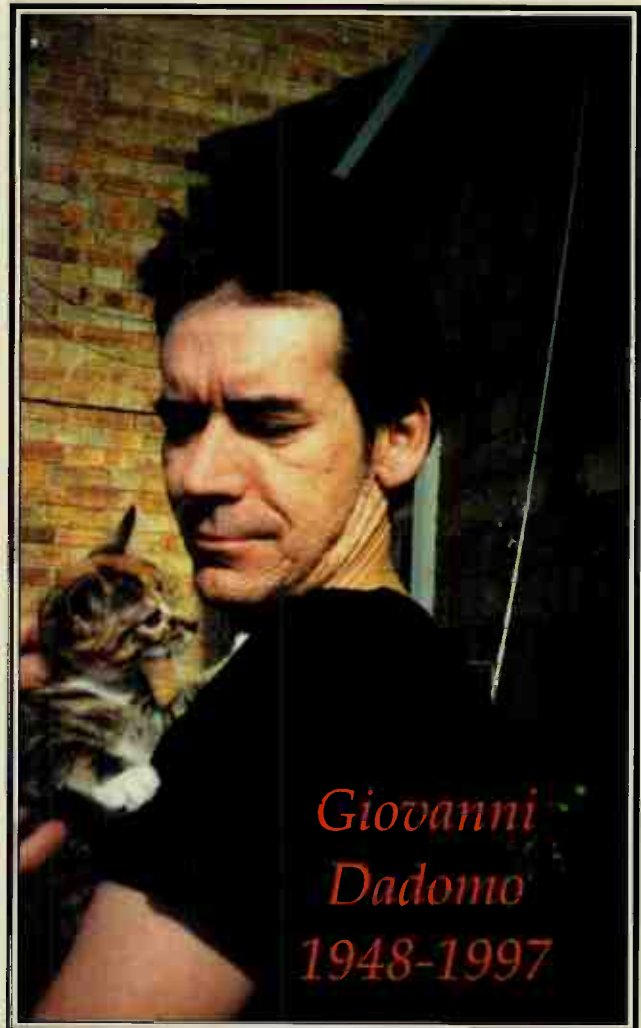
Giovanni Dadomo was one of that select group of music journalists who just over 20 years ago broke the stranglehold of the establishment. In articles in Sounds in 1973 he popularised what was then an obscure garage band, The Velvet Underground, and helped launch the British Punk explosion.

I first met him three years later when he was a ranking music writer and I was a student at the Slade Film School. At the time, he too had a band, The Snivelling Shits. The other members were also music journalists and in the unique position of not only being able to write their own reviews but also to get them published in the music press, notoriously in one case before the music was even written, let alone recorded.

The band had a residency at the Speakeasy Club in London's Margaret Street, where, Gio once told me, he used to see all the 'names' walking in when he was a nearby office boy. It amused him to think he was now doing the same. Their gigs, usually sharing the bill with Johnny Thunders and other figures from the New York and London subculture, were characterised by a strong police presence on the pavement outside and a heavy Who's Who of punk - including Malcolm McLaren (in the

days when he still wore a kilt) and Sid Vicious - on the inside. Alongside the usual students, liggers and ageing superstars stood McLaren's office staff, who heckled the Shits mercilessly, and on one occasion received an on-stage kicking from Gio for their pains.

For a while, titles like 'Isgodaman', 'Only Thirteen', 'Et moi, et moi, et moi' and the first cover version of Jacques Dutronc's neanderthal Paris '68 marching song dripped from his pen and were given heavy, heavy guitar treatment and the production values of a young Steve Lillywhite. A self-financed single, 'I can't come', rapidly



*Giovanni
Dadomo
1948-1997*

achieved cult status. It would have gone much further had it not been for the diligence of an employee of French Linguaphone who took time out to listen to what the French pressing plant was actually manufacturing.

Soon after, another single was rumoured and a film - 'Bring Me the Head of Yukio Mishima' - was shot in the Slade Basement, featuring a Japanese Kendo black belt master and Gio's leather jacket. It was intended to be released as the world's first Videodisc single. In retrospect, it's probably fortunate for all concerned it never was, but Gio was still wearing a leather jacket into the Nineties. The Shits' career came to an inglorious end at the Club Gibous over Gio scrawling graffiti about Algeria, after which they were given three hours to leave France.

Our last work together (though we did not do much) was a translation of the 1922 Russian Eccentric's Manifesto, designed and illustrated by the Anarchist graphic artist Clifford Harper, who was also an admirer of Gio's film and music criticism. In any of those pieces which Gio regularly contributed to Sounds, Time Out, City Limits, The Face and many of the independent journals which flourished in the late '70s, anybody could recognise an incisive mind, quick to spot the real and the genuine in an art form he loved.

He died, after a short battle against cancer, aged 48.

Marsh Pylel

Born around King's Cross, his Italian family called him 'John', though he stuck to Giovanni as firmly as he did to his leather jackets. We worked together in a book-cum-record shop in Notting Hill in the late '80s, and discovered a shared delight in all the way-out anarchist-syndicalist stuff that came out of the flying pavé and clouds of tear gas in France in 1968.

He had a smile of transforming charm (it made me envious - girls melted to it instantly) and a wry, disarming sense of humour that could not just see a joke against himself but turn it neatly against the rest of the world as well. I knew something of his history in the Punk movement, though he managed to keep that relatively quiet until, to our glee, a 'retrospective' of the Snivelling Shits contained in a round tin complete with a plastic turd inside was suddenly re-released.

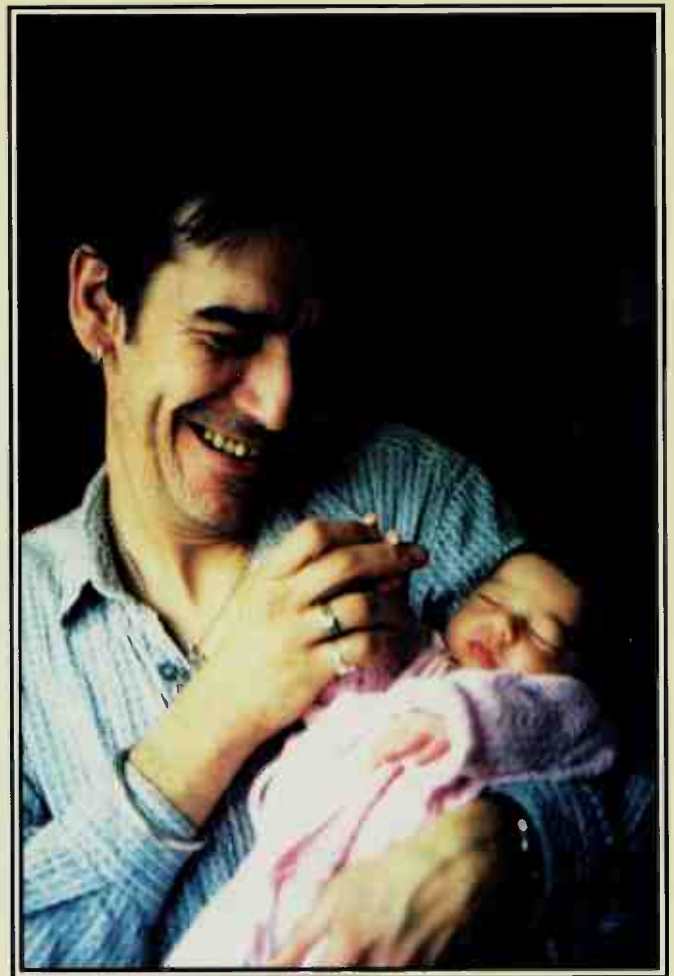
I pestered him to review music for Hi-Fi World when I became Music Editor, what, five years or more ago, though he was reluctant and would rather have written about film. But his knowledge was too much to miss. It was truly encyclopaedic, as readers will know from his ability to track a single riff or few guitar chords from its latest sample right back to a wax cylinder, if that's where it started.

He brought his own sardonic but cheerful style into his reviews, which he feared might have been anachronistic, because he wasn't one to let mere attitude masquerade as insight like so many do in the music press. He wasn't one to dismiss an old Rock lag's umpteenth album, if it had any musical point to make, just because it didn't fit into whatever the scene thought was cool that week.

Yet he could easily burst a pretentious bubble with a pithy couple of sentences. I can't be the only one who splashed out on an album he slammed because I thought it couldn't possibly be that bad, what with rave reviews everywhere else, only to realise with horror that his own musical and journalistic integrity had made him uniquely PR-puff and trend-proof and the album was actually appalling.

Like Pete Townshend I suppose we both thought once we'd like to die before we got old. The trouble is, life and music are too interesting for us to want it to happen any more. Dammit, I was so sure, if I was spared, I'd be reading Gio's review of Pulp's 2020 come-back tour, Bowie's 70th birthday album or the Stones' first-bus-pass anniversary double CD. Now I'll have to content myself with the reviewing legacy he's left. Dio te benedici, Giovanni.

Eric Braithwaite



And Gio said

"I suppose you could call me one of the blessed, but I was actually around at the birth of the Sex Pistols. Now whatever the arguments, the truth is that Matlock, whether he was writing the hits or not, was an ace musician, whilst Sid, for all his death-wish charisma, wasn't. No point in mincing words about this unless you want to take it outside. True, his voice lacks the mad mannerisms of Lydon's, but there is some brilliant guitar playing on the likes of 'Hot Water' and the ironic (I wonder who this could be about, now?) 'My Big Mouth'. Classic Rock long-player, no argument. Or do you still wanna take it outside?"

[Glen Matlock: Who's He Think He Is When He's At Home?]

"Sort of Jacques Brel-meets-The Clash-and-they-busk-outside-a-Left Bank Kebab-house."

[Les Negresses Vertes: Familles Nombreuses]

"An earful of Molotov cocktail, no less."

[Public Enemy: Apocalypse '91 - The Enemy Strikes Black]

"Suede with balls, Blur without laddishness, Bowie with a sense of

humour.”

[Pulp: Different Class]

“More than ever you get the impression that there’s a Great American Novel trying to get out from within Bruce Springsteen’s psyche.”

[Bruce Springsteen: The Ghost of Tom Joad]

“Try spelling ‘white’ with an ‘s’, and we’re getting somewhere.”

[The Orb: Orbis Terrarum]

“This is music to orchestrate riots by, but that was hardly the intention.”

[Portishead: Dummy]

“There’s always the danger that we’ll all get tired of all this boyish, lager-primed high spiritedness. But by then Supergrass will probably be living it up in Rio next door to Ronnie Biggs.”

[Supergrass: I Should Co-Co]

“Forgotten their names already? Me too. Sad. But millionaires deserve all the tears they can muster.”

[Foo Fighters: Foo Fighters]

“You could say Stuart Staples’ morbid tones make Leonard Cohen sound as jolly as George Formby at a VE Day concert or as the Marx Brothers on Laughing Gas. . . And when was the last time you heard a saw played on a record?”

[Tindersticks: This Way Up]

“PJ’s femaleness is at the very bedrock of her appeal. It’s at the core of her lyrical concerns, it’s one of the most - if not the most - vital and provocative aspects of her entire musical and visual persona. And only a woman could sing the way PJ does - she can ooze sensuality one second and harpie anger the next. Everything about her has what the Cramps called “the smell of female”. Is there anyone around to touch this woman and her band?”

[PJ Harvey: Rid of Me]

“A funny thing happened the other day - I heard a Sting record and really liked it. Like a lot of my chums I sort of lost interest in Sting after The Police split and he put on his ‘serious jazzman’ beret, much as we all got a tad bored after Paul Weller quit pretending to be

Pete Townshend when he cut loose from The Jam and tried being Curtis Mayfield.”

[Sting: Mercury Falling]

“Cred-wise, Tori Amos has it all sewn up. Not only does she have a name that conjures up all kinds of anagrams - Roti Soma (a mental-health-inducing kind of curry), Mia Toros (Lesbian bulls!?) - but she has also managed to clock up multi-million sales with records that are far from overtly commercial.”

[Tori Amos: Boys for Pele]

“More retro than Blondie at their most bathetic, more overblown than Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich at their ‘Zabadak’ worst. World of Twist are making the music that combines all the worst elements of Capital Gold at



its most banal. So why aren’t they enormous? Because a) they’re 20 years too late, and b) Tony Blackburn hasn’t heard them yet. A new Dark Age in music could be just around the corner, and World of Twist are just the people to bring it to us.”

[World of Twist: Quality Street]

“Here is a band that makes Ozzie Osbourne look like a stamp collector; here is a band that can fit three pairs of leather trousers more stitch-

stretchingly than a dozen Jon Bon Jovis; here is a band whose pheromone output makes Arnold Schwarzenegger look like the sad sack he is.”

[Spinal Tap: Break Like the Wind]

“This isn’t to say there aren’t some great lines here. Take ‘Books don’t stay, but books aren’t Stanley knives’. Own up, there’s a brain under that barnet. Even if I’ve never had any problems distinguishing a Stanley knife from a Penguin Modern Classic.”

[Morrissey: Southpaw Grammar]

“Such guitar-hero racket can’t help but bring to mind the fact that ex-Pistol Steve Jones now has long locks and a penchant for all things heavy and metallic. He’s more than a ghost in the aptly corrosive ‘Acid Drops’ in which into there’s a sample of the SP’s ‘No

Future’. Neat bit of pilfering, or what? Speaking of thieving, what possible excuse can there be for ‘God’, riding shamelessly on the back of the bassline from Talking Heads’ ‘Psycho Killer’? A trifle too much bias towards fretboard frenetics and some lacklustre fillers bolster the impression that this is the sound of John Lydon paying his rent.”

[PIL: That What is Not]

“Of all the ‘80s’ revival bands - Adam Ant with a balder, skinnier Mario Pirroni, the dreadful Duran Duran and who knows what other leftovers - only Phil Oakley’s revitalised Human League are at all welcome. Octopus re-emphasises the fact that The Human League banner carried some of the most active and influential sounds of their decade.”

[The Human League: Octopus]

“It’s the sort of thing movie buffs will recall from early Roger Corman epics featuring the obligatory Beatnik scene: all the girls in Juliette Greco shades, berets and black polos.”

[The Last Poets: Holy Terror]

“Nick Drake was a man out of time and place, another delicate soul swimming against a cruel tide. But please just listen. Because he was a true original and his last song is touched with hope and a rare glory. It really is music that soothes the soul.”

[From one of Gio’s last reviews, of Nick Drake’s Fruit Tree] ●



KRIS NEEDS MUST

RUMOUR CDRAID 534

Yes it's that scene stalwart Kris Needs back again. He seems to get about a bit this man, working as a music journalist, DJ (especially for the Prodigy) and producer of the outfit Secret Knowledge (responsible for the classic 'Sugar Daddy').

However, on the production front the last Secret Knowledge album didn't do too well. Released last summer, after being held up for rather a long time, reviews weren't favourable, causing Secret Knowledge to leave their record company Deconstruction.

But I guess we'll have to wait and see the results of future Secret Knowledge albums, as Kris Needs Must is a compilation CD. The featured tracks are pulled together from a selection of his own mixes, mates' tracks and faves. And instead of the usual mixes, Kris intercuts each track with interview snippets with the rich and famous - well, there's Dudley Moore waffling on about smack. And it's all wrapped up in some fluffy yellow packaging. Nice.

Er, anyway, the CD opens with Primal Scream's classic 'Jailbird' before we get a taste of a new Secret

Knowledge track (and the jury's still out on that one). Leeroy from the Prodigy steps up as Longman with a sizzling, unsurprisingly Prodigy-esque track, complete with some nice girlie vocals to boot. Kris 'n' D.A.V.E. get hard with the rollicking 'The Sonic Stiffy' and there's a rare remix by Kris of the Prodigy's 'Speedway', as well as his excellent mix of A&E Dept's 'And the Rabbit's Name was.'

If that gets your juices flowing, add to that Digital Destroyer's 'Frontier', the Boo Radley's spiced up 'Lazarus' and the excellent comedy Christmas Houser 'Down The Pub' by Norman and Christopher.

With such a novelty concept and a sometimes left-field choice of tracks, it works surprisingly well. If the tracks weren't so damn fine, this could have been an over-indulgent pile of elephant do-do. But they are, so it isn't. So there.



JUNIOR VASQUEZ: LIVE VOLUME 1

LOGIC RECORDS LC7502

Well, this is Junior Vasquez in uncommon compo mood. What can

Viv Craske

you say? He's one of the leading lights of the New York club scene from way back, resident at the Sound Factory and a clubbing legend who has created his own style complete with technically spot-on mixing and one of the best sound systems in the world.

Yep, a legend alright. But sometimes careers can't exist on myth alone. And perhaps, in Britain at least, Junior's take on clubland is wearing thin.

"What evidence do you have to back up such a blasphemous statement?" I hear you cry in horror. Well, there's last summer's release 'If Madonna Calls' that allegedly samples the First Lady of Pop from a message on Vasquez's answer phone. It was a load of old rhubarb. Then there was his first gig in the UK, scheduled to be a ten-hour set in front of a capacity 8000 crowd at London's Dockland Arena. I guess there aren't enough die-hard fans to shell out £25 a go, because the gig has now been postponed, probably to go ahead in May at a smaller venue. Hmmm. Then there is this compilation. . .

There are some House faves in here, with perfect mixing tying them together. But perhaps the New York sound has become a tad stale for British tastes. My real problem is some of the other, ahem, so-called tracks featured. You've got Annie Lennox's 'No More I Love Yous', KD Lang's 'If I Were You', Cher's 'One By One' and Edina and Patsy's 'Ab Fab' novelty single. Hmmm again. Admittedly I've only been sent one half of the two-CD set but I think I've heard enough.

Yes he's a legend and his contribution to the scene has been of vital importance. But why would he think we're interested in this compilation? Why did he do it? Why, why, why?



VARIOUS

FACT 2

WORLDWIDE ULTIMATUM/EDEL

0091022COX

Without doubt Carl Cox is the best DJ in the country. Wherever he plays, clubbers hail him as a god, some kind of super-human being. And all this for a guy who plays two or three records at once. But then he is that good. After 18 or so years he knows how to work a crowd, to build them up, tease them, change the style of music but still keep the beats rocking hard.

So now, Coxy releases his second FACT mix CD. It's essentially a hard House/Techno celebration, which manages to incorporate more genres than most DJs will even admit to liking.

The first CD flirts with Josh Wink, Electroliners, Fat Boy Slim and Cosmic Messenger. And the mixing is not only smooth but also fluid and flexible,

almost as if the music is guiding the DJ instead of the other way round.

The second mix stretches the formula even further, taking in DJ Skull's ear-burster 'Acid Wiss L' and Death in Vegas' 'Rocco' in just a few tracks. Add to that Vernon's Wonderland, Denki Groove and Underworld and you're looking at a very special line-up.

I've heard some critics say that FACT 2 doesn't live up to FACT 1, but that's journalistic rubbish, looking for an angle which just isn't there. FACT 2 stands its ground more than comfortably with most other compos. Long live Lord Coxy!



LIONROCK

CITY DELIRIOUS

DECONSTRUCTION CITY I

Justin Robertson and his merry band are back with this second album, a year

after the release of the critically acclaimed *An Instinct For Detection*.

When I reviewed the debut album, I was impressed by the bold originality that Justin had shown, somehow combining samples and beats with a more laid back, vaguely Amyl House direction and twisting the result into tracks no one else had the nerve to make. I thought by now their status would be up there alongside Orbital, The Chemical Brothers and Leftfield. So why hasn't it happened? Perhaps it was their live shows, which somehow seemed to jam around the tracks too much when a Dance crowd would prefer music truer to the recordings.

However, *City Delirious* provides more of the same loose beats, more insightful lyrics rapped by MC Buzz B, more funky bass, and more squelches, squeals and sonic wibbles. However, this time around the music sounds a little more laid back. Compare the casual melodies of the new single 'Wet Roads Glisten' with, say, 'Fire Up The Shoeshaw' on the last album, or 'Packet Of Peace' even.

Of course I don't mean to imply that this album is all hearts and flowers. Far from it. Check out the Pulp Fiction sleaze of 'Zip Gun Rumble', the imposing, swaggering beats of 'Dark Day' or the processed heavy drum kicks of 'Chewing Gum Weekend'.

Dance goes home-listening one more time. Hooray for sofas, beers and Lionrock ●

dance & ambient record of the month

VARIOUS

VIVA HACIENDA

DECONSTRUCTION 74321 486552/4

The Hacienda is a true icon, the kind of thing your kids will pore over in a Media Studies degree, trying to piece together fantasy and reality. Even the Sun has likened the Hacienda to Liverpool's The Cavern!

The Hacienda is now 15 years old, surviving the occasional violence and a drug overdose of the early '90s to maintain one of the country's most respected clubs.

The industrial decor has been incorporated into clubs up and down the country, but no other club can take recognition for giving as many artists a step up the career ladder - New Order, *Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark*, *Echo And The Bunny Men*, the whole damn Manchester baggy scene, Grand Master Flash, Frankie Knuckles,

Marshall Jefferson, Graeme Park, Mike Pickering, Justin Robertson, Sasha, etc, etc. Get the picture?

So, to the music. The three-CD set kicks off with a mix of Soul, Hip Hop, Electro, prototype House tunes and funky feel-good songs from '82-'86 spanning the likes of New Order,



Gwen Guthrie, Joyce Simms, Farley, Nitro De-luxe and Mr Fingers.

Moving on to the birth of Acid House, CD No2 ('87-'91), there are gentle slices of Detroit, Chicago and Balearic influences. Remember the impact Rhythm is Rhythm's 'Strings Of Life' had on you when you first heard it? Or L'il Louis' 'French Kiss'? Immense. Ah, magical times.

Still CD No3 snaps you out of nostalgia and brings you right up to the present day. Phuture, Clive Griffen and Salt City Orchestra nestle nicely alongside The BucketHeads, Armand van Helden and Basement Jaxx.

And the music doesn't seem to have changed much somehow. The tunes and people may come and go, but as Led Zeppelin said, "the song remains the same". Here's to one of the last, great British institutions. See you in another 15 years ☺

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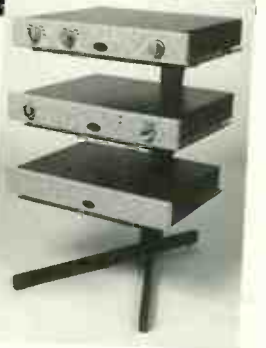


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Jazz

Simon Hopkins



TERJE RYPDAL
SKYWARDS
ECM 1608

I want to say great things about this album but sadly find myself unable to do so. I am, let me say from the off (and this is hardly news to regular readers of this little outback of a column) a huge fan of Norwegian guitarist/composer Terje Rypdal. I've said here on numerous occasions that, if in the critical mainstream (whatever that is) Jazz-Rock is associated with either a certain limp-wristed, white-boy Funk or overly showy muso grandstanding (or even, God forbid, some ghastly combination of the two) then Terje Rypdal's work for the ECM label in the '70s was part of a body of music which represented the real potential of a

Jazz-Rock hybrid. It's right up there with the best work of post-Bitches' Brew Miles, early Weather Report et al. Just check out *Odyssey* or *Whenever I Seem To Be Far Away* for exemplary - if way too rare - blends of high Gothic drama, Nordic asceticism and fleet, sparing and always searching improvisation.

It would be easier to dismiss this album, if Rypdal had - as so many musicians do - simply lost it as he grew older. But that ain't the case. In particular, his work with the Chasers - the group he led during the '80s - although spoilt by occasional lapses in taste, was nonetheless largely rip-roaring stuff. And his increasingly common forays into chamber and orchestral music have been extremely rewarding, especially the really rather wonderful *QED*. Yet the main thrust of his recent Jazz work has become ever more rarefied and, while not exactly anodyne, is hardly the aggressive and plangent tour-de-force of his earlier ground-breaking albums. And so to *Skywards*. . .

To be fair, I'll say straight off that this album does have at its centre a fine piece, the 16 minute 'Out Of This World (Sinfonietta)', a distillation of the piece commissioned by the Lillehammer Winter Festival 1996 to commemorate Rypdal's 25-year association with Manfred Eicher, ECM's prime mover.

The piece strikes a perfectly appropriate balance of slowly unfolding melodies and barely graspable textures. It seems to me to say just what one would expect Rypdal to say of his time with the label.

But elsewhere, the balance of the music too often dips into romantic self-indulgence, syrupy, saccharine melodies and self-consciously expressive gesture. Why is not exactly clear.

The group is impeccable. Trumpeter Palle Mikkelborg and drummer Jon Christensen are, of course, ECM stalwarts, and frankly among Europe's finest contemporary Jazz musicians. They're joined by American cellist David Darling (of whose solo work I'm a huge admirer), violinist Terje Tonnesen, who featured on this album's predecessor *If Mountains Could Sing* (an album of which Rypdal interestingly says, "it had not been an easy album"), keyboardist Christian Eggen and percussionist Paulo Vinaccia. There's absolutely no question as to any of these players' skills and musical judgements.

While these musicians individually are capable of some deeply expressive playing, either collectively they smooth out each others' edges or else Rypdal's current composition brings this out in them. Not that there aren't some fine moments here, but overall I'd say that the impression this album leaves is one of preciousness and insincere gestures. Of Rypdal, I'd say that's unforgivable.

Simon Cooke

Jazz



TAPPAN ZEE IS 20!
THE BEST OF TAPPAN ZEE
 RENC D 121

This has been a good month for re-releases, which leads me to skip through a selection rather than review any new works.

To begin with, this is a compilation (rather than a straight re-release or re-master) of tracks from the New York-based Tappan Zee label. It's a funky selection of easy Jazz tracks by names such as the Allen Harris Band, Mongo Santamaria, Richard Tee, Bob James (who incidentally produced the tracks and compiled this selection) and Earl Klugh.

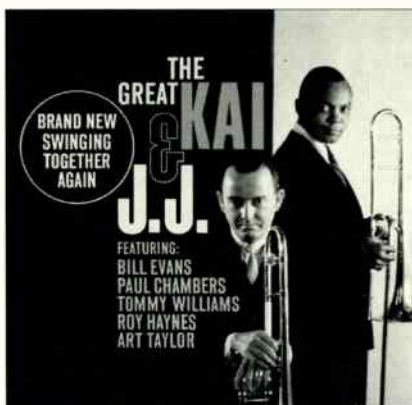
For your hard-earned you get 13 tracks of well recorded contemporary Jazz ranging from Soul-Funk to Latino in style, and if you don't know the label, it works well as a sampler.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
TORCH SONGS: GREAT BLUES AND SWING PERFORMANCES 1925-1945
 ROBERT PARKER'S RPCD 324

Here you'll find Billie, Bessie, Ella, Lena and others in a beautiful selection of torch songs like 'Love Me Or Leave Me'



and 'Stormy Weather'. This CD comes from Robert Parker's selection, which means it may not appeal to everyone as far as sound quality is concerned but there is no denying the calibre of the original performances. This is one of the best selections from the genre I've heard in a long time.

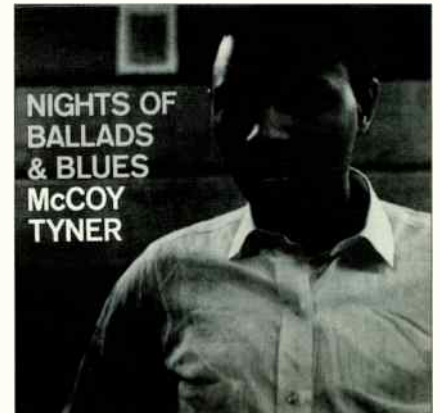


THE GREAT KAI AND JJ
KAI WINDING AND JJ JOHNSON
 IMP 12252

Getting down to the bones - two of them in fact - Kai and JJ are joined here by Bill Evans (piano), Paul Chambers,

Tommy Williams (basses), Roy Haynes and Arthur Taylor (drums) to cover eleven tracks. These include Carmichael/Gorrell's 'Georgia On My Mind', Monk's 'Blue Monk' and Porter's 'I Concentrate On You'. There's also a couple of tracks by Johnson and Winding themselves.

Like the other Impulse re-release here, this is a digital re-master in all-singing, all-dancing '20-bit Super Bit Mapping' and it sounds excellent. Enjoy.



MCCOY TYNER
NIGHTS OF BALLADS & BLUES
 IMP 12212

A beautifully simple group this, consisting of Tyner's piano, Steve Davies on the baize - sorry, bass - and Lex Humphries on drums. This recording gives you eight tracks including Ellington's 'Satin Doll', Monk's 'Blue Monk' (again), Mancini/Mercer's 'Days Of Wine And Roses' and Monk/Hanighan/Williams' inescapable 'Round Midnight'.

Recorded in 1963, this remains a fresh and vital set, well served by the re-mastering.

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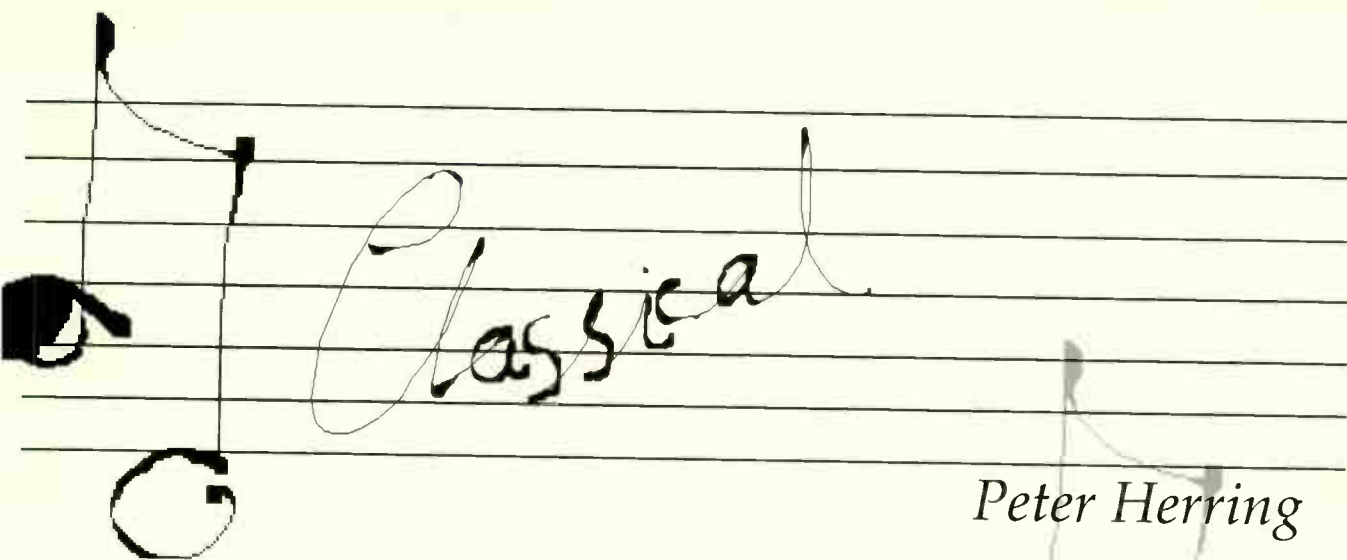
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JOHANNES BRAHMS
String Quintet in G major, Op 111

ANTON BRUCKNER
String Quintet in F major
Brandis Quartett; Brett Dean,
viola

NIMBUS NI 5488 (DDD/75.05)

Luigi Boccherini composed 125 string quintets, Mozart six and Beethoven just one. Franz Schubert also made a solitary contribution to the genre but it was to prove one of the greatest creations in all music. Indeed, such was the stature of Schubert's C major quintet that it seems to have deterred the next generation of composers, Schumann and Mendelssohn among them, from employing the five-strings ensemble.

Brahms, however, was prompted into writing a quintet by his close friend,

the violinist Joseph Joachim, the dedicatee of his Violin Concerto. This was the Op88 in F major of 1880. Sometime after, Joachim asked Brahms for a companion work and, in the summer of 1890, he duly began work on a new quintet. Brahms was now fifty-seven and seriously contemplating retirement from composing. As it turned out, he continued working up to his death seven years later but at the time there was every chance that the G major quintet would become his last completed work.

However, there is nothing valedictory about this music. Rather, the confident handling of the ensemble, the invention of the solo writing and the often striking richness of texture suggest someone at the very height of his powers: the coda of the finale is as exuberant as anything penned by the younger Brahms.

Ironically, having urged Brahms to write a second string quintet, Joachim did not give the first performance. That was entrusted to an ensemble led by Arnold Rose, the then-leader of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Coincidentally, the same fate befell Anton Bruckner's F major quintet, the solitary major chamber work to come from the pen of a composer who devoted himself to symphonic and choral writing.

Bruckner composed the work in response to a request from Joseph

Hellmesberger, director of the Vienna Conservatory and the first violin of a celebrated string quartet. Naturally, Hellmesberger was expecting to receive a quartet rather than a quintet and proved a reluctant beneficiary. Instead, the premiere in 1881 was entrusted to the Winkler Quartet, with Bruckner's disciple Franz Schalk the second viola.

Clearly Bruckner had added that viola to enrich the texture of a work which, while displaying remarkable assurance, sensitivity and imagination in its handling of the five strings, nevertheless bears all the hallmarks of a symphonist. Each movement, along with the overall structure, has a grandeur and nobility that is pure Bruckner and, as in the symphonies, a deeply felt adagio lies at the heart of the work.

The Brandis Quartett, led by the former leader of the Berlin Philharmonic, Thomas Brandis, and here augmented by the gifted young Australian violist Brett Dean, offer glowing performances combining warmth and eloquence with a deep understanding of both works. Nothing is superficial; the impression is of every expressive nuance having been carefully considered within the context of the work as a whole.

No less satisfying is Nimbus's recording, which captures every strand and detail across a broad sound stage with never a hint of exaggeration. There is none of the steely gloss which

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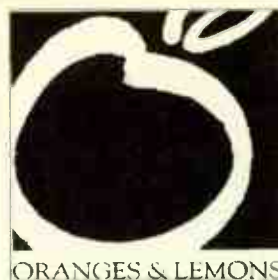
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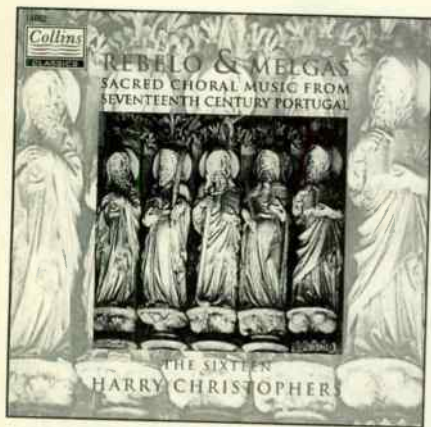
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characterises many a modern chamber recording. Instead the strings have a rich resonance, and how pleasing to hear the cello line so clearly and firmly articulated. The depth and presence of the sound perfectly mirror the qualities of the interpretations.



As a consequence, the Italian influence was readily apparent in the music of other European nations and the stylistic revolution instigated by such as Monteverdi and the Gabrieli spread to France, Germany, Bohemia, Spain and even England. However, one area was to prove curiously resistant to these developments: Portugal.

This may have been partly due to its relative geographical isolation but was more probably a by-product of the country's eighty-year rule by Spain. Pursuing an indigenous musical style - albeit one based on an earlier Italian model, that of Palestrina - was one way of sustaining a Portuguese cultural identity.

Change, therefore, came late to the Atlantic shores of the Iberian peninsula, resulting in a musical eclecticism whose products were frequently startlingly original. Abundant examples of this originality can be found in this latest recording of Portuguese polyphony from *The Sixteen*, under the direction of Harry Christophers and ably accompanied by His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts. Two composers are featured, composers whose working lives, while overlapping, could hardly have displayed greater contrasts.

Joao Lourenco Rebelo, one of Portugal's greatest musicians, was in the employ of the Braganca family from the age of fourteen and, when the Braganças ascended to the Portuguese throne, he took up the appointment as head of music at the Royal Chapel. In this capacity, Rebelo was able to call upon the services of a choir of twenty-four highly talented singers and a host of instrumentalists including several fine exponents of wind instruments such as the sackbut (an early trombone), trumpet, cornet, shawm and curtal (these last two belonging to the oboe family).

Rebelo exploited these enviable resources to the full, including obligato parts - indicated as "vox

instrumentalis" - in many of his polyphonic works. The Psalm settings here, for example, display a wonderful diversity and imagination in their scoring and sonority, and no less impressive is the sumptuous seven-part *Panis Angelicus*.

However, Harry Christophers saves the best of Rebelo for last, concluding the programme with his darkly resplendent 13-part *Magnificat*, a blending of choir, solo voices and instruments that clearly shows the belated influence of the Venetian masters, especially Giovanni Gabrieli. The intensity of the performance is typical of the recording as a whole.

Diogo Dias Melgas lived a very different professional life from Rebelo. He was employed as a chapel master in the provincial city of Evora and is unlikely to have been exposed to many outside influences. He was required only to produce music for liturgical services, yet in doing so showed himself to be both idiosyncratic and with a penchant for experimentation, albeit within an essentially archaic and conservative style.

Melgas is represented by three works, one a sublimely beautiful and dramatically pictorial setting of the *Salve Regina*. This is word-painting at its most effective. The other works by Melgas are a darkly atmospheric rendering of the *Lamentations for Holy Thursday* and a setting of the *Improperia, Popule Meus*, one of the very few texts in the Western rite to retain a declamation in Greek, the ancient *Trisagion*.

As in previous recordings in this series, Harry Christophers and his colleagues prove the masters of both the distinctive character of this music and its strong emotional charge. The music is also well served by the recording team of Mark Brown and Mike Hatch, as well as the splendid acoustic of St Augustine's in London's Kilburn.

JOAO LOURENCO REBELO

Psalm settings: Super Aspidem; Ecce Nunc; In Te, Domine, Speravi; Qui Habitat; Educes Me; Fratres Sobrii - Compline; Hymn - Panis Angelicus; Canticle - Magnificat A 13

DIOGO DIAS MELGAS

Improperia - Popule Meus; Lamentacao De Quinta Feira Santa; Antiphon - Salve Regina
The Sixteen; conductor, Harry Christophers
COLLINS CLASSICS 14652 (DDD/87.S4)

It is true to say that, from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth centuries, most musical roads led, if not to Rome, then at least to Italy. A legion of composers, from Josquin and Lassus, through Victoria to Handel, crossed the Alps to hone their skills and ply their trade in the courts, chapels, cathedrals and opera houses of the peninsula.

GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN

Overture in B flat major La Bourse/Suite in G minor/Suite in C major II Fondamento; director, Paul Dombrecht

VANGUARD CLASSICS PASSACAILLE COLLECTION (DDD/72.33)

The sign in the window of a New York record store summed up what, until recently, was the prevailing opinion of this contemporary of J S Bach: "All the Telemann you could want". Georg Philipp Telemann, like Vivaldi, has been viewed as a composer whose music arrived not so much by the opus as by the kilo and it is true that he was extraordinarily prolific and versatile. He wrote over forty operas, made some forty settings of the Passion story and, most relevant here, composed over six hundred 'ouvertures' or suites.

Although his music has become more valued of late, largely thanks to the efforts of period instrument ensembles such as Il Fondamento, Telemann seems destined to be forever cast in the role of 'journeyman composer'.

It was all very different three centuries ago, when Telemann was feted by the establishment and collected all the glittering prizes with Bach only coming in a worthy second. While the latter toiled away in Leipzig for three decades, Telemann enjoyed lucrative spells as kapellmeister of several Saxon courts, culminating in the post of cantor at the Hamburg Johanneum.

Naturally, this popularity brought

its material rewards. While working in Frankfurt-am-Main, Telemann enjoyed accommodation in one of the city's finest mansions, the Zum Braunfels. At that time the ground floor of the house served as the Frankfurt stock exchange - the Bourse - and it was in honour of his fellow tenants, the hard-pressed stockbrokers, that Telemann composed an overture subtitled La Bourse.

Like the other two suites on this recording, it is a work brimming over with vitality and invention - there is

this form, which had its origins in France and whose predominance in European music during the Baroque period was largely a result of French cultural and social supremacy.

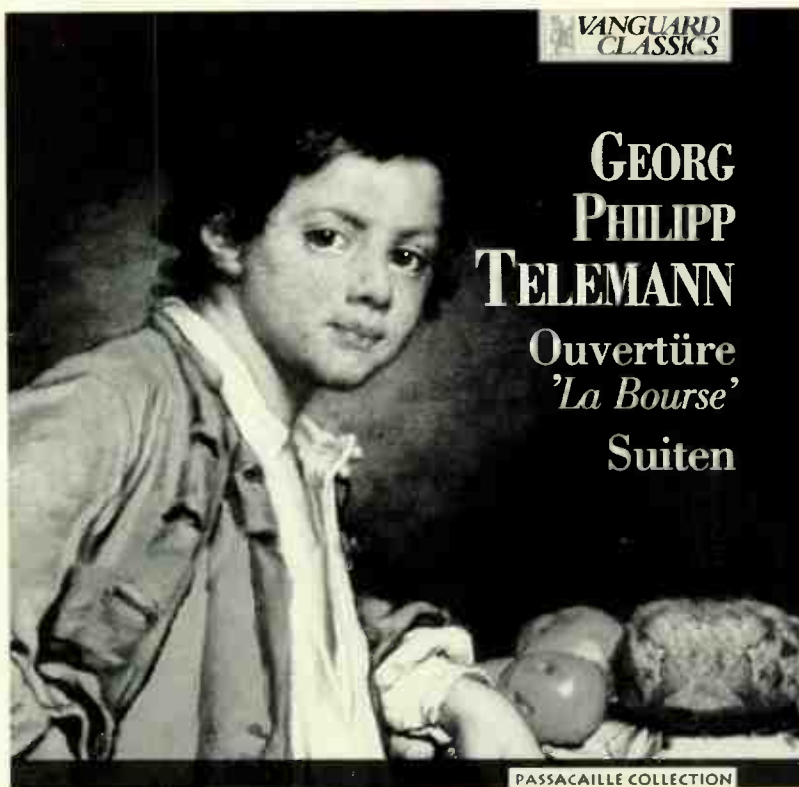
The format called for a slow, stately introduction followed by a sequence of shorter movements loosely based on courtly dances such as the minuet and sarabande. Before long, however, this format was being treated with a good measure of freedom, not least by Telemann, and by the end of the Eighteenth century it

had evolved into the serenades and divertimentos of the Classical period.

The three suites included here have been well chosen, not just for their musical riches but for the fact that, in the main, the movements are scored for woodwinds - double oboes and bassoon - and strings, which as well as bringing a pleasing unity to the programme gives full scope to the virtuosity of oboists Paul Dombrecht and Griet Cornelis along with bassoonist Trudy van der Wulp.

There is much delightful playing

here, and the commitment of the players in this Belgian ensemble, formed in 1989, is evident throughout. It is all most persuasive, with a warm and spacious recording engineered by Leo de Klerk in the chapel of the Bisschoppelijk Seminarie in Ghent. Georg Philipp Telemann may not have attained the lofty spirituality of his august contemporary, Bach, but, like the equally disparaged Vivaldi, there is much of quality among the quantity. But this Vanguard Classics recording makes the point better than any words of mine.

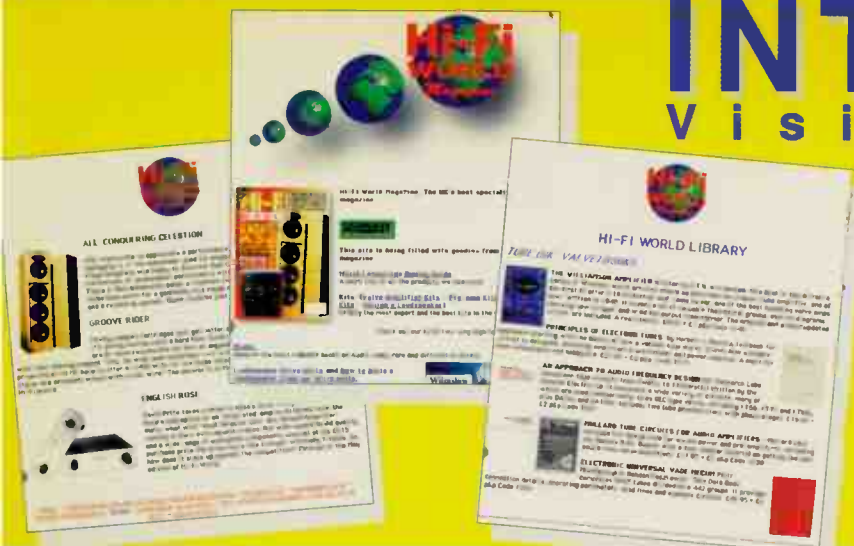


nothing to suggest a journeyman at work here. Three of the six movements have titles which reflect the trials and tribulations of the stock market: War and Peace, The Conquerors Conquered and The Expectation of Mississippi, which must have reflected the hopes for a good return on investments in the Americas.

That he wrote six hundred such suites, as opposed to the mere four composed by Bach, suggests that Telemann rather enjoyed working in

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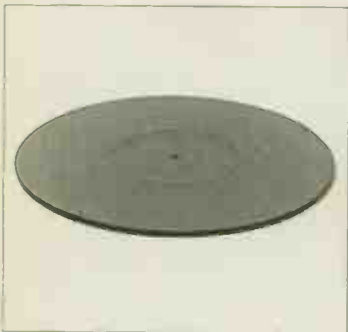
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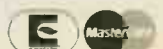
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"It sounded quick, direct, uncomplicated, with an ability to resolve subtle textures in instrumental scoring. Taken overall, the sound quality score (on my usual subjective listening test scale) was an impressive 23 points."

Martin Colloms

HI FI NEWS / RR March 97

The Rhythm presentation as a whole could be described as clean and powerful, in an appealing natural way."... "Whether it was the string quartets of Ravel or Debussy, Alanis Morissette or Joni Mitchell being fed into the Rhythm, what emerged always impressed with its natural, easy power and control. For those in search of an alternative to the 300B, one which couples the organic feel of valve amplification with a rather un-valve-like ear-opening bass extension and control, the Rhythm is definitely worth audition."

Jon Marx

HiFi World July 1996

WORLD VERDICT

Partnered with sensible 'speakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.

WHAT HI*FI? says

sound	★★★★★
facilities	★★★★★
build	★★★★★
verdict	★★★★★

Dan Houston

WHAT HI*FI May 1997

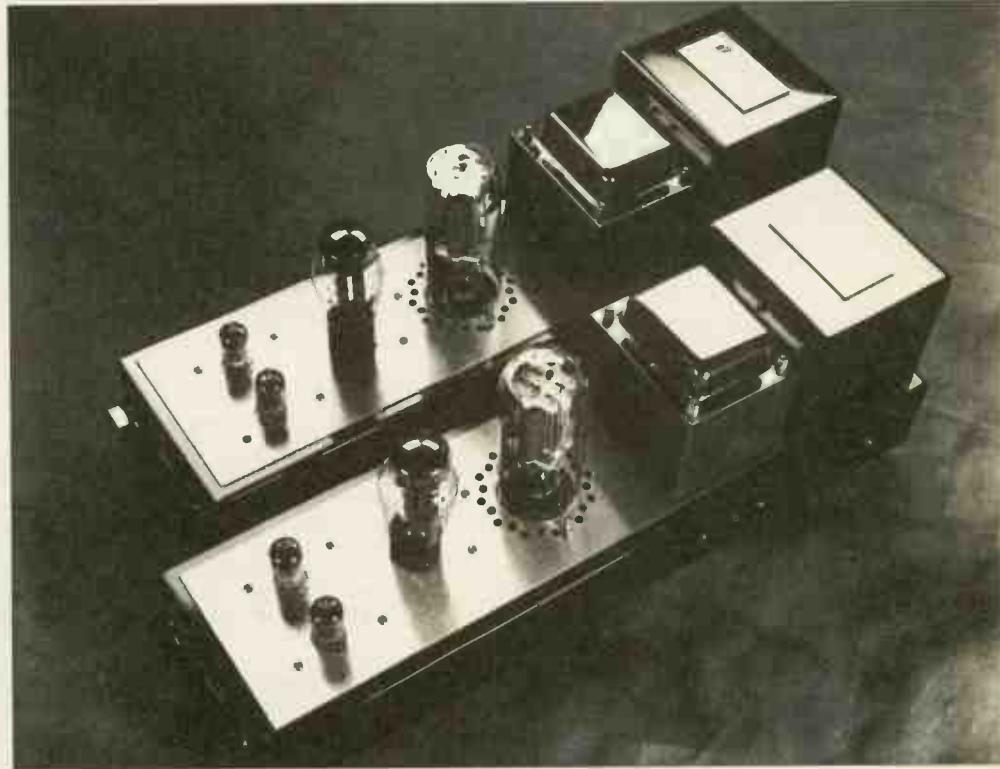
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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

AMPLIFIERS

HENLEY HMC100 PHONO AMPLIFIER

The Henley is a dedicated phono stage for moving coil (MC) cartridges. It appears to be aimed at very low output types (usually expensive), because at x1694, gain was very high. The amplifier has a limited output swing of 3V (10V is easily achieved with silicon chips) resulting in an input overload figure of 1.8mV, which is low. Although unimpressive, providing low output MCs are used this should be satisfactory.

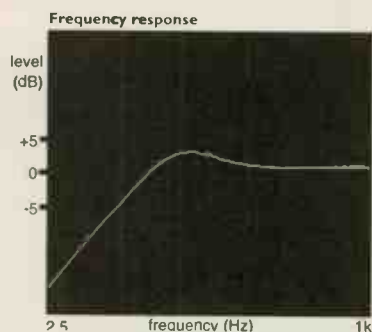
A parameter known as Equivalent Input Noise is the only way to quantify noise in a meaningful fashion within pre-amps. With this unit it measured 0.1uV CCIR weighted, which is about normal. Really quiet MC stages (Linn, NAD) can be up to 6dB quieter (0.05uV EIN), so the Henley is good, if not a class leader.

I was disappointed to find an input impedance in excess of 47k, a peculiarly high value. MC stages usually have a 100ohm input impedance so the Henley is somewhat unconventional in this area, for no good reason I know about. There was no hum on the output, a good point, but there was a massive DC offset of 5V. Through an all-direct coupled amplifier with no input blocking capacitor this would put 5V DC onto the loudspeakers, which would do no good at all.

Frequency response was flat across most of the audio band, but Henley have added a +2dB bass peak at 35Hz to provide some bass welly. I was disappointed that this had been achieved by a simple first-order warp filter which provided only -6dB of attenuation at 10Hz, not really enough. Our analysis, which runs from 2.5Hz up to 1kHz, clearly shows both phenomena.

In my view this phono stage could do with more development. **NK**

Frequency response	17Hz-75kHz
Separation	104dB
Noise	-75dBV
Distortion	0.003%
Gain	x1694
Overload	1.8mV



QUAD 707 POWER AMPLIFIER

The Quad 707 packs a good punch: it delivers 136watts into 8ohms and 225watts into 4ohms. Power supply regulation was excellent, allowing the amp to deliver a real wallop in the bass. The 707 will easily fill a large room with sound and drive difficult loudspeaker loads.

Bandwidth was wide at 8Hz-30kHz, but Quad have obviously decided to limit high frequency extension, not a bad thing.

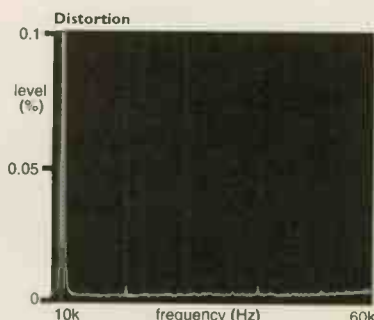
Channel separation was high and noise minimal. There was just about no DC output offset and little distortion either! Only at full output at 10kHz did the 707

produce just a smidgen of low-order distortion - impressive.

Sensitivity was such (700mV) as to require a pre-amplifier with gain.

The Quad 707 has been very well engineered. It measures near-perfectly. **NK**

Power	136watts
Frequency response	8Hz-30kHz
Separation	87dB
Noise	-93dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	700mV
dc offset	0.6/0.7mV



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Extracts from Hi-Fi World and Hi-Fi News and Record Reviews Jan '96, Sept '96, Dec '95 and May '97.

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LOUDSPEAKERS

POLK PSW 150 SUBWOOFER

Our frequency response analysis shows main driver output and port output from the Polk subwoofer. They combine to give an integrated response at the listening position.

Main output from the woofer cone runs from 50Hz up to 130Hz (-6dB). Like any reflex system, the lower limit is defined by a sharp roll-off influenced by the port's out-of-phase radiation. The upper roll-off is steady at -18dB/octave and should ideally be the inverse of a typical loudspeaker's roll-off in order to give a net flat response. Most loudspeakers are reflex types that in theory roll-off at -24dB/octave, reduced by room/wall gain of +6dB/octave or so to give around -18dB/octave overall, so Polk appear to have this parameter set sensibly.

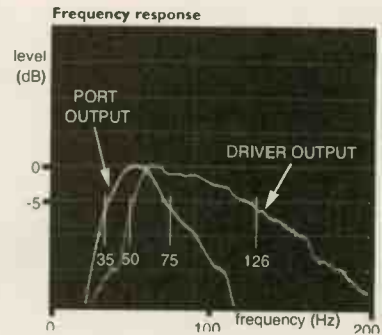
Measurement confirmed this: the

subwoofer combined perfectly with Mission 731Pros to give a flat response down to 50Hz. Some humping may well occur with infinite baffle enclosures having a slower roll-off but the tuning controls should cope with this satisfactorily. In our case, we set roll-off to the highest frequency and adjusted level to get a good match. Most important though was the phase switch.

Output from a reflex port is out-of-phase with main driver output. Port output provides extra downward extension though. With this subwoofer the port works from 35Hz up to 75Hz, our analysis shows. Polk have interestingly incorporated a phase reverse switch capable of putting port output in-phase with the main loudspeakers. Measurement showed this was vital if the port was to be usefully harnessed, as it needed to be, since the 731Pros have almost as much

downward extension as the subwoofer! With this switch set to Reverse, the 731Pros benefited usefully.

The Polk subwoofer does not, in my view, extend down far enough to justify its cost, bulk and complexity. A robust bass driver should, with electronic equalisation, get lower. RELs hit 10Hz or so with ease. It was otherwise well engineered. **NK**



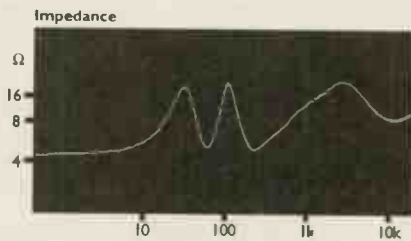
MISSION 731 PRO

Our third-octave frequency response plot of the diminutive Mission 731Pros shows they reach down to 63Hz (-6dB). They peak up by +2dB at 150Hz, which adds subjective speed and also helps keep the bottom end sounding lively. Little 'speakers like this have to use a bag of minor tricks to give a plausible subjective impression at low frequencies.

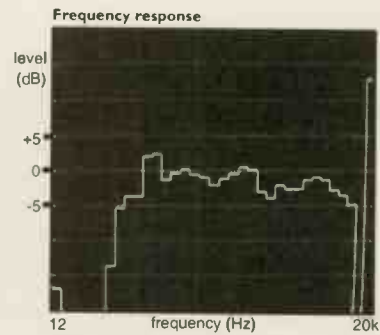
The tweeter's response has been placed a little below that of the bass/midrange unit, again I suspect to ensure the 'speaker displays a reasonably

full-bodied subjective balance. The tweeter has an acceptably smooth characteristic.

Sensitivity was as expected, measuring 86.5dB SPL from one nominal watt (2.8V), about right for a good but conventional miniature. Impedance was 7.5ohms overall, the analysis showing the usual midrange rise, 'till the tweeter cuts in, plus the twin



peaks of reflex loading. The 731Pros are a normal load. These 'speakers are well engineered. **NK**



CARTRIDGE

DNM ACIORE MC

The Geiger S stylus of this cartridge revealed itself in end-of-side tests - there was virtually no treble loss, an exceptional result. It shows the stylus can retrieve very short wavelength signals.

Frequency response was impressively flat from 20Hz up to 20kHz, with a little lift of +1dB or so around 8kHz on both channels, as our analysis shows. This will add a little brightness to the sound.

Tracking ability was high at low frequencies and in the mid-band, so the Aciore should sail through difficult cuts. Distortion was a little higher than usual

though, measuring 2% instead of 1-1.5%. There was significant third harmonic and some fifth too, so the Aciore could well have some bite to its sound.

Vertical tracking angle was high, measuring greater than 30degrees. This increases second harmonic distortion on left and right images. Luckily the ear is insensitive to large amounts of second (10% or so).

Output was low at 0.56mV at 5cms/second rms (0.4mV at 3.54cms/sec), so the Aciore will need a quiet phono pre-amp.

The DNM Aciore measures well all round, with the exception of VTA. **NK**

Tracking force	1.65gms
Weight	5gms
Vertical tracking angle	>30degrees
Frequency response	20-20k
Channel separation	26dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	90µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	24cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	2%
vertical	5%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	0.56mV



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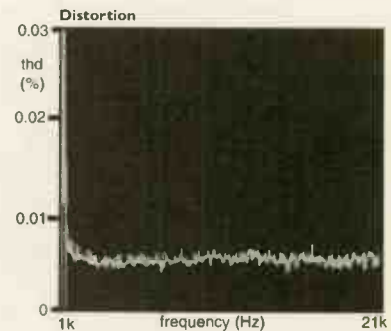
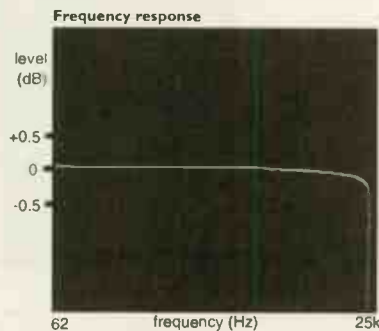
CD

MERIDIAN 506

Meridian generally aim for state-of-the-art measured performance and the 506 delivered it. It has a ruler flat frequency response, as our analysis shows, and very low levels of distortion by conventional standards. Against Denon's DCD-S10 of course, it comes second in this latter respect, if not by much. In its favour bandwidth does not reduce with short term impulsive signals. The response analysis shown here was derived using the same sort of short impulse applied to the Denon and stretches right out to 20kHz. The Meridian will sound tonally well balanced as a result, and not as warm as the Denon.

With good channel separation, low noise, excellent dynamic range and a high audio output of 2.6V, the Meridian measured well. The 506 CD player is as well engineered as most Meridian products. **NK**

Frequency response	4Hz-20kHz		Noise with emphasis	-108dB
				-108dB
Distortion (%)	left	right	Dynamic range	110dB
-6dB	0.004	0.004		
-30dB	0.018	0.018	Output	2.6V
-60dB	0.36	0.36		
-90	29	29		
-90dB dithered	noise	noise		
Separation (dB)	left	right		
1kHz	111	111		
20kHz	88	88		



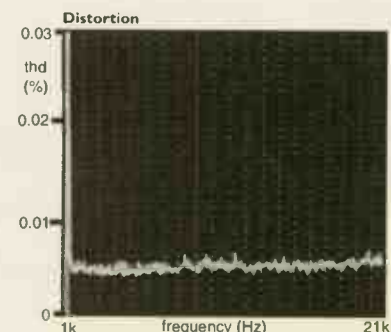
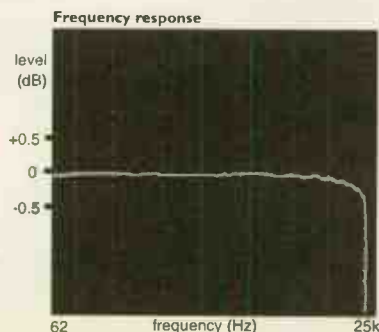
MARANTZ CD-67SE

Marantz have given the CD-67SE a little treble roll-off our response analysis shows, just enough to ensure the CD-67SE doesn't come over as bright or sharp, if not enough to make it sound warm.

The distortion analysis of a signal at -30dB shows noise rather than distortion, so this is a very linear player too. At lower levels though distortion and quantisation noise rose to low but not unusual values of around 0.6% at -60dB and 30% at -90dB. I would not expect the Marantz to sound coarse or hard all the same, although it may not match the Meridian or Denon in this issue.

Channel separation was wide and noise very low, probably because the player goes into muting at digital zero. Dynamic range (EIAJ) was good, if not exceptional, due mainly to the normal -60dB distortion

result, which substantially affects the outcome of this test. With a normal audio output level of 2.2V and very low levels of spurious output above 21kHz the Marantz CD-67SE measured very well. NK	-90	30	31
	-90dB dithered	noise	noise
Frequency response	4Hz-20kHz		Noise with emphasis
			-120dB
Distortion (%)	left	right	-120dB
-6dB	0.005	0.005	Dynamic range
-30dB	0.018	0.019	106dB
-60dB	0.57	0.6	Output
			2.3V
Separation (dB)	left	right	
1kHz	132	132	
20kHz	102	101	



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ANOTHER BIG HIT!

Following in the path of the original and extremely well received Assemblage DAC-1, the DAC-2 appears to be another big hit with customers and reviewers alike. The DAC-2 builds on the strengths of the original DAC-1, with its dual Burr-Brown PCM 702 20 bit DACs, Crystal CS8412 input receiver, toroidal power transformer and Analog Devices based output stage, but adds HDCD capability with the PMD-100 digital filter chip, an extra co-ax digital input on a BNC jack, a phase invert switch, three more power supply regulation stages with greatly increased power supply capacitance, and improved parts quality in the analog output stage. The best news is that all these improvements come with a very small price, the DAC-2 digital processor kit is **\$499.00 U.S.** Of course, the DAC-2 also comes with our 30 day satisfaction guarantee, two year limited warranty, AND our assembly guarantee, (If you can't get it to work, we will!).

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DENON DCD-S10

Denon use a digital processing scheme in this player to reduce distortion levels, especially on low level signals, but there is a price to pay.

Whilst the DCD-S10 measures normally for distortion at ordinary music levels (e.g. 0.02% at -30dB), down at -60dB where digital distortion usually measures 1% or so, it was one fifth that, or just 0.2%. At -90dB the gain was also great, distortion falling from 28% or so to just 7%.

This is an impressive result. However, whilst the Denon's audio frequency response measured flat with a slow sweep tone test signal, with a (convolved) impulse - the test we usually apply at Hi-Fi World - it rolled off prematurely, reaching just 8kHz (-1dB). I have encountered this phenomenon before, with Pioneer's Legato Link system. It gives a CD player a 'warm' and often spacious sound, but not one that is overtly dull. Since CD is

generally accused of sounding cold, hard and clinical, the coloration is euphonically appropriate in my view.

In all other areas the DCD-S10 measured well, as expected, because Denon are fluent in the field. **NK**

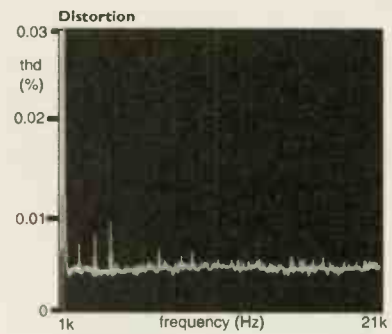
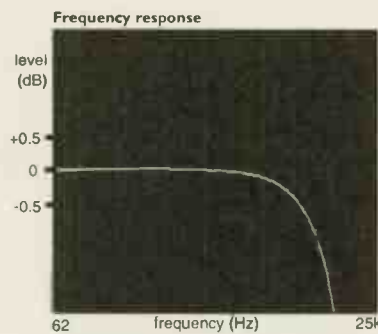
Frequency response	4Hz-8kHz	
Distortion (%)	left	right
-6dB	0.004	0.004

-30dB	0.022	0.019
-60dB	0.2	0.2
-90	7	7
-90dB dithered	6	6

Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	102	97
20kHz	87	92

Noise with emphasis	-114dB
	-114dB

Dynamic range	111dB
Output	2.3V



TUNER

AMC T7

The AMC T7 tuner has a good, flat audio frequency response, with just a slight downward tilt toward high frequencies. I would expect this to tinge the sound with a little body and warmth - a good thing.

Channel separation on stereo was wide at 44dB in the midband, with little deterioration at high frequencies (-32dB), enough to give solid left and right images and no centre dominance.

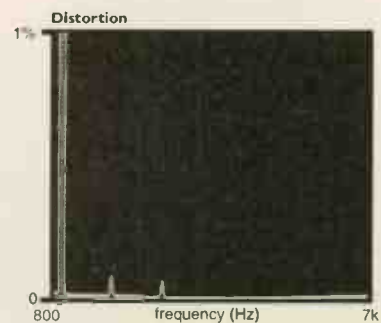
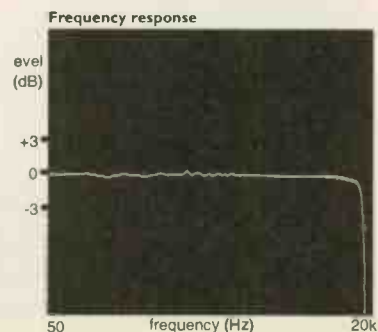
There was little distortion from this tuner; our analysis shows just a trace of second and third harmonic, measuring just 0.1%. This is too small to introduce any serious sonic degradation.

Filtering of pilot tone at 19kHz and subcarrier at 38kHz was effective; there was little of either. This prevents these inaudible tones from tricking the Dolby system when recording to cassette. Audio output was a healthy 500mV.

Hiss was low, reaching a minimum of -72dB with an aerial signal of 0.8mV or

more. And good sensitivity ensured the T7 will be as hiss-free as most tuners when faced with a weak signal. With very high alternate channel separation of 80dB, AMC's T7 tuner measured well all round. It has no weaknesses in its measured performance. **NK**

Frequency response	8Hz-15.7kHz
Stereo separation	44dB
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.1%
Hiss (CCIR)	-72dB
Signal for minimum hiss	0.8mV
Selectivity (at 0.4MHz)	80dB
Sensitivity	
mono	1.6µV
stereo	25µV
signal strength meter	none





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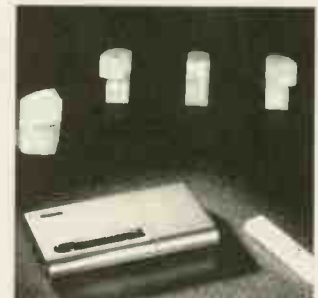
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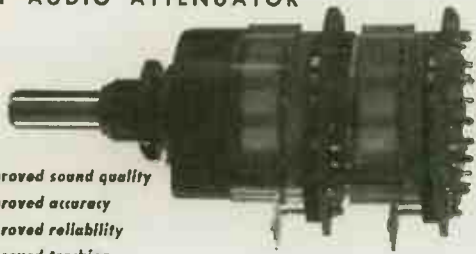


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This fantastic John Linsley Hood designed amplifier is the flagship of our range, and the ideal powerhouse for your ultimate hi-fi system. This kit is your way to get EK performance at bargain basement prices. Unique design features such as fully FET stabilised power supplies give this amplifier World Class performance with startling clarity and transparency of sound, allied to the famous HART quality components and ease of construction. Standard model comes with a versatile passive front-end giving 3 switched inputs, with ALPS precision "Blue Velvet" low-noise volume and balance controls, no need for an external preamp. Construction is very simple and enjoyable with all the difficult work done for you, even the wiring is pre-terminated, ready for instant use! All versions are available with Standard components or specially selected Super Audiophile components and Gold Plated speaker terminals and all are also available factory assembled.

K1100 Complete STANDARD Stereo Amplifier Kit £415.21
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 K1100CM Construction Manual with full parts lists £5.50

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 2-Gang 10K Special Balance, zero crosstalk and zero centre loss £17.48

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 2-Gang 20K Log Volume Control £26.20
 2-Gang 10K RD Special Balance, zero crosstalk and less than 10% loss in centre position £26.98

TOROIDAL MAINS & OUTPUT TRANSFORMERS for EL34, 32W VALVE AMPLIFIER

Special set of toroidal transformers, 2 output & 1 mains for the "Hot Audio Power" valve amplifier design described in the Oct. 1995 issue of "Wireless World". Total Wt 4.8Kg. Special price for the set. £99, Post £8

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This magnificent kit, comes complete with all parts ready to assemble inside the fully finished 228 x 134 x 63mm case. Comes with full, easy to follow, instructions as well as the Hart Guide to PCB Construction, we even throw in enough Hart Audiograde Silver Solder to construct your kit!

K1450 Complete Kit £116.58
 K1450SA Audiophile Kit £138.94
 A1450SA Factory assembled Audiophile unit £188.94

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K2100 Complete Standard Kit £112.50
 K2100SA "Senes Audiophile" Kit with selected audiophile components £115.46
 A2100SA "Senes Audiophile", Factory Assembled £115.46
 CM2100 Construction Manual £2.50

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The Hart "Andante" series power supplies are specially designed for exacting audio use requiring absolute minimum noise, low hum field and total freedom from mechanical noise. Utilising linear technology throughout for smoothness and musicality makes it the perfect partner for the above units, or any equipment requiring fully stabilised ±15v supplies.

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 K3550 Full Supply with all outputs £94.75
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 5070 Polyester Wool, 125g £3.20
 5069 Pure Lambs Wool, 125g £6.73

SPEAKER DESIGN SOFTWARE.

VISATON "Speaker Pro 6" is a complete speaker design program for use on IBM machines. Covers cabinet and crossover design and contains a full expandable database of drive units. Earning a "most recommendable" accolade it tests this program is ideal for the professional speaker builder or serious audiophile.
 0303 Speaker Pro 6, 3.5" Disk £45.51
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 "THE HART PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARD CONSTRUCTION GUIDE" £2.50
 "A SIMPLE CLASS A AMPLIFIER" J.L.Linsley Hood M.I.E.E. 1969, RLH12 £2.75
 "CLASS-A POWER" Single Ended 15W Amp. J.L.Linsley Hood M.I.E.E. 1996, RLH13 £2.50

LOUDSPEAKERS; THE WHY AND HOW OF GOOD REPRODUCTION. G.Briggs, 1949. £8.95
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 ELECTROSTATIC LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION Ronald Wagner BKT6 £15.95
 "THE ELECTROSTATIC LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN COOKBOOK" Roger P.Sanders, 1995 £24.95
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 THE VTL BOOK David Manley 1994, BKVT1 £17.95
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World favourites guide

COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

QUAD 67 second-hand

One of Quad's best products for a long time, the 67 is warmer and smoother than most, yet is highly musical and revealing. Good enough to frighten many rivals.

DENON DCD-315 £150

Real hi-fi and real music for a mere £150. Achieves a good semblance of orchestral dynamics and acoustic space.

NAD 510 £200

A competent all rounder with lifelike soundstaging and impressive treble clarity.

NAD 512 £250

Its smooth sound and fine treble extension make the 512 something of a rarity at the price. For the money rivals are few.

ARCAM ALPHA 7 £320

This British built player is extremely good value. An upfront, punchy nature suits Techno and Rock particularly well.

MARANTZ CD-63 Special Edition £350

A superb budget buy. Addressing the problems of the CD-52II SE, its detailed and musical sound embarrasses many expensive players.

MARANTZ CD-63MKII KI-SIGNATURE £500

Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound.

TRICHORD GENESIS £549

Conveys music in a powerful and dramatic fashion. Smooth and sweet, with a good sense of depth. A little soft sounding though.

DPA RENAISSANCE £895

Words cannot describe its infinite variety, but suffice to say you'll love it or hate it. Highly emotional, involving presentation with not a hint of self-doubt.

AUDIOLAB 8000CD £1000

Great presence and body through midrange along with good stage depth give this player a seductive and musical sound. A real charmer.

LINN KARIK 3 £1600

Superb one-box player. Its supremely rhythmic, musical sound with delicacy and finesse puts it up with the best of the rest.

NAIM CDI £1600

This single box 16-bit player sounds very engaging compared to your average bitstreamer. Has that vital tingle factor of the larger, two-box CDs.

MCINTOSH CDM7009 £2635

A thoroughly inspiring machine. One of the most musical CD players around; sweet, open and detailed.

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

TEAC VDRS-TI £550

Not as substantially built as its chunky looks suggest, the TI is nevertheless a good entry-level transport with a warm, expansive sound.

AUDIOLAB 8000CDM £1300

Beautifully built and finished, the CDM is packed with sensible features and performs superbly, day-in day-out.

CD CONVERTORS

DPA LITTLE BIT III £300

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THORENS TDA2000 £700

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PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO £1450+

Offers a choice of filter modules, all up there with the best. The Da Capo is superb in many respects, but can sound a touch polite on rock.

DPA 1024 £6000

Proof positive that today's CDs needn't sound CD-like! Uses an in-house discrete convertor, and DPA haven't skimped on the build either!

TURNTABLES

GARRARD 401 second-hand

In a decent plinth with an arm of SME309 calibre, the 401 has a highly authoritative overall sound with the most solid, expressive bass in the business. Very musical, but treble isn't up to modern standards.

THORENS TD124 second-hand

One of Thorens' best-ever turntables. Needs a modern plinth to give of its best. Duly installed, it's good enough to face off the Garrard 401, swapping some of its bass power for a more delicate, incisive treble.

SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250 £330

A fine all rounder and easy to upgrade. Brings more depth and breadth than a Rega 3.

SYSTEMDEK 2X2 £499

Although tuneful, bass isn't as deep as some rivals. More than makes up for it though with neutral and precise midrange and treble.

RESON rs1 £600

A lean, yet vibrant sound quality that really draws the listener in. With good detail and rhythmic integrity this is an impressive turntable package.

MICHELL GYRODEC £800

Stunning looks, build and engineering, and don't underestimate the sound. Standard PSU and Rega arm gives a detailed, architectural, if undynamic sound. With QC PSU and SME V, its scale and insight kills the competition at the price.

PRO-JECT 6.1SA £999

The Pro-ject places the listener in the best seat in the control room. Outrageous dynamics and a punchy, seriously deep bass. Comes with Sumiko arm and Ortofon MC30 Supreme.

LINN SONDEK LP12 £840 - £1530

Cirkus bearing puts it back up with the best. Superbly beguiling, rhythmic sound that plays Jazz like few others, but lacks the Gyrodec's detail or imaging. You'll forget CDs were ever invented.

PINK TRIANGLE ANNIVERSARY £1200

One of the finest-sounding turntables around, the Anniversary takes the listener nearer the recording studio than almost any other deck. Works with Rega, Linn and SME arms alike.

ROKSAN XERXES X £1295

DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150/170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new Swiss motor and outboard power supply. Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity.

MICHELL ORBE £1950

The Darth Vader of analogue, the Orbe builds on the strengths of the Gyrodec. An ultra-tuneful, expansive sound.

SME MODEL 20 £2495

Including the excellent SME V tonearm, the Model 20 is possibly the last great turntable, unless you've got £11,000 for the Model 30, that is.

TONEARMS

REGA RB300 £130

Supremely capable at the price, but not quite humankind's salvation as has been suggested. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding.

SME 3009SII £375

This Paleolithic device doesn't bother with frequency extremes or detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Oh death, where is thy sting?

SME309 £570

A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

SME IV £850

A Series V with lower toleranced bearings, cheaper cables and no damper. Still vastly over-engineered and almost capable of its bigger brother's sonic fireworks. SME's best value product.

SME V £1235

A masterpiece of precision engineering with a cohesive, ultra-transparent sound. A dream to set up and use.

LINN EKOS £1400

A thunderous battleship of an arm, with a very impressive sound, masses of detail and dynamics, but lacks the SME V's cohesion and musicality.

CARTRIDGES

ORTOFON VMS-2E £10

Warm, full-bodied, punchy and fast. Not to be sniffed at for a tenner. Can be upgraded with a better stylus at a later date.

World favourites guide

GOLDRING 1012GX £60

An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. £20 buys the faster, more dynamic 1022GX.

GOLDRING 1042 £100

The best moving magnet available. Has an extremely cohesive sound that's warm but highly involving. Deliciously delicate treble and strong, powerful bass.

ORTOFON MC15 SUPER II £110

An excellent budget moving coil with a smooth, polished, detailed sound. Tracks superbly but verges on the analytical at times. A bargain.

ORTOFON SUPREMES £225-£450

The MC10, MC20 and MC30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a distinctively rich, smooth and detailed musical performance. The valve brigade love them.

ORTOFON MC2000 £650

We came across this one in an SME IV on a Garrard 401; it duly gave one of the best results we've ever heard.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000

In a way it's MC2000 meets MC7500 with the tonal strengths and dynamo sound Ortofon have been putting into their moving-coil cartridges of late.

LYRA LYDIAN £649

A truly musical, sophisticated device that makes most other MCs sound frigid.

VAN DEN HUL MC-10 £840

Fluid bass, finely etched treble and highly tuneful in between. The MC-10 is honey, pure and simple.

ORTOFON MC7500 £2000

Conclusive proof that there's hope for humankind. Makes music of enormous scale and vibrancy. CD lovers would die if they heard it.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

NAD 3020 *second-hand*

Classic sweet sounding, punchy budget super-amp with strong phono stage. Able to embarrass many modern budget amps.

NAD 310 £130

A real hi-fi amplifier at a bargain price. Forms the heart of a separates system that will murder any midi system at twenty paces. No phono stage, but you can't have everything at this price.

NAD 312 £200

Smooth, clear and dry. Fine detailing with little to complain about at the price. Good facilities.

ROTEL RA-970BX £250

With its smooth and powerful sound, the Rotel sings a seductive song with all types of music. Powerful enough for most 'speakers too.

AURA VA-80 £280

The VA-80 is superb for the price with a confident, powerful sound. One of the smoothest around, it is capable of embarrassing more up-market competition.

ORELLE SA-100 £449

Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch too. One of the best at the price.

ARCAM ALPHA 9 £500

A detailed and open sound lends great atmosphere to music. Wide range of facilities too, including optional MM/MC phono stages.

AUDIOLAB 8000A £500

A jack-of-all-trades whose facilities, build, power and top-rate phono input make it a steal. Sound is good, but less involving than the Naim Nait 3.

NAIM NAIT 3 £500

A taste of high-end audio. The most involving, musical design at the price, but low power. Superb phono stage is £100 extra.

MISSION CYRUS 3 £500

Superb engineering, a solid cast chassis and a clear, spacious sound. Phono stage could be better.

SONNETEER CAMPION £579

An amplifier that delivers near studio definition along with exemplary timing. Utterly gripping.

DPA RENAISSANCE £595

Rich and smooth, the Renaissance is one of the sweetest amps around, if lightweight.

AUDION STERLING ETSE £600

Economically but well built single-ended valve amplifier. Wonderful clarity with vocals. £600 with 1 line input, £800 with 5.

SUGDEN A21a £640

Class A transistor amp. Rich, crisp, deep, tight sound and it images well too. Wonderful.

AUDIOLAB 8000S £650

Fast, clear, crisp sound with a wide-open sound stage. One of the best at the price.

MERIDIAN 551 £795

Beautifully-built integrated with a sweeter, clearer sound than mid-price alternatives. Plenty of facilities and remote controllable.

UNISON SIMPLY 2 £995

This single-ended valve amplifier is smooth, sweet and open. An extremely musical performer.

UNISON SIMPLY 4 £1495

Sonically similar to the Simply 2, but with more power and control.

AUDIONOTE OTO SE £1500

Ten watts of the sweetest sound around. Use sensitive speakers though, because it's unlikely to crack windows or trigger earthquakes.

McINTOSH MA6800 £3735

The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive and a three-dimensional sound stage.

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

NAIM NAC32.5 *second-hand*

Naim's one-time top pre-amp is still a force to be reckoned with thanks to its precise, fast sound and excellent phono stage.

ROTEL RQ-970BX £130

Superb value entry-level phono stage with audiophile quality components and clear sound.

DPA DSP200S £495

Not quite the 50S, but there's little to match it at this price if outright sound quality is your priority.

ROSE RV23-S £495

This interesting valve/transistor hybrid has a smooth, rich, spacious sound.

AUDIOLAB 8000C £520

Versatile with superb phono input. Can sound sterile, but latest version is much improved.

MICHELL ISO/HERA £530

This phono stage has fine midband and treble detail, with taut bass. The £850 ISO/HR brings more of everything, and for many people is the last word on the subject.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2 £749

Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around. One for vinyl lovers.

AUDIOLAB 8000Q £995

Excellent line-level only pre-amp, greatly improves on 8000C with a more fluid, musical sound and greater grip. Remote control.

MERIDIAN 502 £1295

Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and a neutral presentation. Flexible and remote controlled too.

NAIM NAC82 £1945

This remote control pre-amp thrusts detail forth in true Naim fashion.

POWER AMPLIFIERS

QUAD II *second-hand*

Classic valve monoblock with many thousands still in use around the world. Archetypal warm, smooth valve sound, although not the last word in detail or dynamics.

LEAK STEREO 20 *second-hand*

The Stereo 20 can sound impressively up-to-date, although power and detail are ultimately limited.

QUAD 405II *second-hand*

Solidly built, but lifeless sounding, power amp which can be substantially improved by a Quad factory service.

ARCAM ALPHA 9 £400

With 70watts on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass drive too.

MISSION CYRUS POWER £450

This power amplifier is a honey. Rich and smooth, but with a firm grip; a fine blend of properties.

ROSE RP190 £495

Used with the partnering pre-amp it gives 70watts of smooth, relaxing sound.

SUGDEN AU41P £530

Extremely competitive at the price with 100W of unusually smooth, full-bodied sound.

SHEARNE PHASE 3 £619

A neutral, highly dynamic and thoroughly exciting amplifier. A sonic bargain.

World favourites guide

QUAD 606II £675

Quad's latest 140W powerhouse is smooth and civilised, but engagingly musical. Legendary back-up service.

DPA DPA200S £750

Better than anything else at the price. Not as dry as the 50S.

NAIM NAPI80 £900

Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, making for a superbly rhythmic presentation. A touch lean for some tastes.

MICHELL ALECTO STEREO £1300

A refined transistor amplifier with valve-like transparency and a full, warm, easy-going sound. The £1800 Alecto monoblocks have rare lucidity and three dimensional realism.

MERIDIAN 557 £1400

Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.

AUDIOLAB 8000M £1500

Beautifully built, powerful amps that will drive anything you care to throw at them. Detailed, analytical sound, but a touch grey compared to valve rivals.

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE second-hand

Our favourite way of listening to the wireless. A deliciously smooth, mellifluous sound that will have you junking your transistor radio in seconds. Ergonomics are crude, and you'll need a decent aerial and stereo decoder.

NAD 412 £190

The 412 is remarkably musical and natural sounding. Rich sound and full bass are a rarity. Unbeatable at the price.

KENWOOD KT-6050L £300

Very, very tuneful and as clear and detailed as CD. Tuners like this have you sitting in your seat wondering at the sheer wealth of music out there.

MISSION CYRUS FM7 £300

Clear and lucid sound that puts it up with the best regardless of price. Superb build and superior ergonomics to the NAD.

ROTEL RT990BX £500

High quality Michi-based tuner with a sophisticated, forward sound with great imaging and soundstage. Sensible facilities and remote control.

NAIM NAT03 £500

The NAT03 is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners, with a warm, easy sound and a good sense of atmosphere.

FANFARE FT-1 £1350

In its native US the FT-1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquits itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

NAIM NAT01 £1380

The best solid-state tuner available. For better radio, live in the studio.

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750 £150

Sonically a very decent machine. For the price there's nothing better. With Dolby B, C and S.

KENWOOD KX-3080 £160

A simple deck, but high quality head and transport give an unusually high level of performance at this price. Not to be missed.

DENON DRM-650S £230

Forget metal tapes, but sound quality with ferrics and chromes makes it a bargain.

AIWA AD-S950 £300

A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make this an excellent recorder.

PIONEER CT-S740S £430

A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, a bit complex, but a first rate sound on playback and recording. Dolby S included.

NAKAMICHI DR2 £600

Where serious cassette decks start. The DR2 pushes recordings to the limit, remaining unflustered at all times.

NAKAMICHI DRI £850

Better still than the DR2, with manual head azimuth adjustment to boot.

NAKAMICHI CR7 £1500

Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves.

LOUDSPEAKERS

MISSION 731i £130

A truly worthwhile improvement on the old 731s, sounding faster, stronger, tighter and more subtle. Able to take on all comers.

MISSION 731 LE £149

An extensive reworking of Mission's entry level 'speaker, much tighter on transients and more refined treble. Neutral and revealing.

TANNOY 631 SE £170

Great bass extension, super open and focused midrange and fine detail up-top. Work best on filled dedicated stands; unmatched at the price.

HEYBROOK HBI S3 £269

Fine tonal resolution through midrange and a smooth and extended treble make the HBIs ideal for Classical/acoustic music. Bass is a little boxy and constrained though.

CELESTION IMPACT 23 £299

Smooth and even handed. Clear and well extended treble and deep, tight bass. Midrange is focused and pure with plenty of detail and speed.

B&W DM 602 £300

Deep and strong bass, pure, projected and uncoloured midrange. Treble quality a little metallic, but imaging precise. A lively, enjoyable sound.

REL Q-BASS £350

Few subwoofers match the Q-Bass at the price. The tuning controls can be a bit of a fiddle, but once set up the rest is pleasure.

EPOS ES12 £495

Strong, punchy bass is allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble. Above all, these 'speakers are thoroughly musical.

REL STRATA £500

The Strata is not a toy. Offers superb, true hi-fi bass depth and power.

MISSION 752 Freedom £600

Use advanced High Definition Aerogel bass/midrange and silk dome tweeter. Dynamic, punchy and musical, yet refined like few others at the price. Not as soft as the original 752s.

TANNOY D100 £650

This small dual-concentric loudspeaker produces believable three dimensional imaging.

CASTLE AVON £700

Taut, dry bass and lucid midrange from their carbon fibre driver, but need warm ancillaries to avoiding sounding bright.

HARBETH HL-P3ES £799

A fine example of good loudspeaker engineering. The top of the mini-monitor league.

HARBETH HL-K6 £975

Clean, musical and classy - Harbeth have done themselves proud again.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE £995

The KEFs combine pin-point imagery and detail with a smooth and polite balance. Good, agile bass too.

HEYBROOK SEXTET II £1129

Heybrook have retained the strengths of the original Sextet, whilst improving on bass extension and smoothness. Treble and imaging still up with the very best.

MISSION 754 FREEDOM 5 £1299

Highly articulate and informative sound with fine imaging and tight, deep bass extension. Uses silk dome tweeter, HDA midrange and 8" bass driver.

HARBETH HL COMPACT 7 £1329

Dry and analytical, but truthful and uncoloured with it. A cohesive sounding top class monitor.

EPOS ES25 £1505

Epos' best. Combines near-uncoloured tonality with characteristic fireworks in the rhythm department. Superb by any other name.

SPENDOR SP7/I £1970

This big Spendor is very appealing thanks to its lucid sound and valve-friendly load.

TANNOY AMS8 £2700

Bold sounding professional active monitor with solid bass, clearly focused midrange and delicious treble. Built-in amplification.

QUAD ESL-63 £2860

A reference against all other loudspeakers, with superb imaging qualities and genuine transparency. Earlier ESL model is an excellent second-hand buy; both enjoy legendary Quad service back-up.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES FOUR £3099

Superb bass and near-electrostatic soundstaging make these involving loudspeakers a reference to others. Need a strong amplifier though.

JBL S2600 £3500

Smooth, detailed and spacious with great dynamics and fine imaging. Capable of producing a superb performance when used in a big room.

TANNOY WESTMINSTER ROYAL £10,000

An incredibly dynamic, detailed full-range horn design with a rich sound. Its high sensitivity predisposes it to valve amplification.

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MICROMEGA DATA & DIALOG CD Player	£4250	£3650
PRO AC Studio 250 Loudspeakers (Cherry)	£2249	£1995
PROCEED PRE Pre Amplifier	£1995	£1550
PROCEED POWER Power Amplifier	£1995	£1650
TRICHORD GENESIS CD PLAYER IN CASE	£930	£550
RUARK PALADIN Loudspeakers (Rosewood)	£1099	£850
REGA ELICIT Integrated amplifier	£730	£550

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MISSION 73PS Sub Bass (Boxed as new)	n/a	£95
QUAD 77 Integrated Amplifier (6 weeks old)	£700	£495
YAMAHA DSP-A270 DSP Amplifier	£1100	£595
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PRO AC TABLETTE II Loudspeakers (Teak)	n/a	£375

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YAMAHA DSP A590 Pro Logic Amp	£350	£285

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	E77, E77 Mg	N/A	£36.00	R20 XE, QLM, 34/36, XLM III	£13.50
	P77, P77 Mg	N/A	£48.00	AN 5/11/30/60/8745	£9.00
Audio Technica	AT 95E	£21.00	£12.50	AN 2/10/70/77/0/4932/8743	£11.00
	AT 110 E	£25.00	£13.00	RS 3/33/5/38/84/85/90	£9.00
	AT OC9	£280.00	£210.00*	SP 8/9/12A	£25.00
	AT 120ET	£45.00	£31.50	ST 14/15/16/17/19/21	£3.00
	AT 440 ML	£81.00	£53.00	Dual DN 145/155/165/E DN 149 S	£13.50
	AT 450 E	£63.00	£33.00	G800/820/850 (D110/D120/0130)	£11.00
	ATML150	£187.00	£128.00	6800 Sup E	£13.50
	DL 110	£70.00	£55.00*	Hitachi DS-ST 7/12/14/15/26/30/35/102	£9.00
	DL 304	£190.00	£160.00*	DS-ST 5/16/23/24/25/55/103/104	£11.00
	DL 304	£190.00	£160.00*	DT 3/3/35/36/45/55/60/65, DT Z1 S	£9.00
Goldring	1006	£53.00	£34.00	JVC N 47/48/51/53/60/61/63/66/72	£9.00
	1012 GX	£70.00	£46.00	Kenwood (Trio) N 36/37/43/45/56/59/62/67/69	£11.00
	1022 GX	£90.00	£57.00	National EPS 23/24/25/30/33/35 I CS/270 D	£9.00
	1042	£105.00	£70.00	(Technics) EPS 43/52/75/76/ STSD, P30/33 D	£9.00
Grado	ERDICA (LX/M)	£100.00	£65.00*	P30 (Upgrade), EPS 205/207 E	£13.50
	ELITE	£187.00	£122.00*	Ortofon FF 15/WMS 10/20 EIL, OM/P 20	£13.50
	Prestige black	£44.00	£24.00	Philips GP 371/40/8780/400 I/III	£9.00
	Prestige green	£53.00	£29.00	GP 33D/37D/40/41/401 I/IV/12 II	£11.00
	Prestige Blue	£62.00	£34.00	Pioneer PN 27D/27D/240/K65/250T/295T	£9.00
	Prestige Red	£80.00	£49.00	Sansul SN 27/28/29/33/34/37/41/50/80/101	£9.00
	Prestige Silver	£107.00	£59.00	ST 80/100/151/66/613	£6.00
	Prestige Gold	£134.00	£74.00	Sanyo ST G-1/9/10, ST 28/29/35/37/40 D	£9.00
	Ortofon OM/OMP 5 E	£20.00	£16.00	Sharp STY 104/111/116/117/118/123/124	£9.00
	DM 10	£28.00	£20.00	N 75-4/C.G.N 91 G.SS 35 C	£9.00
Ortofon	510	£32.00	£22.50	Shure N 44 I, N 70 EJ, N 75 ED, VE T2	£11.00
	520	£59.00	£45.00	N 55 I, N 95 ED/EJ, N 97/105 ED	£13.50
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	MC 1 Turbo	£70.00	£50.00*	N 95/07 HE, VN 35 HE	£22.00
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	MC 10 Super	£92.00	£78.00*	ND 105/143/148/158/220/250 G	£11.00
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	MC 25 FL	£210.00	£178.00*		
	MC 10 Supreme	£263.00	£224.00*		
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	SC 35 C	£29.00	£20.00		
	V 15 III	N/A	£39.00		
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CONCORDE NCLUB S	76.00	105.00**	29.00
CONCORDE NCLUB E	64.00	88.00**	24.00
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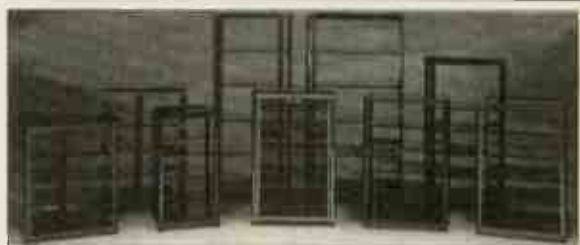
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Also now in stock is the latest townsend seismic sink stand, which as well as being a brilliant design, looks great and is quite unique. Prices from £700 to £1000 depending on size and number of shelves. Do also come and hear our home cinema set-up, which is still the most musical and exciting we have heard. Harmon Kardon AVI250 and ADP303 THX amp and AC-3 decoder in stock.

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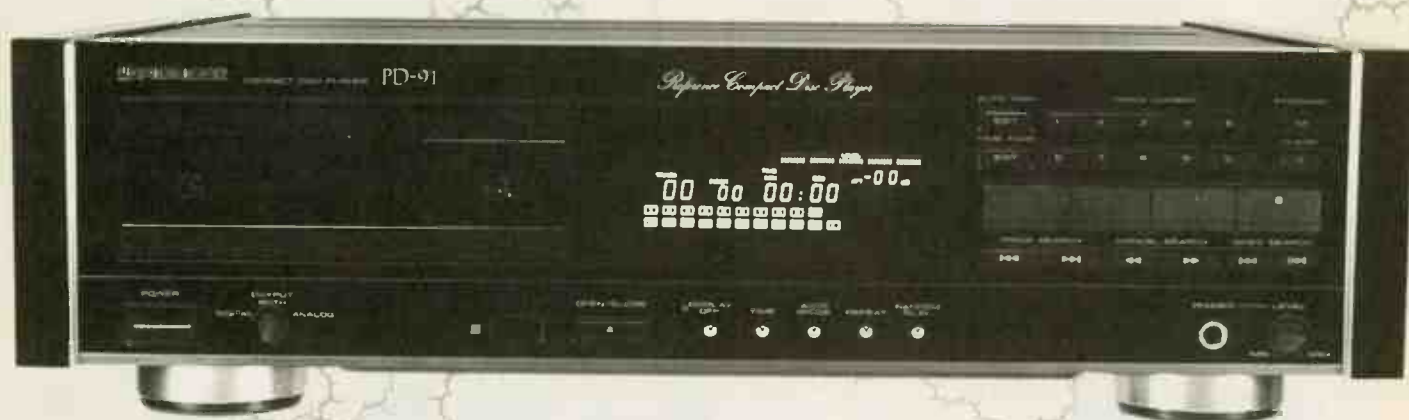
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review

PIONEERING

Player

This month Jon Marks pays homage to a CD player that makes music in a most un-digital manner.



As time passes, it seems, more and more hi-fi goes from being built to last to being built to last for a while. I don't mean by this that a lot of modern hi-fi is shoddy. It's just that contemporary components just don't seem to have had the same kind of care and effort lavished on them as something like Pioneer's PD-91 Reference CD player from 1988.

Take a peek under the lid of the Pioneer and you'll find acres of copper plating and shielding for sensitive circuitry. The eagle-eyed will also notice fair numbers of the well known Elna Cerafine electrolytic capacitor.

Try hefting the PD-91 and you'll swiftly realise this is no biscuit box full of air. With its high-gloss wooden side cheeks, substantial base plate (stamped with hexagonal indentations to dissipate vibration), mains transformer mounted on the back panel and high quality transport this player weighs in at 12kg.

The twin 18-bit Burr-Brown DACs the '91 relies on may be a little long in the electronic tooth but they can still turn out a performance to equal any modern player at £600-£700. And rhythmically the Pioneer is second to none - more than almost any other CD player I've come across, the '91 captures the vitality and drive in music, whether Rock or Classical.

Compared to DPA's £900 Renaissance player, which itself betters many more expensive players, the Pioneer sounded a bit rough across the midrange and lacking in dynamics. The Display Off switch might look like a gimmick but using it has a big impact on the sound, bass becoming tighter and better controlled and midrange smoother.

A machine of this vintage is ripe for modification, especially in the master clock department. Trichord Research (tel: 01684 573524) and Marston Audio Research (tel: 01553 772875) both

offer clock upgrades as well as improved analogue output stages (the Pioneer uses fairly standard 5534 op amps here). Plumping for these upgrades yields a much more transparent, detailed sound and a midrange free from roughness.

What really makes the PD-91 special though is its transport. When hooked up to our Pink Triangle DAC the sound was appealingly open and firm with that excellent sense of rhythm that only seems to come from the best transports (like TEAC's P-30 for example).

As an unmodified player that can be snapped up for about £350, Pioneer's PD-91 offers a mix of great build quality and a level of musical involvement many modern players fail to reach. And with a few tweaks to bring the Pioneer up to date in a couple of areas, it has the potential to offer great single-box sound quality or to partner a DAC as an excellent transport ★

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AUDIO INNOVATIONS SERIES 300 integrated amp £295. Marantz CD94 £395. Epos ES14's in black £395. Magnum MP125 preamp £145. Creek 2020 integrated £75. Leak 2030 speakers £65. Rotel tapedeck £45. Tel: 01200 428081

FOR SALE: Naim CD1 CD player £1350. Naim NAT02 tuner. Both 18 months old, absolutely mint condition, all packaging. Richards Tel: 01639 814628

ATC SCM50A active speakers teak £3250. Revox B260-S RDS Tuner £1195. Ben Duncan's Amp-01 ClassA preamplifier with possibly the best vinyl input ever £350. Marantz CD94 with Covent Garden Bitstream upgrade £350. All excellent, with boxes and handbooks. Moving to smaller house. Tel: Nottingham 0115 9242075

FOR SALE: VOYD TURNTABLE, black, Reference Bearing and Platter, split phase power supply, Rega arm and Goldring 1022 GX cartridge £1500 ono. Tel: 01443 422796 after 6pm

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Nakamichi 600	£500	£149
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Naim NAT101	£1250	£695
Pioneer F91 (Reference Tuner)	£695	£375
Quad FM4 (Grey)	£475	£245

AMPLIFIERS

Albarray APS1 / PSU / DMP 1 / M408	£1400	£600
Arcam Alpha 3 (Integrated)	£230	£135
Arcam Alpha 3 (Integrated)	£230	£135
Arion Electra (New) Integrated	£1400	£875
Audiolab 8000S	£700	£500
Audion Sterling (Silver wired power)	£599	£495
Audio Research LS3 (Blk) Pre	£2000	£1395
Audio Note M2 (Pre-amp)	£1000	£700
Aura Evolution	£350	£269
AVI S2000MI (Ex-dem)	£899	£699
Concordant Excelsior	£1295	£695
Exposure 7 Pre / 8 Power	£1100	£575
Jeff Rowland Model 3 Monoblocks	£4000	£2250
John Shearman Phase 2 (Integrated)	£595	£425
Lecson AC1 / AP1	£750	£295
Linn Majik 1 (Inc MM Phono stage)	£890	£450
Linn LK1 / Dirak PS / 2 X LK280	£2500	£1200
Linn Kairn / LK100	£2350	£1695
Magnum MF / MP120 (As new)	£600	£475
Meridian 562 Pre (Ex-dem)	£995	£795
Meridian 565 AC3 / 519	£3150	£2350
MicroMega Tempo 2 (Integrated)	£950	£650
Myryad MI 120 (Ex-dem)	£500	£439
NAD 208 (THX Power)	£1100	£899
Naim NAC32 / Hi-Cap / 250	£2700	£1250
Naim 72 / 180 (As new)	£1785	£1375
Naim 92 / Flat Cap / 90 (As new)	£1260	£900
Pioneer A91D (Reference)	£1250	£595
Quad 66 / 606	£1515	£995
Quad 34 / 306	£715	£495
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Sugden Symetra Mono amps	£1550	£1050
Sumo Athena (Pre) + 9 (Power)	£1900	£995
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CD PLAYERS

Arcam Delta 70 / Black Box 3	£1100	£675
Audio Research DAC 1 (Silver)	£3000	£1395
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Linn Karik 3 (As new)	£1850	£1395
Meridian 206B Delta Sigma	£795	£425
MicroMega Stage 3	£900	£595
Naim CD3 (1 month old)	£997	£797
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Quad 66	£595	£455
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Sony CD-P701ES	£795	£295
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LOUDSPEAKERS

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Linn Sara (Teak)	£700	£295
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Linn Isobariks / Naim active Xover (To clear)	£1975	£475
Linn Kelidh (Black + Granite stands)	£795	£595
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Mission 754 (Oak) Ex-dem	£1498	£1198
Naim SBL (Walnut) Paxo S/soiled	£1975	£1379
Proac Response 1	£1200	£850
Quad ESL57 (Black)	£1500	£395
Quad ESL63 (Rosewood)	£3500	£1800
REL Sentour	£1800	£995
Spendor S100	£2125	£995
Tannoy Berkeley 15" HPD (Walnut)		£1150
Tannoy Lancaster 15" Gold (Circa 1960)		Offers over £500

And WHAT'S NEW?

Most of the hi-fi bargains you'll see listed on the left have come into stock when customers have chosen to up-grade components or systems at The Hi-Fi Company. Generous trade-in allowances are just one of the benefits enjoyed by our customers because - we really want your old hi-fi equipment! And, most importantly, we back up our **Easy Up-Grade** facility with the most appetising stock of hi-fi equipment at any price level.

As well as virtually every justifiably 'award winning' component and system featured in the serious hi-fi press, we always keep a wide range of equipment which we consider to have outstanding or unique qualities and characteristics, regardless of budgetary constraints or that invidious 'sound for your pound' jounalese espoused by 'popular' hi-fi magazines, and which so demeans the aspirations of more discriminating enthusiasts!

In fact it is obvious to us that most of our customers have quite individual and specific expectations, often not met by the 'vanilla' favourites of the popular press! For them (and hopefully, you) we keep right up-to-date with the very latest, and most interesting hi-fi components and systems available for your assessment.

Amongst several exciting new products that have found favour in our demonstration studios in the last few weeks are the following:

- ♦ **SONUS FABER**
Concerto Grand Piano £2299
- ♦ **MICHELL ORBE** with
SME Series IV / Lyra Lydian £3445
- ♦ **AUDIOLAB**
8000 CD Player £1000
- ♦ **NAIM Credo**
Loudspeakers £1060
- ♦ **KRELL KAV 250 P/A**
Pre and power £5280
- ♦ **COPLAND CDA 277**
CD Player £1799
- ♦ **MERIDIAN 565 (7.1)**
DTS/AC3 Dig. Processor £2850
- ♦ **M&K 150 THX (5.1)**
Studio Monitor Spkr System £5000
- ♦ **QUAD 77 Remote Control**
CD / Tuner / Amp system £2250
- ♦ **YAMAHA DDP-2**
AC3 Processor £350
- ♦ **MAGNEPLANAR**
MG - 0.6 SE Speakers £1370
- ♦ **MARTIN LOGAN CLS IIr**
Full Range Electrostatics £4555

To arrange for your personal listening session, please call us on our 'What's New?' line below.

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I.M.F. PROFESSIONAL MONITORS MK IV improved with stands, absolutely stunning sound. Good condition, can demonstrate. Reason for sale, move to a small house £950. Tel: 0191 417 5145 evenings or weekends.

CONCORDANT EXEMPLAR 100 WPC £425 ono. B&W Active Sub70W £90. B&W 2000IFS Centre Speaker £50. Audioquest Crystal speaker cable 4m biwire £85. Tel: 01295 257175 (Banbury)

NAIM NAC 72 Preamp phono input Linn moving coil. Naim NAP180 power amp mint condition £995 or very near offer. Tel: 01202 570675 (Bournemouth)

1 PAIR of YAMAHA NS1000 Monitor Speakers with stands £450. 1 15in Tannoy Gold Speaker unit, no crossover £200. 1 pair/motion feedback Phillips speakers (Model 544) £50. Suit experimenter. Tel: 0181 893 4650

QUAD 34 PRE-AMP £155. Quad FM4 Tuner £185. Aiwa XK S9000 cassette deck £315. Thorens TD 160 Mk4 SME 3009 arm. Shure ML140 HE £325. All as new. Tel: 01203 544626 (Steve)

ROKSAN OJAN 3 ROSEWOOD £550. Audioquest Indigo 4x3meters £100. Rega Planar 2 £100. Target Audio 5 shelf equipment rack £100. Little used, no offers! Tel: 0468 420115 (01730 893106) Laurence (Hants)

MUSICAL FIDELITY E500 FM Tuner, original box with instructions, full remote control, unwanted gift (I have no Aerial) as new £275. Linn LK1 pre-amp, boxed with instructions £95. Tel: 01904 763157

QUAD ESL57s £250. Linn Kan 2s and stands £220. Teac X7 open reel £120. Akai 1721L open reel £90. Pair Tannoy DU316 gold drive units, offers. Hi-Fi News, 97 issues - 1957 to 1965, offers. Tel: 0181 893 1985

ART AUDIO "CONCERTO" Power amp upgraded with silver wiring & "Holco" resistors. 30W Triode/50W pentode. Spare valves, rarely available- £850 or swap for quality valve pre-amp. Tel: 0181 579 7451(H) 0171 287 4888(W) Richard.

SUGDEN SDT 1 SPECIAL EDITION CD Player, factory fitted analogue output stage upgrade with separate power supply. Trichord clock 2 system with power supply. Bargain at £350. Tel: 0181 881 4999

KRELL KSA 250, just serviced, mint £2999. Audio Research LS 2B MkII 11mths old £1999, serious bargain. Tel: 01623 871950

LINN AKTIV CROSSOVER for isobariks, mint- £500 ono. Musical Fidelity P170 power amplifier. Just serviced with latest circuitboards £300 ono. Sony Personal CD player- D150 £200 ono. Tel: 0958 560555 (Justin)

WILMSLOW AUDIO VOLT Home Studio Monitor Loudspeakers finished in real wood Teak veneer with Target stands £199. Pair KEF B110A Bass/Mid units £35. Tel: 01332 704668

LINN SONDECK LP12, Mission Electronics Speakers 751, Aura Evolution VA 100 MK2, Atacama Speaker stands, Ortofon SPK200 cable, all approx. 2yrs old, superb sound. Price £1500 ono. Tel: 01604 402856

LINN EKOS Tone arm in vgc £595. Tel: 01904 490796 (York)

QUAD ESL 57. Excellent condition. Original packing and cables. Serviced by Quad £325. Tel: 01837 840438 (Martin)

SNELL ACOUSTICS J II Speakers (black) on pirate stands £490. Will demonstrate. Tel: 01189 475459 (Reading)

WANTED: Trio/Kenwood L-07D Turntable. Working or not. Also accessories, manuals, packaging etc. bought for cash. Top prices paid. Tel: 01782 680376

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 1st Audio Monoblocks £650, Nakamichi BX300E, just serviced £300. Snell J2 speakers, boxed £450. Rotel pre/power amps £250. Sony S070ES Tuner boxed £90. May P/X. Tel: 01432 275203

LINN SONDEK with Ekos arm Trolka cartridge, Lingo power supply. Boxed, excellent condition £1395. Linn Axis with Basik Plus arm, boxed, excellent condition £299.95. Tel: 01752 664546 (Plymouth)

QUAD ELECTROSTATIC LOUDSPEAKERS £375. Grant G100AMS 100 Watt valve monoblocks £750. Lumley 120 monoblocks £1500. Audio Innovations First Audio £750. Lumley valve pre-amp £300. Townshend Glastonbury II Loudspeakers £600. Tel: 0121 784 8765

LUMLEY REFERENCE AUDIO- PVI Active Pre-amplifier, pair of M120 monoblock power amplifiers with Triode/Pentode switch. Pair of Reference LM2 Signature 4-way speakers, 12 metres of Audionote ANSP Silver Speaker cables, Linn LP12/Lingo/Ekos/Arkiv. Mint condition. Price negotiable. Tel: 01795 890338

GENUINE ENTHUSIASTS UPGRADE SALE: Harman Kardon PA2100 Power Amplifier, 65W x 2 or 130W x 1. Cost £350 accept £200. Musical Fidelity PRE3A Pre-Amplifier, superb quality. Cost £400 accept £180. Musical Fidelity Elektra E100 Integrated Amplifier with remote, 70W x 2. Cost £600 accept £380. JBL Sound Effects Director, Dolby Pro-Logic decoder 25W centre amp and 2 x 12.5W surround. Cost £280 accept £180. Magnaplaner MG1.4 Panal Loudspeakers, big but beautiful sound. Cost £1190 accept £500. All boxed as new with manuals. Tel: 0118 9845944 (office) Paul Ferguson (Nr. Reading). Tel: 01252 860438 evening 6pm + or weekends.

ROKSAN OJAN 3's in black. Excellent condition, superb bass extension and detail. Very reluctant sale £450 ono. Linn Kans Mk1 with stands, mint condition £250 ovo. Tel: 01902 756486 (Chris)

QUAD ELS 57 SPEAKERS x 2, Quad 33-303 Pre-amp/Amp. Quad FM3 tuner, Tanberg series 6 open spool tape recorder, Akai GX39D cassette tape deck, many extras £755 ono. Tel: 01271 860375

LINN EKOS. Recent overhaul, latest bearings fitted. Can be demonstrated. £600. Tel: 01245 283125 (Leigh)

BRYSTON 12B Pre-amp, mint condition £300 ono. Tel: 01276 451704 (Surrey)

300B SINGLE-ENDED TRIODE 'Silver Night' stereo amplifier, wonderful open soundstage, recent service, immaculate condition £675. Audio Innovations Series 200 pre/power separates, recent re-valve, as new £475. Tel: 01834 860681 (Pembrokeshire)

MANTICORE MANTRA Turntable, Magician arm, MB6 power supply, Goldring MC cartridge, mint boxed (new over £1700) accept £595 ono. Audiolab 8000M's (late spec) mint £950. Audiolab 8000P mint £425. Tel: 01634 387686

CLASSE CP50 PRE-AMP. Latest high end model under 1yr old, mint condition, remote, cost £2300. Owner changing to valves £1325 ono. Tel: 00 3531 4591432

BEAUTIFUL VALVE SYSTEM: Audio Innovations Series 800 Anniv. power amp, L1 pre-amp, Micromega Stage3 CD (upgradeable), Dafi 104ms speakers (bi-wired), quality interconnects, all boxed/manuals, Target 5-tier table, very reluctant sale £2095 ovo. Also, Linn LP12, ash, Linn Plus arm, K5 cartridge £300. Tel: 0115 959 8278 (Martin)

LINN PMS ISOBARIK SPEAKERS, Naim Naxo Snaps active crossover, cables and stands £950 ono. Tel: 01908 675607

WANT £3500 worth of Chord SPM 1000B Power-amp, Michell Argo/Hera preamp for only £1350? Both VGC and 1995. Separating hence giveaway price. Tel: 0973 209837/01734 321056 (Andrew)

EAR 834P PHONO STAGE, mint £295. 6 metres Audionote ANB. Bi-wired ex. £150. Helvius Scorpio Tonearm ex. £90. ART Audio VPI Valve Preamp ex. £275. ART Audio VPL Line Preamp MkII S.E. mint £495. Tel: 01509 231254

ACCUPHASE DP 70 Reference CD. Musical Fidelity MVT Preamp. Musical Fidelity 3A pre + 2P150 power amps. Nakamichi Professional cassette, fully balanced, 3 head, dual capstan. Apogee Centaur spks. Offers. Tel: 0181 523 1134

FOR SALE: NAIM 62/140 Pre/Power amp, M/C Phono boards, all cables, manual, absolutely mint £650. HiCap power supply, mint £325. Linn Nexus speakers, black ash, ku stone stands, mint £225. Audio-Technica OC9 M/C cartridge, boxed, unused, manufacturer's warranty £250. Tel: 01639 814628 (Richards)

WANTED: SIGNET MK3 CARTRIDGES any condition. For sale: Mission 770 speakers with stands £170. JPW Sonota speakers silver wired upgraded Xovers Kanii stands £150 ono. Tel: 01209 613733

EPOS ES25's, black, few months old £1100. Teac VRDS 10SE £650. Naim Nac 52 (original PSU) plus Nac 135's, new style £4300. Five Tier Custom Design Rack, glass shelves £125. Tel: 0181 311 8986 (Chris)

MICROMEGA STAGE 1 £270. DPA Little Bit Three £230. Exposure Super 15MM, new £600. Rogers Studio 3's, rosewood £250. Custom Design stands for Studio 3's £100. Tel: 0181 311 8986 (Chris)

MARANTZ CD63SE £250. Audio Alchemy, D.I.T.B. £140. Pioneer Laser Disc player 1950 £300. DPA integrated amp £350. Creek T40 tuner £120. Sennheiser HD580 Precision £120. Tel: 0181 311 8986 (Chris)

CHORD 1200B Power amp and Chord 2800 pre amp boxed with guarantee. Mint condition £4500. A.T.C. 20 SL Biwire monitors, just 3 months old £1250. Wanted: Transcriptors Turntable. Tel: 01226 710605 South Yorkshire

GOLDRING LENCO L69, Connoisseur SAU2, Decca FFSS model tonearms. Stylus balance. "Dual" Stylus Protractor. All wanted. For sale: two Wharfedale "5" bronze and "Super 5" speakers. 8 ohms. Offers please. Tel: 01286 831340 (Jamieson)

ATC Active 50 Speakers rosewood £2400, Monitor Audio Studio 20SE speakers £1200, Chord 1200 Amp £1300, Musical Fidelity FCD £700, Quad 34/4051I pre pwr £350, Quad 66 pre-amp £480. Tel: 01977 643629

LINN KARIK MK III CD Player boxed as new £1000. Pink Triangle Ordinal DAC as new £500. Naim NAC 72 new style, immaculate £400. DPA Enlightenment DAC & Drive £980 6 months old. Meridian 200-203 DAC7 mint £600. Tel: 01792 280061 (Jules)

MERIDIAN A-500 speakers £450. Meridian 508 CD player w/remote £850. Rogers E-40a valve amps £1350. Audiolab 8000-DAC £520. Audiolab 8000-A amps £220. All mint condition. Price negotiable or WHY? Tel: 0121 242 0570 (Birmingham)

TANNOY 3LZ SPEAKERS (10" gold monitors) £350. Lowther Accoustas, original PM6s, new surrounds £450. SME 3009 S2 improved, unused £100. Wanted: Tannoy GRF, York or Lancaster speakers. Tel: 01484 311456

LEAK TROUGHLINE Stereo Tuner, excellent condition £100. Leak Delta 70 amplifier, boxed £25. Tel: 01322 282512 days, 01622 820716 evns (Kent)

AUDIOLAB 8000P (grey case) mint £295, Monitor Audio MD850 very good condition £150, Target Heavy duty spiked and welded 17 inch sand filled stands £70. All boxed. Tel: 01761 414168 (Somerset)

SDI LOUDSPEAKERS (1989), custom built in DNM Rainbow Ribbon cable. In reasonable condition. Happy to demonstrate £400 ono. Please Tel: 01734 611918 after 7pm

MISSION 753 ROSEWOOD immaculate £450 (unboxed). Audiolab 8000 Q&P as new condition £1000 (boxed) sell as pair only. Can demonstrate and deliver if local. Tel: 0370 652742 (Kingston)

MICHELL GYRODEC, QC power supply, latest bearing, platter £750. VDH EMT MC1 BG cartridge, very rare, recently rebuilt, superb sample £700. Snell-E with Pirate stands, mint and boxed £750. Tel: 0181 206 1023

PAIR RUARK CRUSADER-II Speakers nearly new £850. Linn LK1 pre-amp with Linn Dirak power supply boxed as new £330. Teac Reel tape deck £350. Thorens TD160 Super Turntable with formula 4 arm A/R. Cartridge vgc £150. Mission DAC5 C/D digital converter boxed as new £160. Tel: 0181 406 4460 (Croydon)

MARK LEVINSON #28 Pre-amp w/phono Mark Levinson #29 Power-amp, will not separate. XLO 1m balanced interconnect included. £3300, best offer. Tel: Joe: 00 1 313-455-4377 work (7-3.30) 00 1 810-669-9686 home (6-10.00) USA (Eastern Standard Time) or minus 5 hours UK

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Decca FFSS Cartridge £70 to £100
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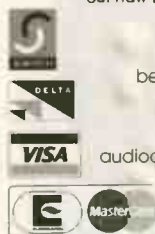
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TRICHORD

As well as the excellent Genesis and Revelation CD Players, we can also supply and fit the Trichord Clock and Digital Output systems to your existing player or transport. These modifications can be fitted to most players and improve transparency, detail and stereo to a surprising degree. The Clock 2 costs £141 or £221 with the power supply upgrade (including fitting), so for relatively little outlay, you can significantly improve the sound of your system.

LFD

We were pleased to read the very favourable review of the LFD Mistral amplifier in last month's HiFi World. This really is a superb model and is definitely worth a listen if you are looking for a new amp. The new matching Mistral CD Player is exceptionally good too and together they make a very rewarding system.

NEWS

We now have the Sonneteer Alabaster in stock which is very solidly built and sounds excellent. The Roksan Caspian system, which currently consists of CD, amp and speakers, should also be arriving soon and we have now added Origin Live to our range of loudspeakers; these speakers will not only get the best out of your system but they look very stylish too.

If you are interested in any of these products or would like advice generally, please call us on the number above.

second hand & ex dem

Audiovector 3 loudspeaker black ash x/d (£1500) very valve friendly - £875
Naim 140 power amp perfect, boxed, s/h current style - £450

Audiovector 5 loudspeakers black lacquer very (very, very) dynamic with astonishing bass quality and extension. Best in a big room. Very efficient but 4 ohm load x/d (£2500) - £1425
Or buy the **Naim** 62 / hi cap / 140 combination with all required cables - £1000

Unison Research Mystery One preamplifier. Absolutely perfect x/d (£1750) - £1395
Rogers LS33 loudspeakers Black (Vinyl) Ash, unmarked x/d (£249) - £200

Unison Research Simply Two Single Ended valve amplifier. Excellent s/h (£995) - £650
Royd Squire loudspeakers. Compact, slim floor-standers in walnut s/h (£390) - £210

Morel 705 SE loudspeakers. Black lacquered oak veneer Perfect, boxed Clear open and "fast" with excellent bass extension Compact floor standing loudspeakers that originally cost £1500 s/h - £500
Rego Planar 2 turntable with RB 250 arm and Rega cartridge. Good condition s/h - £110

Naim 62 preamplifier, perfect, boxed, s/h current style - £220
DPA IS19 loudspeaker cable 3 m terminated pair x/d (£140) - £65

Naim Hi-Cap, perfect, boxed, s/h current style - £400
Audioquest Incaiga Loudspeaker cable x/d 5m set (£150) - £110

Audioquest Type 6 loudspeaker cable x/d 5m set (£105) - £75



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ROGERS E-40a valve amps 3 months old £1350 ono. Consider to p/x either KEF 105/3 or 107/2 speakers or WHY? Tel: 0121 242 0570 (Birmingham)

MICROMEGA STAGE 6 CD. 7 mths old £750; Arcam Delta 290 amplifier £350; interconnects; Sennheiser HD580 Precision headphones £150; all boxed, manuals, mint condition, under warranty. Tel/fax: 0181 556 8255; wikt@compuserve.com

HEYBROOK SEXTETS £595. Mk2 specification, black with yew detailing. Tel: 01784 421123 (Geoff, office) / 01784 437150 (home) or e-mail: geoff.tmd@btinternet.com

PROAC RESPONSE 2.5 speakers in light oak, Van den Hul internal silver wiring (dealer upgrade) £2050. Music Fidelity F22/F15 pre-power amp combination £1580. Tel: 01284 769985 (Suffolk)

MERIDIAN 555 Power amp £400. Monarchy DIP (Jitter Buster) £120. Chord Flatline twin speaker cable- 10 mtr pair £150. XLO Signature interconnect 0.5 mtr pair £175. Tel: 01249 821288 (Wilts)

SUGDEN SDT-1 Integrated CD Player latest spec, purchased new 4/10/96 (1100) absolutely as new, boxed, manual, receipt £750. Nakamichi CR1 cassette deck mint boxed manual £150. Tel: 0141 647 5364

LINN LP12, Lingo, Ekos and Arkiv on Audiotech table. All excellent, less than 20 hrs use £1350. Over 400 albums £400. Denon TU 400L tuner and Cobra 405 "Gain" ariel £80. Tel: 01242 577496 (Cheltenham)

IIMPULSE H2 LOUDSPEAKERS excellent condition £900 ono. May part exchange for Audionote AN/J and stands. Tel: 01960 369607 (Philipp)

MILLER & KRIESEL V-75 Subwoofer, mint condition, boxed with manual £400. Tel: 01392 861373 (Exeter)

AE1's Rosewood with stands, boxed MkII £550. Castle Howard S2 immac £600 ono (rosewood). M. Fidelity Typhoons (2) bridged, modified brilliant boxed £500 ono Consider P/X for any of above - wanted value amps. Tel: 01332 663339

LINN KEILIDHS and stands, walnut finish £550. Tel: 01444 248424

LECSON AC1/AP3 MK2 Pre/amp, 150W per channel, matching Lecson SFM2 tuner. Boxed/manuals. Superb looks and sound £450. Possibly split. Ferguson 3V48 HiFi video recorder £125. Tel: 01344 776370 (evenings) 01734 868541(Work). Bailey.

QUAD 34/405-2 £350. Audio Technica AT-OC9 brandnew unopened £200. Michell Transcripator £200. Helius Scorpio silver wires £80. Thorens TD160 £70. Leak stereo30, FM/Troughline3 £100. Quad ELS, spiked £350. Tel: 01302 360836 (Doncaster)

LINN KEILIDH Active System (unused) £2500. Linn LP12, Ekos, Kiseki £1000. Epos ES14+ stands (new) £600. Micromega Stage 5 (new) £550. Arcam Alpha 5 £150. Epos ES11+ stands £250. Tel: 01952 502097 (Telford)

LINN WAKONDA Pre phono with brilliant power supply, phono, remote control. Immaculate boxed reason for sale upgrading. Tel: 01943 876254 evenings (Guiselley Leeds)

BASIS DEBUT GOLD TURNTABLE £2700, heavy duty MAF table £400. Gamma Aeon Monoblocks built by Andy Grove with GEVT4C valves, one of the best SET's £2800. Impulse H1 Kimber wired, selected components £1500. VDH MC1 Special, as new £550. Concordant Excelsior £500. Tel: 0171 331 3664 day, 0181 452 1394 eve (Roshan)

TDL RTL3 Speakers, black, as new mint condition, 18 months old but only 6 months use, with original boxes £200. Celestion DL4 Speakers with spiked stands £30. Tel: 01279 833787 (Herts)

LINN INDEX II speakers and Kustone stands £160. Moth arm £30. Tel: 01952 402983 (Telford)

KEF REFERENCE 107 Loudspeakers black ash with Cube Equaliser, nice condition £1050. Marantz PM-95 Digital Integrated amp class A built in DAC remote control, champagne finish £900. Tel: 01228 21533 (Carlisle, Cumbria)

QUAD 77 INTEGRATED AMP 18 months old £380. Micromega Stage 6 CD Player 3 months old £600. Both as new. Tel: 01256 461453 (Basingstoke)

LINN KAIRN PRO line level preamplifier with S.P.S. in excellent condition boxed as new complete with handset leads and users manual £750. Tel: 01922 53188 (evenings)

NAIM, PRE, POWER & P.S.U. Linn Kans inc. stands boxed. J.F. Le Tellec turntable. Linn LK100 power amp. E.A.R. phono. Troika cartridge. Quad monoblocks, Troughline Tuner. Will split may P.X. Wanted: Marantz CD 94, Tandberg 3001 Tuner, Naim amplifiers and speakers. Tel: 0114 2486493

EPOS ES11s + stands £200. Linn Kelidh's £350. Pink Triangle PT2 + Rega 250 £350. Pink Triangle PT1 £175. Naim 32 Preamp £125. Meridian 541 Processor £600. Meridian M60 centre speaker £600. Tel: 0121 783 8227

LEAK 2200 AMPLIFIER £45. Leak 2001 T.Table, Audio Technica 1005 arm £55. Armstrong 421 amplifier £20. Armstrong 625 amplifier £45. Decca FFSS arm Decca cartridge £45. Garrard AP76 T.Table £15. Two Conniesur T.Tables, dismantled, SAU2 arm £20. Tel: 01908 674193 (Milton Keynes)

KEF 104/2 REFERENCE Loudspeakers in walnut. Dynamic, easy to drive, powerful. These floorstanders are in perfect condition. Possible delivery £600 ovno (new £1800). Tel: 01308 868044

FULL QUAD 2 SYSTEM, 22, 2xII FM2 with decoder, AM2, all manuals. Rebuilt to original spec with Mullard valves by Quad £400. Tel: 01984 633905 (Somerset)

KEF REFERENCE 3 Speakers finished in Rosetta Burr veneer (£2300 new) £1500 ono. Audiobal 8000Q & 8000M's £1400 ono, will split Tel: 01384 359273 after 6pm (Terry)

HIGH-END TURNTABLE Nottingham Analogue Graphic, Alien carbon composite tonearm, Analogue Tracer Four cartridge, total new cost £2950, asking £1100 ono, all mint condition. Offers accepted. Tel: 01603 438752 (John)

MOREL BASSMASTER 620 Loudspeakers, biwirable, twin tweeter, stunning soundstage. Sale due to inferior ancillary equipment £995 ono. Tel: 01689 834279 (Phil) (SE London)

ATC SCM20's Blk ash boxed as new £995. Meridian 605 150wpc monoblock power amplifiers as new boxed £950. Audio Synthesis Passion (use as a preamp) rave reviews as new £275. Tel: 0181 948 5568

SILVERADO RAIDER MONITOR Loudspeakers piano blk £325 new(695). Foundation Designer stands (four pillar) the best £185 ono(325). NAD 302 integrated amp (new) £85 Heybrook HB1 stands as new (Blk) £75. Tel: 0181 948 5568

LOWTHER SUPER ACOUSTA 124's. two original PM6A drive units in each cabinet, new foam surrounds. Dark wood cabinets £600 the pair. Tel: 01227 742566 (Herne Bay)

YAMAHA NS1000M SPEAKERS, good example and well cared for, boxed. Includes 10inch Foundation lead filled stands £750 ono. Tel: 01273 701218 after 6pm (Brighton)

PINK TRIANGLE LPT Turntable, Rega RB300 arm, AT-F5 cartridge, mint condition £225. Rotel RD865 cassette deck, mint £35. Toshiba PC D-10 cassette deck, good condition £10. Tel: 01252 870861 after 6pm

LUMLEY REFERENCE M120 Monoblock valve amplifiers Triode/Pentode 18 months old mint boxed manuals and spare valves £2500. Superb sound upgrade forces reluctant sale. Tel: 0115 9817814 (work) Paul Allen

MARTIN LOGAN AERIUS Speakers 6 months old, little used. Still under guarantee £1400 ono. Genuine reason for sale. Tel: 01623 512427 or 553667

SME MODEL 20/2 £2000. Russ Andrews DISC 60 silver wired £595. Yamaha CT7000 FM tuner £550. Monster Alpha Genesis 1000 perfect £120. Genuine reason for sale. Tel: 01242 231766 (Cheltenham)

NAIM AUDIO NAP140 Stereo power amplifier. Excellent sound, only 16 months old + in immaculate condition boxed as new with Naim Interconnect to suit + manuals. Offers over £429. Tel: 01245 224024

QUAD ESL 63's with stands, excellent sound, priced to sell. Too large for new room £895. Tel: 01803 873427

CASTLE HOWARD S2 Loudspeakers yew finish. New unused, competition prize £945. Tel: 01443 685492

NAIM CD2 £900. Tel: 01782 633088 (N. Staffs)

NAIM AUDIO CDI with remote & double puck, boxed £1250 ono. Linn Valhalla Board for LP12 unused £75 ono. Tel: 01702 354946

PAIR QUAD ESL63, brown with trolley stands. Immaculate £1600. Tel: 01206 862259 (Colchester)

WANTED: ROTEL RB 980 power amp. Tel: 01795 430254

SPENDOR SP1/2 SPEAKERS & M.A.F. Stands £650 (£1500) or exchange for solidstate or valve amps, Audio Innovations 1st Audio, AVI SM2000MM, DPA, ART Audio, Unison Research SIMPL-4, Audionote OTE SE. Tel: 0181 531 5979

PROAC STUDIO 100's with Target RS2 stands, good condition, boxed £590. REL Strata sub as new, boxed £296. Tel: Dave 01992 628848 (Cheshunt)

DEFINITIVE TECHNOLOGY BP10 Bi Polar Reference HiFi/AV speaker. 6 months old boxed immaculate (due to upgrade) £1095. Pioneer CT93 Reference cassette deck, Dolby S, built like a battleship, hardly used £395. Meridian 263 DAC £195. Tel: 01869 278249

LINN LP12, Ittok, Asak (new cantilever and stylus) £395, Quad FM4 £200. Sony ST80F FM/AM tuner £50. Spendor BC1 speakers and stands £200. Tel: 01993 883523

MISSION 753 LOUDSPEAKERS black ash £400. Arcam Delta 90.2 integrated amplifier £150. Excellent condition. Tel: 01686 626530 Dave (Mid Wales)

MORDAUNT SHORT DECODER One TV Surround sound amplifier list £300, £1350ono. Mana shelf (£130) £70. B&W centre speaker DM600IFS (£180) £85. Naim SNAIC4 £15. Various interconnects half price. All equipment two years old, mint, boxed can demonstrate/post. Tel: 01702 582986 (evenings)

NAIM CD2 as new £1500. Naim NAP180/NAAC72 (latest spec) £900. Castle Harlech speakers as new £600. Mission 752 Freedom speakers as new £400. Tel: 01303 240862 (Folkestone)

TANNOY 607 LOUDSPEAKERS 50x32x23 cms 88dB sensitivity 8 ohms impedance, bi-wirable. Hexagonal cabinets, v. good condition £85 ono. Tel: 01273 676805 (Brighton)

ARION ADONIS VALVE AMP (Chrome) £500. Trichord Genesis CD Player £350. Triangle Titus TZXe speakers £250. Stax Lambda Nova electrostatic headphones £250. All hardly used, mint condition, can demonstrate. Tel: 0181 684 0188 anytime

LINN LP12/Lingo/Ittok LVII/K18, black, mint condition and boxed £995. Tel: 01453 758322 (6-9pm)

LINN LP12/ITTOCK LV II Supex SDX 1000 M/C. Excellent condition £495. Tel: 0121 628 2437

FOR SALE: NAKAMICHI CR5 cassette deck (magnificent CR7 sound quality without auto calibration remote control). Pristine condition. Also Snell J speakers on back breaking Pirate Sounds. Tel: 01753 879468 (day) 01753 529926 (eve) Steve, Berks.

CR DEVELOPMENTS Romulus integrated valve amplifier, 35 wpc, 1yr old, as new. Cost £1189, £750 ono. Tel: 01205 750314

MICHELL ARGO PRE-AMP with Hera power supply, mint condition and boxed, will demonstrate. Superb sound £450. Tel: 01732 461561 Mike (Sevenoaks)

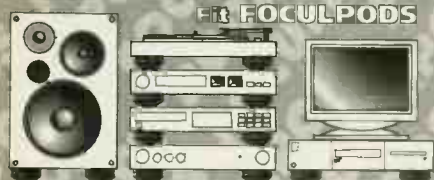
CHARIO ACADEMY I Speakers. Solid walnut, boxed, mint 6 months old £800. Target K. Series stands. Filled and spiked. Boxed, new £100. Tel: 0181 642 6470 (Cheam, Surrey)

HARBETH HL-K6 SPEAKERS, as new £595. ATC stands for SCM10 speakers £95. Tel: 01892 536919 (W. Kent)

AUDIO RESEARCH LS3 (black) £1000. Rowland Model Three monoblocks (black) £2000, Audio Research DAC1 £1000, Target TT4 £60, Audiotech wall shelf £60. All boxed in excellent condition. Tel: 01628 34109 (Julian)

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Hi-Fi Choice July 1995

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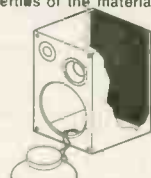
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Audiophile - January 1994

"...the result was sharper imaging, wider dynamics and a more natural sound..."
Hi-Fi Choice - January 1994

CHOICE VERDICT

Sound Quality ■■■■■
Value for money ■■■■■

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Hi-Fi News & Record Review - March 1994

"...But one thing for sure - the Deflex panels are no gimmick. They work..."
Audio Video - December 1994

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- SONY ● SYSTEMDEK ● TANNOY ● TEAC ●
- TDL ● TECHNICS ●
- AND MANY MORE

CLEARANCE BARGAINS

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ATC SCM20T ROSEWOOD	£2650	£1999
AVI NEUTRON SPEAKER	£ 500	£ 375
AVI S2000 MP PRE	£ 850	£ 720
B&W P6	£1095	£ 849
EXPOSURE XX	£ 625	£ 399
McINTOSH C712 PRE	£1500	PHONE
McINTOSH C40 PRE	£3500	FOR
McINTOSH M.C.7100 POWER	£1400	BEST
McINTOSH MC150 POWER	£3200	PRICES
MUSICAL FIDELITY E101	£ 500	£ 399
PIONEER A400X	£ 300	£ 245
PIONEER 605R	£ 400	£ 325
PIONEER PDS904	£ 400	£ 325
REL Q50	£ 375	£ 299
REL Q50 / JBL TLX AV5	£ 750	£ 579
REL Q100	£ 475	£ 379
REL STRATA II	£ 575	£ 459
SYSTEMDEK 2X2/RB300	£ 681	£ 579
TEAC VRDS 10 se	£ 850	£ 679
TDL T LINE 2 R/W	£ 600	£ 429
TDL T LINE 3 R/W	£ 750	£ 499

SPECIALS ★ SPECIALS ★ SPECIALS

	WAS	NOW
MUSICAL FIDELITY F25 PRE	£1500	£1199
MUSICAL FIDELITY F16 POW	£2500	£1999
MUSICAL FIDELITY F19 POW	£4000	£3199

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NAIM CD3 £650. Nait 3 £425. 2x5M NACS £25. Tel: 01993 811480

FOR SALE: LINN KARIK 3 £1250. Wakonda pre-amp, LK100 power amp £450 each. boxed. World Audio Design KLS6 floor stander speakers £1000. Sell fantastic sounding system complete £3000. Tel: 0181 797 7670 after 6pm (John)

HI-FI CABLES: Various cables, some unused, still boxed including Audioquest, XLO Reference, Masterlink, Van Den Hul, all excellent condition and at bargain prices due to upgrading. Tel: 01425 477515

LOUDSPEAKERS: Italian Chario Hiper II's in light walnut on walnut stands, bi-wireable, superb! (weeks old) £450. B&W, DM3's, refurbished and regrilled. Great with valves! £150. Preamp: Nytech CP112 (MM) a classic! £75. Tuner: Sony ST70 £25. Tel: 01462 678158

MERIDIAN 506 CD Player £540, NAD 916 & 917 DPL amplifiers & tuner £525. KEF 70S speakers with KEF stands £185. All mint condition, under 2 years old, with boxes and manuals. Tel: 01245 381810 (Essex)

FOR SALE- KEF Concerto's, fitted with Canon XLR connectors and extra tweeter unit. Ex-small recording studio monitors £110. Wanted- Quad 303. Tel: 01923 212044 days (David)

PAIR OF STACKED ELECTROSTATICS beautifully constructed magnificent sound £500. Tandberg 3600xD reel to reel tape deck £100. Tel: 01279 718325 after 5/6 weekdays

MERIDIAN DSP 5000 Active loudspeaker system, rosewood with MSR 12 months old, immaculate boxed £2450 ono. Tel: 01454 250193 after 6pm or Fax: 0117 9354115

LINN KAN 2 SPEAKERS & K2 Stands £230. Cyrus III amp, new £395. Sony SS86E speakers £35. Arcam Alpha 7 CD Player £235. Mission 760i speakers £40. All mint condition. Tel: 0171 794 3843 (Robin)

WANTED: SONY TC229SD, TCK8B, CDPX303ES, Sansui SR222, Michell Gyropower PSU, old HiFi mags. Tel: 016974 78537

CYRUS TWO Amplifier with PSX power supply, excellent condition £290. Systemdek turntable with Moth arm, Goldring G800 cartridge as new £170. Tel: 01792 369582 (evenings) 01792 703139 (day, Swansea)

WANTED: NAIM CD, amp and speakers plus Linn LP12 Ekos Lingo etc. Tel: 0121 783 8227

NAIM CD3 new Dec 96 (£970). Perfect boxed with receipt. Will accept £750. Tel: 01247 274451 (N. Ireland)

PAIR DUAL POSITION Lowther Acoustas PM7A drive units £400 ono. Can be demonstrated Studer Revox A77 2 Track £375 ono can be demonstrated. Tel: 01705 321494 after 6pm

RUSS ANDREWS thinks his Rata Excel Plus is one of the finest sounding CD players around. Listen to mine, judge for yourself and buy for £995 ono. Tel: 01423 528256 (Harrogate)

DAT Sony DTC77 four head recorder £450, Revox A77HS £325, Marantz SD62 three head cassette recorder £110, B&W 620i Speakers black £250. Tel: 01787 247243 (Dick Histed, Suffolk)

2 W.B. STENTORIAN H.F. 816 Speaker units £40 pair. 1 professionally built column speaker (no unit) £40. Decca FFSS arm (minus cartridge) £40. ACOS Hi-light arm (Deram cartridge) £50. Tel: 01429 298956 (Hartlepool)

MUSICAL FIDELITY F22 pre-amplifier, phono-stage £600. Yamaha DSP-1 digital soundfield processor £125. Pioneer VSA-730 pro-logic amplifier £195. N.T.S.C. to PAL converter for PAL televisions £80. All excellent condition. Tel: 0121 705 1142 (Rod)

MARANTZ SM11 Stereo power amplifier. Fantastic build & sound £750 (1500). Marantz SC1000 pre £450 (1000). Amcron ES224 electrostatic speakers & subs. Awesome £1750. Metaxus Icarus integrated amp £400 ono. Tel: 0121 459 9616

WANTED: SNELL TYPEK Speakers. Must be Mk1, in good condition. For sale: Transcriptors Hydraulic Reference Turntable, fluid arm, sweep arm, stylus brush £300. Tel: 01935 702643 (day) 01935 432417 (eve)(Chris)

LINN KABER Loudspeakers; passive, black ash. 2x6m lengths K600. Boxed, immaculate, 3.5 years old £850 ono. Tel: 0161 429 0963 evenings/weekend (Nick, Stockport)

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE2 Speakers plus stands (now £2000+) superb sound and looks. Reluctant sale £750 ono. Rega Planar 3 £100. Nytech CA252 amp £90. Tel: 01633 254673 (Nick)

KRELL KSA 100 Power amplifier. One owner from new, as new £1250. Tel: 0161 904 8081 or fax 904 8082 (Manchester)

AMERICAN POWER AMP. MUSE 160, 50 hours use. Musically with definition, as new. £2400 new, accept £1100. Tel: 01246 590452

J.P.W. AP3 SPEAKERS, oak veneer + JPW stands vgc £150 or swap Pioneer A400 amp. Meridian 103 power amps + power supply £60. Tel: 01765 600450 (N. Yorks)

NAIM NAP140/NAC72 MM boards £850, Flat Cap (new). NAC72 £425, SEAS T25-001 tweeters £85 pair, MkII Talisman tweeters £25 pair, Nytech Pre/power £200, all items immaculate and boxed. Tel: 0181 668 8983

WANTED: WHARFEDALE 708 speakers. Selling Leak TL10 £150, Williamson amp £170, Garrard 301 £170. 1950s Wharfedale open baffle speaker £50, Quad mono pre and tuner £10 each G.75 £10 Ortofon Fonofilm Cartridge and linear tracking arm £25, CTC mono valve tuner £25. Large selection of new/used valves send SAE for list. A. Cavender, 288 Hexham Rd, Throckley, Northumberland NE15 9QX. Tel: 01661 852874

PINK TRIANGLE EXPORT GTJ with SME 309 and Corus Black; Perception Phono Stage; Air Pod Supports (3); VDH First interconnect 1m. All sensible offers considered. Tel: 01685 385898 evens./weekends.

ROGERS E20a Integrated amplifier, 18 Watts per channel Class A with a phono output. 7 months, mint condition. £700 ono. Tel: 0161 764 8136

1 SOURCE TURNTABLE including R.P.G. One Odyssey arm and the 3 dimensional power supply, excellent condition £650 ono. Tel: 01623 646543

KEF 107 REFERENCE Speakers, rosewood with cube £1200. Yamaha digital processor/amp DSP £1000 £300 Technics VC4 200 Watt amp £150 Nakamichi BX300E cassette deck £200. Arcam Delta stereo TV tuner £50. Thorens TD 321 turntable, Linn BSK arm, Gldrg G1042 Cart £150. Tel: 0385 791744

ATC SCM50A active loudspeakers in black ash, tri-amplified, 300W, with stands and cable. Immaculate condition, only 24 months old. Ono £2850. North London Tel: 0181 340 3832/ 0973 313 819

NAIM 250, old style £550. Sony TCK611S Dolby S cassette deck, little used £120. Leak Variaslope stereo pre-amp, excellent condition £30. Quad FM1 tuner £10. Toshiba Aurex FM tuner £20. Tel: 01276 65054

SILVER SOUNDS 12/2 2x4 mtrs £150. Denon 250 MkII £60. Denon 250 MkIII £80. NAD 304 as new £85. Mullard 3 Watt Single Ended Monoblocks £150. Leak Stereo 60 (new chassis) rebuilt £200. Tel: 0114 2215271 or 2723621

ARCAM ALPHA 5 PLUS as new boxed with manual, accept £250. Quick sale. Looking for Marantz CD63SE must be in good condition, boxed with manual. Tel: 0161 232 1431 after 6pm.

ROKSAN DP1.5 CD Transport £600, DPA PDM 1 MkII DAC £300, both excellent condition, single-owner and recent manufacturer service; Moth Passive Pre, Audioquest Video Z 1m digital interconnect, Audion Pure Silver 0.5m, Deltec Black Slink 1m, Deltec Slink 0.75m stereo interconnects, Chord Flatline Gold 2x3m speaker cable, offers. Tel: 0151 526 5344

MARK LEVINSON 27 £1500. Apogee Centaur Minors with stands £500, mint boxed. Origin-Live table £100 (equivalent of Mana). 1-metre Cardas AES/EBU digital £100 (£190). 1/2-metre Siltech HF6 digital £60 (£110). Tel: 01442 877853

GRANT G50A valve amplifier £600. Pair Rogers Studio 3 speakers £300. Pair 22" Huygens speaker stands £100. Pair 16" Target stands £30. Akai x 200D reel to reel tape deck £100 plus tapes. Tel: 01709 510588

LINN SONDEK, Mission 774 arm. (NOTLC) Linn Asak, low hrs, mint £450 ono. KEF Transmission Line Speakers 102x47x34cm, 30T0 200 Watts, hand crafted in black, new tweeters worth £100, rewired. Superb sound, perfect condition £450 ono. Audition next to Linn, Valhalla, Circus, Ittok, KEF 105/3s, 140 Watt amp. Come and listen! Tel: 0958 210836 (B/Ham)

QUAD BRONZE ESL speakers all six driver panels renewed by Quad, 10 hours use since, £500. Beard BB 100 integrated line amp 50W+50W £600. The Cartridge Mans AKG, few hours use only £50. Tel: 0181 393 4265 day 01737 362 899 eve

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WANTED: SPENDOR SP2 original Mk 1 speakers. Tel: 01274 817035

WANTED: BATTERY Power supply for Pink Triangle DAC. For sale: pair Acoustic Energy AE1s £250 ono. Tel: 0131 661 6040 (Edinburgh)

ROTEL RC970BX Mk II Pre-amp £100. RB970 BX MkII power amplifier £140. Mission- Pair 780SE speakers £140. Target HS20 stands £35. As new- boxed. Tel: 01444 413782

LINN LP12, Ittok LVIII arm, Ortofon MC10 Supreme Cartridge £650. Alphason turntable stand (grey) £75. Ruark Templar speakers, rosewood £275 (boxed). Denon UPAF10 amplifier/Denon UDRF10 cassette (remote control) £300. Tel: 01954 232056

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LINN LP12 Ekos Lingo Circus Trampoline Arkive Cartridge 3 years old £1500. Naim CD1 CD player with remote £1050. Tel: 01904 490796

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PASSION PASSIVE CONTROLLER latest vishay type excellent condition £350. Musical Fidelity MA 100 monobloc amps class A £500. KEF Reference 107 loudspeakers black ash with cube equaliser £1050. Tel: 01228 21533 (Carlisle Cumbria)

LINN KARIK CD player £950. KEF 104/2 Raymond Cooke specials £950. ATC Active 100 speakers £4200. Quad 34/405II Pre Pwr £350. Quad 66 Pre-Amp £480. Tel: 01977 643629

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Q.E.D. MA34 Passive Pre-amp, as new £30. For CD Campaign Audio Silitarian Digital 75 ohm 1 mtr lead, as new £25. Integrex NRDC Ambisonic surround sound decoder circuit details and review, boxed, good condition £20. Quad 306 power amp, booklet, boxed, overhauled by Quad, excellent condition £165. Tel: 01903 247779 (Sussex)

QUAD ESL63 Electrostatic speakers + stands + Kimber mains cable £1200. Tel: 01843 584030. Please leave message if answerphone.

NAIM NAP250 Poweramp, new style - mint boxed £795. TEAC P-10 CD Transport (£1500) - £650. Wadia X32 20bi: DAC Coax and optical I/P's (£2200) - £695. Tel: 01394 460281 (Woodbridge)

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LINN LP12, Valhalla, Ittok LVII, K9, mint condition £400. Tel: 0191 384 7871

IPL S3TL Mk3s Mahogany run in only £180. Musical Fidelity A1 £50. New Tannoy 625 Alf subwoofer £300. Pair boxed Seas 25 FEWRX mounted unused £60. Wanted: Quad IIs. Tel: 01494 874381 (Bucks)

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MUSICAL FIDELITY 180 CRPS £650. MVT III £495. Ekos II £650. Jordan Watts spks £275. Tandy Lineaums £80. Decca arm £45 P/Ex considered. Tel: 01323 726110

LINN LK100 (new) £450. Linn Mimik (new) £575. Linn Kabers (rosenut) £950. Linn Karik/Numerik (new) £1125/£950. Grado SR60 headphones £40. Mission 733 speakers (new). Tel: 01952 502097 (Telford)

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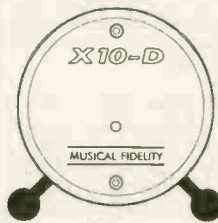
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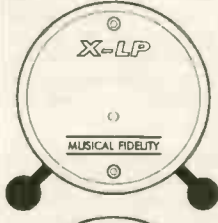
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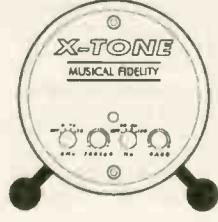
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